

His Honour in Council would be glad to know who your confidential informant is and this may be communicated to me secretly. The name will be kept off the record.

As you surmise, Government had no more information beforehand than you had regarding Mr. Gandhi's mission, the first mention of which appeared in your last fortnightly report. We expected that you would report the result of the interview which he had with you on the 12th instant and the action you proposed to take. You were greatly in error in thinking that you could stifle Mr. Gandhi's enquiry by action under the Criminal Procedure Code but, as explained in my demi-official No. 55-C.T. of the 20th instant, the chief cause of complaint is that you failed to obtain the approval of Government (as you had ample time to do) before imposing on the District Magistrate a line of action which you should have realized (knowing Mr. Gandhi's South Africa record) was certain to arouse public feeling throughout India, and thereby placed Government in a false position *vis-a-vis* Mr. Gandhi, yourself and the general public.

I am writing to ask Gourlay whether there is any truth in the statement that Mr. Gandhi had a long interview with him before he proceeded to Champaran, and if so, what passed at the interview. As to what is alleged to have passed between Mr. Gandhi and the Private Secretary to His Excellency the Viceroy, we have no knowledge but it seems improbable that anything can have been said to Mr. Gandhi unless possibly *after* the Home Department had received information from us that the section 144 proceedings had been abandoned and the local officers requested to place available information at Mr. Gandhi's disposal, with a caution that he should do nothing that would be likely to lead to a breach of the peace.

Yours sincerely,
H. Mc PHERSON.

[No. 48.]

Letter No. 88-C, dated Motihari, 28 April, 1917, from W. B. Heycock, District Magistrate, Champaran, to the Commissioner, Tirhut Division ¹.

2. ...As ordered by Government the notice under section 144, Criminal Procedure Code was withdrawn by me and the proceedings

¹. Political (Special) Department File No. 1571 of 1917.

under section 188, Indian Penal Code, were filed. Mr. Gandhi had an interview with me on Saturday the 21st instant, in which he explained that his object was to ascertain the actual facts. He explained that he was anxious not only to hear the *raiyats* but also to meet members of the planting community and ascertain their point of view.....

3. I saw several members of the planting community on that day and explained that Mr. Gandhi was anxious to meet them. Mr Jameson speaking for them said that they were quite willing to meet him, but that Mr Gandhi ought to make the first move. I wrote¹ and explained this to Mr. Gandhi who, at my suggestion, wrote to Mr. Cox, the District Secretary of the Association. Mr. Cox only received that letter to day and is now replying. I also explained to the planters whom I met what points had already engaged Mr. Gandhi's attention².

4. Mr. Gandhi left for Bettiah and saw both Mr. Whitty and Mr. Lewis. Mr. Lewis came to see me on urgent business on the 24th and I saw Mr. Lewis again for a few moments on the 26th. I ascertained from him that Mr. Gandhi was making inquiries in the villages near Bettiah. His *modus operandi* is the same as he adopted in Motihari. While he was in Motihari, the statements of a great many people were recorded. In the Bettiah villages, he is collecting a great mass of evidence. He has, I understand, quite a number of persons working with him, one of whom is Babu Brajkishore, who records the statements of witnesses. Mr. Gandhi, I understand, tests the evidence very carefully. The fact remains, however, that numerous statements are being recorded and a large portfolio of evidence is being collected.

5. He has, I understand, visited some of Mr. Elliott's³, some of Mr. Gale's⁴, and some of Mr. Amman's villages. He is expected back in Motihari again very shortly.

6. There can be no doubt that his visit to Bettiah and the villages in the Bettiah subdivision has caused intense excitement. He has acquired a wonderful hold of the people and is popularly called by them the saviour. The planters anticipate very serious consequences and are deliberating as to the steps which they ought to take. I expect Mr. Lewis to come and see me to-morrow with a full report and I shall at the same time see Mr. Jameson who is representing the planters. I shall then have a further report to submit. . .

¹ Vide No. 43 *ante*.

² Vide No. 44 *ante*.

³ A.C. Elliot, Manager of Kuriya Concern.

⁴ H. Gale of Byriah.

7. The feeling here generally is that Mr. Gandhi has constituted himself into a Commission of Inquiry. And in point of fact he is acting as such. The only difference is that the Commission consists of himself alone, is irresponsible, bound by no rules and by the planter certainly is regarded as biased. The feeling is that if there is to be this sort of thing, it is much better to have a regular and properly constituted Commission of Inquiry. In fact, such a commission would be welcomed in preference to the kind of inquiry Mr. Gandhi is making. It is not so much Mr. Gandhi who is objected to as his followers who have no responsibility. I take this early opportunity of pointing out that the planters themselves take a very serious view of the situation and anticipate trouble exceeding the trouble of 1909 as the result of this visit. One thing stands out clearly. There can be no further delay. Mr. Gandhi's visit has precipitated matters, and whether it is Mr. Gandhi or a regular Commission of Inquiry, an enquiry will be inevitable. This being so, it is obvious that a regularly instituted inquiry is far better than Mr. Gandhi roving about as a free lance conducting an inquiry on his own lines.

[No. 49.]

*Notes of interview with Rai Dwarika Nath Bahadur on 28 April, 1917, recorded by L. F. Moreshead, Commissioner, Tirhut Division*¹.

1. *Proceedings in Council*.—Public interest directed to planter questions when Brajkishore became member of Bengal Council about 1910. His resolution and speech, and Government's reply (though Kishori Lal Goswami) about reducing number of planters on District Boards worth reading; also his interpellations from time to time about planters...His interpellations about planters in Bihar Council worth studying. Followed his resolution about a Public Commission in Champaran; and Sir E. Levinge's reply. A Government resolution was accepted after enquiry into petitions referred to Settlement Officer. The impression was that such a resolution had

¹. Political (Special) Department File No. 1571 of 1917. It was forwarded to Chief Secretary McPherson under Moreshead's D.-O., dated 2nd May, 1917 wherein he writes, "It may be of interest to Government to see my notes, of an interview with Dwarka Nath. Except for re-arrangement here and there in the order, to make them coherent, they are as taken down at the time, and were volunteered by him without questioning by me. He had kept away whilst Gandhi was here, and I surmise has come forward now, because landholders, and especially Darbhanga, are getting agitated. One never knows what is going on behind the scenes in these matters. Just as Maheshwar Prashad and Ahmad Hussain came to sound me about Gandhi; declined to commit themselves; but are probably subscribing to his fund now; whilst Maheshwar Prashad really put him up although he denied doing so to me."