

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Indra DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No.	552	Press
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Dated	28-10-1918	

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Fort St. George, Judicial Consultation, 4th May 1858.

No. 12. Read the following letter from J. D. ROBINSON, Esq., Joint Magistrate of Canara; to the Chief Secretary to Government, Madras, dated Camp Soopah, 16th April 1858, No. 18.

SIR,

I have the honor to inform you, that immediately after the interview with Mr. Fisher at the Head of the Unshy Ghât alluded to in his letter of 3rd Instant, I made my way across country to Sircy, whence after a visit of 5 days, during which Mr. Binny was in charge of the disturbed Districts, I returned to my Head Quarters at Soopah.

2. I note this brief absence rendered necessary by the state of my health, in view to bringing to the notice of Government the gratification I felt in finding myself able to traverse without escort the country intervening between the Kalaundy and Sircy. Throughout my journey I had much pleasure in satisfying myself from personal observation and enquiry of the freedom from alarm, and general tranquillity of the country south of the Kalaundy. On that side the villages are full, the inhabitants occupied tilling their fields and all apparently in its usual state of security, and loyalty. About the time of my visit to Sircy, it was reported that the Saventh brothers with their families and immediate retinue had found their way through the Portuguese out-post towards their former haunts on the Belgaum and Saventhwady frontiers, but on my return to Soopah I found letters awaiting me from Captain Schneider informing me that they were ascertained to be again in the neighbourhood of the Dursinggoodda and Tinay portions of the Goa frontier range.

3. Acting on Captain Schneider's advices, and with a view of clearing off some frontier cases awaiting trial under the Commission, I proceeded at once to Tinay, where I met Captain Schneider and had frequent conferences with him on the subject of our future plan of operations. On arrival at Tinay, I also found that the rewards for the capture of the three Saventh brothers had been increased by the Madras Government, to Rs. 10,000 per head, and that the means of effecting their apprehension by diplomacy rather than actual force had thus been vastly amplified.

4. In the meantime Deepu Rani the leader in the Goa rebellion 2 years ago is reported to have secretly countenanced them by allowing them an asylum and furnishing them with provisions.

5. Having in my Camp at the time an influential Maharatta landholder in these parts who is a near relative of Deepu Rani, I decided in consultation with Captain Schneider to make use of him as a mediator between ourselves and Deepu Rani.

6. This man of whose trustworthiness I have had considerable opportunities of judging since the out-break of these disturbances is at this moment absent on the mission confided to him, and I am sanguine that with the tempting bait now held forth, Deepu Rani's cupidity may be so far aroused that if declining himself to be a direct agent in the matter he may yet lend us such aid as will enable us to effect the seizure of his proscribed relatives.

7. A few days more must decide this matter, but whatever be the immediate results of this negotiation, the step cannot but be productive of favourable consequences, as it will tend to increase the rebel leaders' distrust of all, save their immediate retinue, and detach them still further from the sympathies and assistance of the frontier neighbourhood.

8. The secrecy with which these rebel chiefs have been latterly enabled to envelope their movements as well as their entire inactivity, coupled with the fact that the villages in the immediate vicinity of the frontier are nearly full, conspire to prove that they are for the moment thoroughly disheartened at the aspect of matters, and are more busy providing for the safety of themselves and families than making head in the desperate enterprise in which they have engaged. In the meantime the fruits of our past policy are making themselves apparent on all sides.

9. Villages formerly quite deserted are once more inhabited. The plough is busy preparing the land for the monsoon sowing, the young standing crop looks green and well tended, droves of laden cattle pass to and fro between the interior and the Goa sea board, the collection of Revenue and Customs have been resumed, and the ordinary functions of Talook administration go forward with their ordinary regularity and quietude.

10. Many obstacles have contributed to retard the progress of the trials under the Commission and as yet 5 cases only have been disposed of.

