

The two years' prolongation was granted without hesitation, but the matter was to be referred to the government, though this was regarded as only a formality. The committee also considered — generously enough — that Sinkiang ought to contribute to the costs of our expedition, since our work was important for the future development of the province!

I took away from the meeting a strong impression of the sympathy felt by the Chinese and their desire to collaborate intimately with us Swedes.

### HUMMEL's RETURN

Some days before Christmas, at half-past eight in the evening, there was a knock at my door and a familiar voice said: »Chief, it's time to come down for dinner!» It was HUMMEL, who in his personal little way preferred to spring arrival as a surprise instead of advising us of it beforehand. It was a real pleasure to see him again, fresh and healthy and full of enthusiasm over his just completed nine months' journey to the dangerous border regions between China and Tibet. It had yielded splendid results, both botanical, zoological and ethnographical.

HUMMEL's interpreter and caravan-leader BÖKENKAMP stayed behind in Kansu to hunt, and collect zoological specimens. He afterwards journeyed to Suchow via Lanchow, and the next time we meet him we find him with the geologists working in the Suchow region, at first BOHLIN, and later BEXELL.

### ROBBER BAND NORTH OF KUEI-HUA

During the month of December the conditions to the north of Kuei-hua were terrible. A band of robbers, a thousand strong, terrorized the countryside, plundering caravans and villages alike. The temple-town of Beli-miao came off badly, and the little town of Kuku-irgen was captured and left half in ruins, as were also several other places. Not even in Kuei-hua could one feel secure. SÖDERBOM was there to receive the caravan with collections that had arrived from the Edsen-gol under MERIN, and that had succeeded in running the gauntlet of the robber bands without being molested (as a matter of fact MERIN had had more trouble with the customs than with the robbers). SÖDERBOM did not dare to leave the forty-four chests, containing MONTELL's ethnographical collections and divers collections from the Gobi-group, in Kuei-hua a day more than necessary, and he sent them on to Peking immediately.