

lay the best trade-route and military road to Lhasa. When the Chumbi Valley had been occupied, the mission might, transported by Nepalese yaks, march across to Gyantse. The 32nd Pioneers and all transport would then be transferred to the Chumbi Valley line, and that line be made our chief line of communication.

These were my recommendations to Government when two months' experience had shown me the difficulty of even entering into communication with the Tibetans. Neither Mr. White nor I, nor any of us, had any real hope of effecting a final settlement anywhere short of Lhasa itself; for it was quite evident to us on the spot that to carry the negotiations through we should have to come to close grips with the priestly autocrats who kept all power in their own hands, and to whom the officials on the frontier were frightened to represent the real state of affairs. But at that time it was high treason for me to whisper the word Lhasa to my nearest friend, such agitation did the sound of it cause in England. So I racked my brains and everyone else's brains to think of alternative measures to an advance to Lhasa, which might be exhausted before this alarming proposal could be made. And I subsequently strove honestly to get the utmost out of each of those measures before I suggested the next, for I quite realized the difficulty which any Government at home has in securing support from the House of Commons in a matter of this kind. Such methods are very costly, very risky, and very ineffective; but as long as what an officer in the heart of Asia may do is contingent on the "will" of "men in the street" of grimy manufacturing towns in the heart of England, so long must our action be slow, clumsy, and hesitating, when it ought to be sharp and decisive.

I have referred to the offer of the Nepalese Government to help us with yaks, a species of buffalo peculiar to Tibet, which are of value as transport animals at high altitudes. This offer was not only of great practical use, but of still greater political significance. And it is time