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11. The principal impediments have been the constant locomotion necessitated by the enemy's tactics, and the absence in the first instance of Native Agency to conduct the proceedings. No sooner had these difficulties begun to disappear and the re-establishment of good order and confidence in the country promised me leisure and repose to devote to the more immediate duties of the Commission than fever breaks out in my Camp and my Sheristadar through whom during the necessary absence of the Tasildar on the frontier, I had commenced to conduct the proceedings, is obliged to repair to the coast for the restoration of his health. Fresh arrangements will of course be made to replace him, but some delay must take place, and I note the circumstance here rather to shew the difficulties I labour under than with the intention of urging it as my excuse further than I can help should the spread of disease and other unforeseen obstacles contribute to delay the work more than I could desire.

12. A 2nd Commission has I observe by Extract Minutes of Consultation, dated the 1st Instant, been sent for issue to Mr. Ballard if the Magistrate see fit. If the reasons for such an additional special appointment existed at the time when I appealed to Government for the assistance much more do they now exist when the rebellion has assumed a proportion and relation to the Districts under my management which I could not then have foreseen or estimated.

13. I have written to Mr. Fisher urging my view of the case and as Mr. Binny is already temporarily employed under me, and the arrangement would not leave the Southern Division weaker than it already is, I am in hopes Mr. Fisher will accede and give the Commission to Mr. Ballard, whose duties would then devolve on Mr. Binny.

14. I have already stated that very numerous and important arrests yet remain to be made, besides which my Calendar of prisoners already in custody, amounts to nearly 90.

15. And this brings me naturally to a matter connected with the Political management of affairs in this quarter, upon which I have already solicited the early instructions of Government.

16. My proposition is contained in a telegram, dated 23rd Ultimo, in which I request permission to proclaim a free and unconditional pardon to all who not being guilty of any of the more heinous offences specified in the Act, may yet have been absent from their villages during the disturbances, and lie more or less, under suspicion of sympathy and indirect partizanship, provided they return to their homes within 10 days from the date of promulgation of the offer of pardon.

17. Very many in this position have as already stated returned to their villages without any guarantee of the sort, but should I in the absence of such offer of grace be compelled to deal with them under the strict letter of the Act, the now slowly recovering confidence of the country would be again shaken and the conscience-stricken sympathiser make common flight with the innocent to the great detriment of the Revenue and general welfare of the country.

18. To this point I once more respectfully beg leave to draw the attention of Government and shall until favored with their instructions confine my arrests to those who from their position and acts are beyond the pale of grace.

19. Captain Walpole at present in Command of the Madras portion of the Field Force, has I am aware entered a strong protest against the location of frontier out-posts during the monsoon, recording it as his opinion that the proposed sites could not from the probable insalubrity of the surrounding country, their exposure and remoteness from Commissariat facilities be maintained without much sickness and possible mortality among the men.

20. In this Officer's estimate of the difficulties in the way of provisioning the Troops and the risk of fever and dysentery breaking out among them, I cannot quite concur.

21. The country it is true is wild and intersected with streams, but during every monsoon there are frequent breaks and the most feverish part of the season is not generally the monsoon months, but those of April and May which precede it, so that it is my hope as well as belief that with a fair attention to the comfort and substantial character of the accommodation provided at the several frontier out-posts and a Commissariat Agency ready to take advantage of the open weather to throw in fresh provisions, the men located at Tinay, Kooveshy, and Diggy will not be exposed to the amount of hardship and disease which Captain Walpole anticipates.

22. Hutting operations have already commenced and Captain Walpole has himself prepared and circulated among the Officers commanding out-posts a plan of encampment which seems in my opinion well adapted to the purpose. In every case it would after all the expense that has

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been incurred and just as the moral effect of our exhibition of power and resource begin to be felt and recognised in the country be highly inexpedient to remove from the very region which has been most seriously compromised and convulsed any of the force now assembled there.

23. Government are already in possession of my sentiments on the subject of the introduction of Act XXVIII of 1857, throughout the Balaghat Division, and Mr. Fisher I observe advocates the measure in a letter dated the 6th Instant, although his suggestion seems only to embrace the Soopah Talook which would not I think sufficiently provide for future security.

