

partly in order that by the annual payment of the necessary instalments they should formally recognize the binding nature of the obligations entered into by them towards the British Government. Should the annual instalments henceforth be paid by the Chinese Government, the punitive effect of the indemnity would disappear, for it did not seem to Lord Lansdowne at all probable that the Chinese Government would be able or willing to recover from the Tibetan Government the sums paid on this account, and past experience had proved that it was not in the power of China to insist effectively on the fulfilment of the other stipulations of the Convention.

Lord Lansdowne felt no doubt that the proposal had been made by the Chinese Government with the object of re-establishing their theoretical rights to supremacy over the Tibetan Government, and probably also with the object of insuring that the non-payment of the instalments at their due date should not stand in the way of the retirement of the British forces. Irrespective of these considerations, the refusal of the Chinese Government to adhere to the Tibetan Agreement made it doubly difficult for us to entertain the offer, and upon this ground alone Lord Lansdowne considered that it should be rejected. For acceptance would be tantamount to admitting the intervention of China in relieving Tibet from this portion of her obligations while avoiding all responsibility for any other portion of the Convention.

Should the attitude of the Chinese Government undergo a change in consequence of our refusal, and should they intimate that they would adhere to the Agreement, the situation would no doubt be altered, and might be reconsidered by His Majesty's Government. Having regard, however, to the complete inability shown by China in the past to exercise effectual control over the Tibetan authorities, it seemed to Lord Lansdowne that it would be highly inadvisable to agree to any settlement which might be regarded as an admission that responsibility for the behaviour of the Tibetans would for the future rest upon the Chinese Government.

This view of Lord Lansdowne's and Sir Ernest