

advances, but she was prevented from doing so by the despotic veto of the suzerain. The Government of India wished to put an end to this "solemn farce," and would have preferred to deal with Tibet alone. But they recognized that China could not be entirely disregarded, and only asked that, if the Home Government trusted to the interposition of China, this might be accompanied by a resolute refusal to be defeated by the time-honoured procedure, and that if and when a new treaty was concluded, it should not be signed by the British and Chinese alone, but by a direct representative of the Tibetan Government also.

At the same time, said the Government of India, the most emphatic assurances might be given to the Chinese and Tibetan Governments that the mission was of an exclusively commercial character, that we repudiated all designs of a political nature upon Tibet, that we had no desire either to declare a protectorate or permanently to occupy any portion of the country, but that our intentions were confined to removing the embargo that then rested upon all trade between Tibet and India, and to establishing those amicable relations and means of communication that ought to subsist between adjacent and friendly Powers.

These proposals the Government of India commended to the favourable consideration of His Majesty's Government, in the firm conviction that if some such step were not taken, "a serious danger would grow up in Tibet, which might one day, and perhaps at no very distant date, attain to menacing dimensions." They regarded the situation, as it seriously affected the frontiers which they were called upon to defend with Indian resources, as one in which their opinion was entitled to carry weight with His Majesty's Government; and they entertained a sincere alarm that, if nothing was done and matters were allowed to slide, they might before long have occasion gravely to regret that action was not taken while it was still relatively free from difficulty.