

resulting as it possibly might in the *status quo* being entirely changed, and in conditions being set up wholly inconsistent with the spirit of our agreements with Tibet and China, agreements by which the continuance of a Tibetan Government was recognized. The Chinese Government might also be told, they considered, that we should be compelled in self-defence to strengthen our escorts at Yatung and Gyantse if unsettlement of the country continued, though assurance might at the same time be given to both China and Russia that the maintenance of the *status quo* under the Treaties and Trade Regulations was all that we desired.

There was nine days' delay—perhaps due to the General Election—in considering this telegram in the India Office, and during those fateful days events were advancing apace at Lhasa. But on February 9, the day when the Dalai Lama and the Chinese Associate Resident were consulting together in the Potala, Lord Morley informed* Sir Edward Grey that he would be glad if he would see fit to address the Chinese Government in the sense suggested by the Indian Government.

Sir Edward Grey fully appreciated† the serious complications which might arise upon the Indian frontier as the result of an attempt on the part of the Chinese to deprive the Tibetans of their local autonomy, but before deciding on the course to be adopted he thought it desirable to ascertain the views of Sir John Jordan, who was accordingly telegraphed to in this sense on February 11, the day before the Dalai Lama fled from Lhasa.

Sir John Jordan, one of the best Ministers we have had in Peking, had unfortunately to leave Peking at this time, and since the reply of the Chargé d'Affaires, Mr. Max Müller, was received the situation had so altered that the terms in which the Chinese were to be addressed had to be reconsidered. It was true, said Lord Morley, in addressing the Foreign Office, that, in view both of our Treaty relations with China and Russia and of the history of our past policy in regard to Tibet, the position of Great Britain is somewhat delicate, and that it is

* Blue-book, IV., p. 189.

† *Ibid.*