24. Should Government see fit to put this Act in force, early instructions should be issued.

25. The question of compensation for arms seized under this Act is perhaps open to discussion, so far as it concerns the tranquil portions of the division, but for the Districts north of the Kalaundy no such indulgence is after what has occurred required.

26. The per-centage of Arms to be left in each village for the protection of crops, and destruction of wild animals could easily be decided hereafter.

27. A small registration fee of say 2 Annas might be paid to the Potal or other trustworthy person held responsible for fire arms retained by the owners, as is I believe the case in the Belgaum and Dharwar Districts where this Act has been fully carried out.

28. The organisation of a local armed Police for North Canara at least under an European Superintendent, on the Bombay model, is a question which I doubt not has already received the consideration of Government.

29. The insufficiency and bad constitution of the existing Police establishment has if ever doubted been abundantly proved by recent tests, and an early reform is urgently called for if only to enable the Troops now employed here to return to their more legitimate duties.

30. The construction of strong towers at our several Custom House stations on the frontier in which to secure the public records and money, is likewise a measure of much importance and necessity.

31. There are several such stone towers at Tullawady and elsewhere on the Belgaum side of the frontier, which with certain modifications and improvements could be adopted as a model for those to be constructed along the Ghât range which separates these Districts from the Goa territory. These if provided with sufficient armed establishment say from 12 to 20 men according to the importance of the Ghât would serve the double purpose of preventive stations and Military out-posts.

32. This measure I beg likewise to urge upon the early and favorable consideration of Government.

P. S.—Since writing the above, I have had the honor to receive your telegram of 1st Instant, forbidding me to make any offer of pardon to persons compromised in these disturbances.

33. Adverting to what I have already said in para. 15, 16, 17, of this communication, I cannot but regret the conclusion at which the Bombay Government have arrived on this point.

34. Captain Schneider with whom in fact the proposition originated, was and I believe still continues of opinion that such a measure is urgently called for, and I am therefore sanguine that on reconsideration such an act of grace may not continue to be considered incompatible with the ends of Justice and Political expediency.

35. In the mean time I shall in obedience of instructions abstain from making any offer of pardon and continue to make my arrests in the villages as quietly as circumstances admit of.

No. 13.

Para. 1—9.

Paras. 15 to 18, and
Postscript.

ORDER THEREON, No. 552; dated 28th April 1858.

The Government are pleased at learning the favorable account given by Mr. J. D. Robinson of the state of affairs in North Canara.

2. The Right Honorable the Governor in Council is not prepared to depart from the resolution already communicated to the Commissioner in respect to the offer of pardon to those concerned in the disturbances. At the same time it is neither necessary nor expedient that the Commissioner should proceed against those whose absence from their villages may seem to have been caused by a feeling of alarm, who are now returning quietly to their

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homes and who do not appear to have committed themselves by any serious offences or active hostility to the State. The fact of such persons being unmolested after their return will be sufficient confidence to all who are guiltless of complicity in the insurrection.

Paras. 19 to 22.

3. In communicating this letter to His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief, his particular attention will be called to these paras.

Paras. 23-24.

4. The Government on the requisition of the Magistrate will be prepared to extend Act XXVIII of 1857 to other Talooks of North Canara, but it will be necessary that those further parts of the division in which it is to be introduced should be distinctly stated.

Para. 25.

The question of compensation for arms taken under the Act is left to the discretion of the local authorities, but the Government doubt the propriety of charging any registration fee.

Para. 27.

Paras. 28-32.

5. The subjects discussed in these paras. will be considered in connection with the proposed revision of the Police for the Madras Presidency.

(Signed) T. PYCROFT,
Chief Secretary.

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for R Canara 16 April 1858.

No 18.

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P 23 - 24

P 25.

P 27

P 28 - 32.

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Majistrate of Canaan }
Commissioner of de. } Dep. D. H. May
Military Dep^t }

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