

SUMMARY OF EVENTS.

India : NORTH-WEST FRONTIER.—The Panjab Government despatched a force to Gomatti, a village near Bannu, within the tribal border, with the object of capturing a band of outlaws. Seven men were captured, but on retiring the force lost 6 killed and 14, including 2 officers, wounded. On a force again advancing, the place was found deserted, when the towers and defences were destroyed.

Captain Roos-Keppel, the political officer at Kuram, on March 1st effected a successful night-surprise of sections of the Chamkanni tribe, who had been raiding the Kuram Valley. He destroyed village defences, took 100 prisoners and 3,000 cattle, and returned to Kuram with his force without a casualty.

Captain Trench, the political officer at Ladak, reports that the Indian trade viâ Kashmir with Tibet and Chinese and Russian Turkestan has decreased, and urges that a fresh field should be sought in the development of regular commercial relations with Tibet.

GENERAL.—Lord Curzon of Kedleston formally assumed his official duties as Governor-General on 6th January at Calcutta, and Lord Elgin left.

In replying to an address from the Bengal Native Chamber of Commerce, Lord Curzon referred to the importance of currency reform as a first step towards the economic and commercial revival of India, and contrasted unfavourably the mercantile and industrial enterprise of Bengal with that of Bombay.

Sir A. P. MacDonnell, Governor of the N.W. Provinces, replying to an address from the Municipality of Agra, severely censured their mismanagement of local finances, and intimated that, though reluctant to supersede the municipality, he felt it necessary to appoint a secretary who would carry out the necessary reforms.

The Indian Contract Act Amending Bill was passed by the Legislative Council, the native members cordially approving the objects of the measure. The new Act confers upon the Courts powers to protect all persons from bargains unfairly contracted, including those between ryots and money-lenders.

The Government has passed a Bill imposing countervailing duties upon bounty-fed sugar.

THE BUDGET.—The accounts for 1897-98 closed with a deficit of Rx. 5,630,000. The Revised Estimate for 1898-99 shows a surplus of Rx. 4,760,000. The Budget Estimate for 1899-1900 anticipates a surplus of Rx. 3,930,000. Almost every department of revenue has improved during the current year, and in almost every department of expenditure there is a saving; but in consequence of the plague there is, above the Estimate, an excess of Rx. 330,000.

The brother and alleged accomplice of Damodar Chapekar, who was executed for the murder of Lieut. Ayerst and Mr. Rand, has been arrested

in the Nizam's territory. Two Brahmins, who were the principal witnesses against Chapekar, were killed in Poona on February 8th.

Nawab Sir Ahsanullah Khan, of Dacca, is appointed an Additional Member of the Viceroy's Legislative Council in succession to Mr. Joy Gobind Law.

The Rev. H. Whitehead has been appointed Bishop of Madras, and the Rev. G. A. Lefroy, Bishop of Lahore.

The National Congress was held early in January at Madras.

The Indian Plague Commissioners are still occupied in taking evidence in all the chief towns. The epidemic rages in various places, and is especially severe in the Bombay Presidency.

NATIVE STATES.—The late Maharaja of Darbhanga, whose death we noticed in our last issue, having left no son, has been succeeded by his younger brother, Rameswar Singh Bahadur, a man of learning and accomplishments. The new Maharaja was installed by the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal on 23rd January, and has been since elected a member of the Imperial Legislative Council.

The Raja of Bhinga has invested a sum of one lakh of rupees in Government Securities to be held by the Treasurer of Charitable Endowments, for the endowment of a Poor Asylum at Benares, to be called the Bhinga Raj Anathalaya. The Institution is for the benefit of the poor and decrepit of all classes, irrespective of caste or creed.

His Highness the Maharaja of Benares has given to the Hindu College at Benares, of which he is a patron, land and buildings to the value of over half a lakh of rupees.

BURMA.—The delimitation of the Burmo-Chinese frontier is practically completed, Kokang alone remaining, which will present no difficulty. The British force has returned to Bhamo. The result is that the frontier from the River Namyang, which runs due east, now adds to the Northern Shan States several hundred square miles not included by the line laid down by the agreement of 1897.

It has been decided to establish a Chief Court for Lower Burma.

CEYLON.—Sir J. West Ridgeway, the Governor, on the 1st March cut the first sod of the Colombo graving dock, the largest between Malta and Hong Kong. It will accommodate first-class battleships, and will be completed in five years. There is no plague, and the island is prosperous.

AFGHANISTAN.—The Amir has addressed a complaint to the Indian Government respecting a raid of Waziris into his territory. He held a public Durbar on 25th February, and was then in excellent health.

BALUCHISTAN.—In February, at Sibi, a *Ghazi* attacked Captain Spence, the Political Agent, and his wife. Both escaped injury. The *Ghazi* was shot dead by the mounted police.

PERSIA.—The port of Lingah in the Persian Gulf, which was for some time in the possession of an Arab Sheikh, has been retaken by the Daryā Beghi (Admiral) Governor of Bushire. The Arab losses were 120. The Sheikh escaped.

MUSCAT.—On information being received by the Indian Government that the Sultan of Muscat had leased to France as a coaling station the port

of Jisseh, on the Muscat coast, Admiral Douglas was ordered to Muscat. Under threat of bombardment, the Sultan cancelled the treaty, and publicly repudiated the French agreement.

