

Peking Government's written assurance. Intrigue on his part against the Chinese he denied. The Amban was altogether hostile, and a hostile policy had been adopted by the Chinese. He repeated his statement that the Chinese had designs on Sikkim, Bhutan, and Nepal. So far as Tibet was concerned, there was no need for the large force of 2,700 troops which, according to his information, the Chinese had in and round Lhasa. The Lama also gave his account of his relations with Dorjjeff, who, he said, was a purely spiritual adviser, and of the treatment of the letter from Lord Curzon. He inquired, at the conclusion of the interview, how his appeal was answered. In reply Lord Minto said that at present he could give no reply at all, but that he was very glad to make his acquaintance, to extend hospitality, and to hear his views, which would be placed before His Majesty's Government. The Dalai Lama again thanked Lord Minto warmly for his hospitality and took his leave.

On the return of the Dalai Lama and his Ministers to Darjiling further representations were made by the latter to Mr. Bell. They said that the only offence of themselves and the Tibetan people was the struggle to maintain the freedom of their country, and they asked* that a British officer might be sent to Lhasa or Gyantse to inquire into Chinese conduct, and that "an alliance under which each party should help the other on the same terms as the arrangement which they said exists between the Government of India and Nepal might be concluded by the Government of India with Tibet."

A few days later, on April 18, they requested† that the aggression of the Chinese might be stopped while discussion between the British and Chinese Governments was in progress, and that permission to communicate with their deputies at Lhasa might be given to the Tibetan Government in Darjiling. Failing this, they requested the despatch to Lhasa of British officers with soldiers to inquire into and discuss the present condition of affairs with the Chinese.

* Blue-book, IV., p. 215.

† *Ibid.*, p. 217.