M.R.O. 1—88,000—16-10-20.

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Judicial DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No.	241	Press Mis.—
42-43		
Dated	23-2- 1858	

Not to be folded or roughly handled

No. 42. Read the following letter from J. D. ROBINSON, Esq., Joint Magistrate of Canara; to T. PYCROFT, Esq., Chief Secretary to Government, Madras, dated Jugglebett, 13th February 1858, No. 70.

Sir,

Since I had the honor yesterday of addressing you on the subject of the north-western frontier disturbances, nothing more of importance has transpired. I received however yesterday evening a native report from Tinay, which merely confirms former intelligence and states that Hunamuntha Sawantha and his insurgent band continue to occupy their stronghold on the top of Dursengooda.

2. Subsequent to burning down the Sayer Chowky at Tinay and the adjacent huts, they appear to have confined their attacks to the Belgaum neighbourhood, making occasional forays on the villages and capturing any stragglers whom they may come across, with a view probably to claiming hereafter ransom for their liberation. The hill on which they have taken up their position is said to be so lofty as to command the approaches on all sides and is only accessible, I am told, by a narrow defile which may be easily defended by a few matchlock men. On it is a good supply of water, and the neighbouring villages continue to supply under the circumstances yesterday stated, whatever provisions and other supplies the insurgents may demand. I have yet no intelligence from Belgaum, and am ignorant what measures have been adopted in this emergency by the authorities of that district, but from all I gather both as regards the present position taken up by the insurgents and the character of the resistance they are likely to offer, their dislodgement by the ordinary Police, would be wholly impracticable and the attempt unadvisable.

3. Since writing yesterday, I have collected a few particulars in regard to Hunamuntha Sawantha's antecedents, for the accuracy of which I do not vouch, but which nevertheless appear sufficiently natural and probable.

4. Hunamuntha Sawantha is one of several brothers, sons of Ponda Sawantha who took an active part in the Kolapoor and Savanthawaree insurrection. On the suppression of this revolt, the family being proscribed and deprived of their large landed property in the Savanthawaree neighbourhood, took refuge within the Goa territory and there remained under the protection of the Portuguese Government, then as it is stated on somewhat cold and distant terms with the British authorities. There the family have since resided and without recovering in any degree their former prestige and influence, have yet contrived to collect together what remained out of their shattered fortunes, and to establish themselves in some land* situated at the foot of the ghat and some 4 miles distant from my frontier boundary.

* "Sonal" a little south of the Coonehay ghat.

5. On the occurrence of the present rebellion and recent disturbances in the Kolapoor neighbourhood, the Bombay Government are said to have suspected this family of being in secret intelligence with some of the disaffected leaders in the aforenamed movement, and to have requested the Portuguese Government who have throughout this crisis maintained the most friendly relations with the neighbouring British authorities to place Hunamuntha Sawantha and his household under some sort of surveillance. This requisition it is reported to me the Goa authorities have acted upon and an officer with 25 soldiers were detailed to watch their proceedings. Under this controul they have been I am informed, for the last 6 months, but latterly owing to some further suspicion against them, a fresh correspondence has arisen between the two Governments with a view to a closer watch being kept over the family.

6. Whether resenting this and fearing that their liberties were in immediate jeopardy or whether encouraged by some outward influence I shall not pretend to decide, but be this as it may, they appear latterly to have determined to throw off the mask and to make a direct armed demonstration in their own behalf. The report is that they have now sold all their land, cattle and other property and have taken the field with their families, adherents and dependants there to die or make good for themselves some certain position for the future. Such is the tale as I put together from the vague material I have at my command. I will in no wise vouch for its accuracy, but there is about it, taken in connection with what is going on around us, a sequence and natural aspect which give to it an air of probability.

7. I anxiously await answers to letters addressed by me to the Portuguese and Belgaum authorities, which when received shall be placed at once before the Madras Government. It is reported that there are 2 or 3 robber gangs of the Beder caste scouring the country and the destruction of the Doodwalla Chowky and some other acts of violence therewith connected, are, I think, attributable with more truth to these than to Hunmuntha Sawantha's party. I shall procure further particulars of the natural character and means of approach to the Dursengooda stronghold. In the meanwhile I shall remain here or in the near neighbourhood until I have reliable intelligence of the Belgaum arrangements, and an answer to my own application for Military aid from Dharwar.

*Again addressed this day demi-officially on the subject.

8. The Magistrate* of Belgaum must ere this be apprized of my arrival in this neighbourhood, as I wrote from Yellapoor to inform him that I was there en route to the disturbed regions.

No. 43. ORDER THEREON, No. 241; dated 23rd February 1858.

To be recorded.

(Signed) T. PYCROFT,
Chief Secretary.

Exd. F. Cartledge.

Entered in Vol 2/3/58

Judl Dr to Govt 30th June
No 9 3/1858 - Paras 2 & 3

In Cons. 23d February
Judicial 1858. sept

2

From the Joint Magistrate
Canara — 7th

2/3
No 20 Feby/58.

No 309

With reference to his
letter of the 12 inst. sub-
mits further observa-
tions on the subject of
the North western
frontier disturbances.

42 & 48

C 28 Feb
R 22

Lib
No 241
To be recorded
23/2/58.