

I knew it, and I think a very remarkable point to note in the practical working of the system is the rapidity and directness with which affairs are carried on. This, to an official working under the ponderous Government of India, seems as remarkable as the deliberate movements of the elephantine British Government appear to the Chitralis. The largest question that affects their state they can settle in a few days. Though they have no telegraphs, they can, in cases of urgent importance, send messages at the rate of sixty miles a day. The whole country can spring to arms at a moment's notice, and hundreds of men be moving to the frontier at twenty miles and more a day, a few hours after they receive the order. I have known a governor more than sixty years of age ride his sixty-five miles into Chitral with a large following on foot, in a couple of days. No time is wasted in useless correspondence; there are no records to be referred to; the matter is discussed and settled there and then, man to man, and action immediately follows. People accustomed to rapid decisions and immediate action of this kind are unable, therefore, to understand why the British Government, with its telegraphs and its thousands of troops kept permanently ready for action, should be so slow moving. A question arises upon which the decision of Government is required, the agent in Chitral says he will refer it to the agent in Gilgit, the agent in Gilgit refers to the Resident in Kashmir, he again to the Government of India, and they to the Secretary of State; and back through all these channels comes the answer, months after the question first arose. "With all your telegraphs, why cannot you get answers quicker?" is what the Chitralis were always saying to me. And then the action seems so slow to them. They are astonished at the force of the blow when it does come, but if a blow is to come at all, why does it not come sooner? If, for instance, Government did not intend to allow Umra Khan to take Chitral in the winter of 1894-95, why did not they oppose