

that a strictly non-committal attitude on all points at issue between China and Tibet should be observed.

The Viceroy replied on March 12* that it appeared that all power at Lhasa had been taken by the Chinese into their own hands. The only high official left could not act without consulting the Chinese Resident. Reports from Trade Agents stated that the Chinese did not allow the Tibetans to deal with them direct. Various reports as to Chinese aggressive and oppressive action were in the possession of Government, but their authentication was difficult. It appeared to be the case, however, that there was no longer any Tibetan authority in existence, and it was impossible to reconcile with established facts the statements of the Chinese that the power and position of the Dalai Lama had not diminished, and that no alterations in internal administration were contemplated. Copies of the correspondence that had passed between the Dalai Lama and the Assistant Minister at Lhasa had been given to Mr. Bell. This correspondence, in the genuineness of which there was every reason to believe, showed (1) that the intention was that the Dalai Lama's temporal power should be taken from him; and (2) that the despatch of only 1,000 troops was contemplated. Lama Buddhists and Tibetans would not recognize that the Dalai Lama had been deposed spiritually, and the latter would, therefore, be a source of trouble to the Chinese. There was no reason why the Dalai Lama should have our support, but confidence would be restored on the frontier by his restoration, and it would be proof of a desire to maintain the *status quo*. The Suzerainty of China was denied by Tibetan Ministers in conversation with Mr. Bell, but if China wished to be friendly it might still be possible to bring about a *modus vivendi*.

The Viceroy suggested that in any case our own interests must be protected. There was unsettlement in our frontier States. Rumours of location of a garrison at Yatung and the number of troops in Tibet constituted, in the opinion of the military authorities, a menace to the peace of our border. The reform, not the abolition,

* Blue-book, IV., p. 205.