TURKEY IN ASIA.—In Yemen the Turkish troops have gained a victory over the insurgents, and appear to be settling in the military posts which have been taken from the rebels.

Public security in the *vilayet* of Aidin is seriously compromised by the Cretan Muhammadans, of whom 3,000 are settled in the province, and are committing outrages and depredations. They are terrorizing the whole population, and the local authorities seem to be helpless.

Serious disturbances have occurred at Jeddah in consequence of the issue of a sanitary order forbidding pilgrims for Mecca.

The plague has appeared at Mecca, and is attributable to the breach of quarantine regulations at Jeddah.

RUSSIA IN ASIA.—The Tsar has granted the Russian Geographical Society the sum of 42,000 roubles towards the fitting out of a scientific expedition to Central Asia.

The plague at Samarkand is dying out. A great number of people have been carried off by the disease. A triple cordon is still maintained around the infected district.

PHILIPPINES.—The Filipinos have repeatedly attacked the Americans at Manila, but on each occasion were repulsed with loss.

General Miller on February 11th took Iloilo by assault.

Spanish officials are negotiating with the insurgents for the liberation of the Spanish prisoners.

SAMOA.—After a protracted investigation into the claims of the various rival claimants for the Samoan Kingship, Mr. Chambers, the Chief Justice, decided in favour of Malietoa Tana. The followers of Mataafa (who, as may be remembered, was banished to the Marshall Islands in 1893 for rebellion against the late King Malietoa) refused to acquiesce in the decision, and, being supported by the German Consul, forcibly drove out Malietoa and his chief adherents, who took refuge on a British warship. The incident caused considerable friction at the time, owing to the action of the German Consul, Dr. Raffel, in opposing Mr. Chambers, but fortunately the three protecting Powers have considered the matter very quietly. The good feeling between Great Britain and the United States has again had an excellent opportunity of displaying itself. Mataafa is provisionally recognised as *de facto* sovereign. The population is reported to desire annexation to Great Britain, and the same view has been expressed by Mr. Chambers, who is an American citizen.

CHINA.—At the commencement of the year, floods, due to the bursting of the Yellow River, caused great distress in Shan-tung.

The number of entries and clearances of British vessels at the treaty ports during 1897 was 21,140, representing a total cargo value of 509,554,292 taels, as against 464 of those of French vessels carrying goods valued at 19,398,201 taels.

The total foreign Customs revenue for 1898 amounted to 22,500,000 taels, or 250,000 taels less than 1897. This is exclusive of near *likin* stations, which yielded 5,000,000 taels.

A British syndicate has obtained a concession for a railway from Han-kau to Canton, a distance of 800 miles.

At the end of last December the Tsung-li-Yamên made an official declaration to Sir Claude Macdonald that the Government would not alienate or part with any of the railways named in the Northern Railway Extension contract to any foreign Power.

The Tsung-li-Yamên has agreed to open as a treaty port Nan-ning, on the Yu-kiang, near the Tongking frontier, and has consented to pay \$30,000 as compensation to the relatives of Mr. Fleming, the missionary who was murdered.

On February 20th a conflict took place at Ta lien-wan between Russians and Chinese. It arose on the question of taxes. About 100 Chinese were killed.

The Russian Minister has renewed in peremptory terms his protest against the conditions of the Northern Railway loan. The British Government has emphatically declared that the contract cannot be altered, and has undertaken to assist China if aggressive measures should be attempted.

Italy has made a demand for the lease of Sammun Bay, and her efforts have been diplomatically supported by Great Britain. The Tsung-li-Yâmen returned the letter containing the proposal and, for a moment, affairs seemed rather critical, especially when it appeared that Signor Martino, the Italian Minister, had presented an ultimatum. It turned out, however, that he had acted in excess of his instructions, and Admiral Canevaro, acting with great promptitude and correctness, at once ordered his recall, and left the due representation of Italian interests temporarily in the hands of Sir Claude Macdonald.

JAPAN.—A Bill to increase the Land Tax has passed the Lower House of the Japanese Diet, fixing the rate at $3\frac{1}{3}$ per cent.

A severe earthquake occurred on March 7th, affecting the same localities as suffered from the great shock of 1891. Loss of life and property is reported.

BRITISH NORTH BORNEO.—Mr. L. P. Beaufort, the Governor, had a friendly interview with Mat Salleh, and has settled his dispute with the Tamboonans. This tribe had, hitherto, repudiated the Company's rule, but has now submitted and promised to pay taxes.

BRITISH NEW GUINEA.—The Premiers of New South Wales, Queensland, and Victoria have agreed to discontinue their subsidies towards the cost of administration of British New Guinea from the present month.

EGYPT.—The European Powers have accepted the prolongation of the Mixed Tribunals for one year from February 1st last.

In consequence of a grant made by the Public Debt Commission, the Government has been enabled to reduce the land tax by £221,000. The reduction is to continue for nine years.

The Budget for 1898 shows a surplus of £496,000, while the estimates had anticipated only an equilibrium.

The Khedivah having been delivered of a son, great rejoicing took place at the birth of an heir to the Khedive.

SUDAN.—Major Marchand and the French expedition evacuated Fashoda in December last and proceeded to the coast viâ Abyssinia.