

I consider that his arrival in Champaran is most undesirable and likely to cause serious trouble if he makes speeches against the planters and against the system of indigo. Just now Champaran is in a very readily inflammable condition and Gandhi might very easily put the match to the fire. I am discussing the matter with the Magistrate to-day.

[No. 11.]

*Telegram No. 1584, dated Bankipore, 12 April, 1917, from W. Sealy, Bihar Special Branch, to Under-Secretary to Government of Bihar and Orissa, Political Department, Ranchi.*¹

Please refer S. B. letter 1486 of 11 April, 1916² and last line paragraph 401 Secret Abstract 1916.³ Individual⁴ has gone to Muzaffarpur and intends visiting Champaran. Superintendent of Police, Champaran, writes his presence there most undesirable and likely cause trouble. Am writing to Superintendent to say that no action should be taken against individual without approval of Government, which district officer should obtain direct...

[No. 12.]

*Letter No. 1590-S.B., dated Bankipore, 12 April, 1917, from W. Sealy, Special Assistant to D. I.-G., Crime and Railway, Bihar Special Branch, to C. Marshman, Superintendent of Police, Champaran.*⁵

My Dear Marsham,

Your letter of the 10th regarding Gandhi⁶. We quite agree with you that his mere presence in Champaran is most undesirable. Unfortunately this gentleman has in the past been allowed to speak pretty freely in other provinces on the question of indentured labour for the abolition of which he is a champion. He is not on

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

² Vide No. 7 *ante*.

³ Vide No. 5 *ante*.

⁴ Refers to Mahatma Gandhi.

Mahatma Gandhi arrived at Bankipur on 10 April, 1917 and proceeded to Muzaffarpur on the 11th, the day following (*See* No. 27 below).

⁵ Political (Special) Department, file No. 1571 of 1917.

⁶ Vide No. 10 *ante*.

any list of agitators. ...I have wired to the Under-Secretary, Political, saying that this man's visit is reported by you to be the most undesirable and likely to cause trouble and that I have communicated with you recommending that Government be consulted before any action is taken against the man. He has a biggish following and one needs to be very careful in dealing with men of his notoriety.

As for action, the best course is for the District Magistrate to call him and talk to him and warn him that if his visit results in any way in trouble, action will be taken against him and that he should notify the time and place of any meeting at which he intends to speak. To such meetings two responsible police officers should be sent to record the proceedings and speeches. He may also be warned that apart from public meetings it is quite possible to stir up trouble in his private relations with people he meets and that though we do not in the least credit him with any desire to create trouble, he should realize that it is not always possible to foresee what effect one's utterances may have on people who are already under the impression that they have grievances, etc.

If Gandhi does anything after this warning, which of course the District Officer will report to Government, he can be proceeded against most suitably by an eviction order under rule 3, Defence of India (Consolidation) Rules, but as I said before in dealing with men like Gandhi one has to be careful. ...

[No. 13.]

*Letter, dated Muzaffarpur, 12 April 1917, from M. K. Gandhi to L. F. Morshead, Commissioner, Tirhut Division.*¹

Dear Sir,

Having heard a great deal about the condition of the Indians working in connection with Indigo plantation, I have arrived here to ascertain so far as is possible for myself the true position. I would like to do my work with the cognizance and even co-operation, if I can secure it, of the local administration. I shall be obliged if you will kindly grant me an interview so that I may place before you the object of my inquiry and learn whether I may receive any assistance from the local administration in furtherance of my work.

I am,
Yours truly,
M. K. Gandhi.

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