

result of his five years of office was a net deficit of two and a half millions.

We have now to deal with the most important question of Indian foreign policy, the problem of Afghanistan. The annexation of the Punjab had extended the British frontier up to the base of the Afghan mountains, but the boundary line was very variable and ill defined. From Baluchistan in the south to Chitral in the north there was, and to some extent still is, a zone of territory occupied by independent Pathan tribes, through which run the passes that debouch on to the plains of the Punjab. Down to the year 1893 these tribes nominally owned the sovereignty of the Amir of Afghanistan, though in reality they were almost completely out of his control. They were fierce, turbulent, and treacherous, always ready for plundering expeditions and raids over the frontier, and a constant source of embarrassment to the government of the Punjab. Punitive expeditions had been sent to chastise the tribesmen for violating the integrity of the British frontier, and owing to the good fighting qualities of the enemy and the mountainous nature of their country, large forces had to be employed. In 1863, as we have seen, an army of 6,000 was employed against the Wahabis, and in 1868 a force of 12,000 had to be dispatched to read the Pathans of the Black Mountains a lesson.

The conditions of the border therefore were obviously not entirely satisfactory, and it is not surprising that different schools of frontier defence were formed from time to time. The most extreme in one direction, though practically of little account, advocated a retirement to the line of the Indus. The supporters of the opposing view, who were somewhat loosely known as the 'Forward School', favoured the subjugation of the tribal zone and a scientific frontier conterminous with the Afghan boundary line. The more extreme members of this party did not shrink from