



PHOOLSAGAR PALACE,
BUNDI.

July 15th, 1947.

Dear Mr. Basave -

His Highness has commanded me to thank you very much for your letter, and for your good wishes. I am also to send details to you, for which you have asked.

Frankly, that is not altogether easy. I have only recently resigned the post of foreign correspondent for Lord Beaverbrook on the Daily Express, after some years as War Reporter for the B.B.C.. It would really be easier for me, as you can imagine, to write the sketch rather than to put down notes for someone else to write it. This, as a brother journalist, you will readily understand. However, I will do my best.

His Highness is a Rajput - and the leader of one of the four great Clans of Rajputs. As any reference book will tell you, the Rajput ruling families are the oldest in India, and have always been famed for their magnificent fighting qualities.

In these days, it is not easy for an Heir-Apparent to get the approval of his Father and State to go to war. His Highness, who was then Heir-Apparent, was determined to go, and go he did. He

completed the normal training, and was commissioned to Probyn's Horse, a great cavalry regiment, which is today mechanised. He was successful as an officer, and very well-loved by his men.

He went with the regiment to Burma, and in the fighting round Meiktila won the immediate award in the field of the Military Cross.

He was wounded in this campaign.

In April, 1945, word came to the regiment that his Father, His late Highness Maharao Raja Ishwari Singhji, was dying. The army authorities made every effort to get him - then known as Captain Bahadur Singhji - back to Bundi in time. They failed, and by the time that a plane touched down in Bundi it was the new Ruler who stepped out. He was twenty-five.

His Highness very soon made it clear that ^{he} meant to rule his State from personal knowledge. He toured every village, nearly always by jeep, and accompanied only by one person. Soon he was known by sight to almost every one of his subjects.

Before the war he had been already a well-known sportsman. His



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polo, already good, was on the way to reaching top championship class. His cricket was good. His tennis was of first class tournament standard. His rifle shooting was among the best in Rajputana - a land where shooting is a serious business.

With his return to Bundi, now as Ruler, His Highness put all these sports from him. Today he shoots, when he has time: tiger in the hot weather, duck and small game in the cold. For exercise he plays a few sets of tennis. But His Highness found that a Ruler who makes his State his full-time job has no time for serious sport.

In recent months, with events moving fast all over India, His Highness has been to the fore. He had always been deeply anxious to see the formation of Union of Rajasthan - of as many of the States of Rajputana and Central India as might be willing to join. At last, after much work, that wish has come true, and his brother Princes unanimously elected His Highness Vice-President of this Union.

His Highness has, in the past week, promulgated a new Constitution for Bundi, which gives immediate representative government, and full res-



possible government within a five year limit.

Other points - H.H. is an honorary A.D.C. to King George VI; he married, in 1938, the elder daughter of the late Maharaja of Ratlam, and has one son - aged seven - and one daughter - aged five. The son is the heir to the "gadi" (throne) of Bundi.

Bundi is a city of great age and beauty. Rudyard Kipling, in From Sea to Sea, gives a good picture; he also writes of Bundi in the poem "The Last Suttee".

I can only add, in all sincerity, that His Highness is a man of deep kindness and understanding, and of a quite extraordinary charm..

From a physical point of view, you have a picture. The most striking features are eyes that are gentle and understanding, but that can flash with annoyance at moments; and teeth that are dazzlingly white.

Yours sincerely,

Bob Duff