

of it. Meanwhile, I said, I would receive the Amban, and would ascertain what power to effect a settlement he and the Tibetan representative really possessed.

In making this recommendation I was counting on a collapse of the Lhasa authorities, which seemed to be indicated by the Resident's statement, by the statement of a Chinese official from Lhasa that Tibetan officers were begging the Resident to intercede, by the fact that the common people even, it was said, at Lhasa did not resent our presence, that there were few troops between Gyantse and Lhasa, and that the Lhasa authorities had been able to produce only 5,000 men to oppose our advance as far as Gyantse.

Whether this collapse would have taken place if we had then set about advancing to Lhasa it is impossible to say. Certainly it did not take place. But this may have been due to the retirement of General Macdonald with the greater part of the force which now took place, in accordance with the plan prearranged between us of leaving the Mission with a good strong escort to conduct negotiations while the bulk of the force remained in support in Chumbi, where supplies were more readily available. This, from a supply point of view, was desirable, and it was in accordance with the policy of Government, but it may have had the effect of re-arousing the Tibetans.

Anyhow, rumours soon began to reach me that Tibetan forces were collecting again. On the 24th came news that they were building walls across the road at the Karo-la (pass) on the way to Lhasa, that camps holding 700 or 800 Tibetans had been established there, that the Dalai Lama was endeavouring to gain time to enlist Tibetans from far and wide to resist a British advance to Lhasa, and that the local soldiers round Gyantse were, under his orders, quietly leaving and proceeding towards Lhasa.

To ascertain the truth of these rumours, Colonel Brander, who was now in command of the Mission escort of 500 men, two guns and two Maxims, and some mounted infantry, on April 28 sent out a reconnaissance party of one company of mounted infantry to the Karo-la; and on