

Europe, their full historical and antiquarian value could never be realised without systematic researches on the spot.

The practicable nature of the project was proved in the meantime by the memorable march which Dr. Hedin made in the winter of 1896 past two areas of sand-buried ruins in the desert north-east of Khotan. Though the distinguished explorer, during his necessarily short halt at each place, was unable to secure any exact evidence as to the character and date of the ruins, this discovery (of which the first account reached me in 1898) sufficed to demonstrate both the existence and the comparative accessibility of ancient sites likely to reward excavation.

It was only in the summer of 1898 that I found leisure to work out the detailed plan of my journey and to submit it with Dr. Hoernle's weighty recommendation to the Indian Government, whose sanction and assistance were indispensable for its execution. Generously supported first by Sir Mackworth Young, K.C.S.I., late Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab, and subsequently on my temporary transfer to Bengal by the late Sir John Woodburn, K.C.S.I., the lamented head of that administration and a zealous friend of Oriental learning, my proposals met with favourable consideration on the part of Lord Curzon's Government. In July, 1899, the scheme, in which Sir Charles Rivaz, K.C.S.I., then Member of the Viceregal Council and now Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab, had from the first shown kind personal interest, received the final sanction of the Government of India. A resolution in the Department of Revenue and Agriculture provided for my deputation on special duty to Chinese Turkestan, during a period of one year. At the same time a grant of Rs. 9,000 (£600), partly from Imperial resources and partly from contributions by the Local Governments of the Punjab and Bengal, was placed at my disposal to meet the estimated expenditure on the journey and explorations.

That, notwithstanding the great distances and physical obstacles to be overcome and in spite of all the uncertainties attending an enterprise in a new field, I succeeded in accomplishing the whole of my programme strictly within the sanctioned estimates of time