

of the journey from which Mr. White had recently returned was to inspect the boundary as laid down in the Convention of 1890, and to compel the withdrawal from Sikkim territory of any troops which the Tibetans might have established in violation of that Convention. He reminded the Chinese Resident that he had offered to make concessions with respect to these frontier lands, on the understanding that matters as to trade would be put on a proper footing. But Lord Curzon pointed out that the negotiations for the improvement of trade relations between India and Tibet had made no real progress during the past twelve years. In these circumstances, he had no alternative but to compel the observance of the boundary as prescribed by the Convention; and until matters as to trade had been placed on a satisfactory footing, he must continue to insist on the boundary being observed, though any proposals which the Chinese Resident would make for the improvement of trade relations would receive careful consideration, and Mr. White had been instructed to discuss with the Commissioners appointed by the Amban any suggestions which they might put forward.

As a fact, the Commissioner never did meet Mr. White. Mr. Ho was prevented by "ill-health" from proceeding to Gantok. Then he was recalled to Lhasa. Then the Chinese Resident himself was to be replaced, and the new one would not reach Lhasa till the following summer. And so on, with the usual and unfailing excellent reasons for doing nothing.

But, in the meanwhile, the new factor in the situation was assuming significant proportions and causing the Government of India anxiety. I have already related how the Dalai Lama was sending missions to the Czar, with autograph letters to the Russian Chancellor, at the very moment when he was declining all communications from the Viceroy of India. And now, from a totally different quarter, came rumours that China was making a secret agreement with Russia in regard to Tibet.