

contravention of the policy declared by His Majesty's Government.

As to the objection which might be raised on the grounds of the difficulty of keeping open communication with the agent at Lhasa, the Government of India contended that such an objection was based upon a misapprehension, and that there was no real difficulty, except on the southern side of the watershed, to such free passage to and from Tibet as might be necessary for the adequate support of a British representative, either at Lhasa or Gyantse; and our recent operations had demonstrated that, however great the physical difficulties of communication might be, they were not insuperable even at the worst time of the year. Moreover, the difficulties on the Indian side of the Himalayas would be obviated by a road through Chumbi, which they were examining, that ran down the Amochu to the plains of Bengal, avoiding the Jelap-la.

The Government of India felt, then, that it was a necessity to have an agent at Lhasa, and they were quite willing to undertake the responsibility. That was the view of the responsible Government on the spot. The Imperial side of the question had still to be weighed, and of that the Imperial Government would be the judge, but in regard to that aspect the Government of India made the following observations :

Lord Lansdowne had given assurances to the Russian Ambassador, but he had expressly added when making them that the policy then announced was not unalterable in any eventuality, and that the action of His Majesty's Government was to some extent dependent on the action of the Tibetans themselves. The Government of India did not desire to depart from the declaration which Lord Lansdowne had made that, so long as no other Power endeavoured to intervene in the affairs of Tibet, no attempt would be made to annex it, to establish a protectorate over it, or in any way to control its internal administration ; but they thought that recent developments might make it incumbent upon them to recommend to His Majesty's Government a reconsideration of the opinion they had