

and made statements before my colleagues at Motihari. I may say that several men have come forward who have corroborated Lakhan Rai's statement as to the uprooting and removal of crops. I shall be obliged if you will be good enough to let me know whether there is any truth in the statements made.

Yours faithfully,
M.K. GANDHI.

[No. 99.]

*Memo. No. S.C. 17-9-4, dated 25 May, 1917, from Major R.J. Malet, General Staff Officer, Commanding Presidency Brigade, Calcutta, to the Officer Commanding, Dinapore.*¹

Mr. Gandhi has been touring the Champaran District, making enquiries, into the so-called grievances of the *raiyats*. The district is apparently in an unsettled state and there is a possibility that military assistance might be required from Dinapore. The General Officer Commanding directs me to request that you will get into touch with the civil authorities, *i.e.*, the Commissioner of Tirhut and also Colonel Hickley, Commandant, the Bihar Light Horse, Muzaffarpur. If the situation indicates it, you should make arrangements, without creating alarm to render any assistance required.

[No. 100.]

*Lt. Governor's minute, dated 25 May, 1917, on Champaran situation.*²

I have discussed with both Hon'ble Members, and we have decided that, whatever may be the decision in regard to a Commission, Mr. Gandhi should be asked to come to Ranchi arriving on 2nd June. The letter may say that Government wish to discuss the situation arising out of the report and the way in which his recommendations have been dealt with. Also news have been received of the burning of Dhokraha Cutchery where he has just been making inquiries, and it has become necessary to consider very seriously the question of his continued presence in the Champaran district.

I place below some rough notes by Sir E. Levinge³ on the subject of a Commission should it be decided to convene one.

E.A.G.(AIT),
25-5-1917.

¹. *Ibid.* A copy of this Memo. was forwarded to Chief Secretary, Government of Bihar and Orissa, requesting him to express his opinion.

². *Ibid.*

³. E.V. Levinge, Member, Executive Council, Government of Bihar and Orissa.

Note by the Hon'ble Sir E.V. Levinge.

I. *Terms of reference.*—The Committee will be asked—

(1) To enquire into the strained relations existing between landlords and tenants in the Champaran district ;

(2) To examine the evidence, oral and documentary, available on the subject, supplementing it by such further enquiry including the taking of additional evidence, as the committee may consider necessary and desirable; and

(3) To suggest to Government remedies for any abuses found to exist, and generally the action to be taken dealing with the situation in the future.

II. *Date of meeting.*—First November, 1917, because—

(a) There is a mass of evidence scattered over the offices of Government, the Board, Commissioner, Collector and Subdivisional Officers and also in the Bengal Secretariat which will have to be looked up, edited and collected in a form suitable to be placed before the Committee, there will also be a considerable amount of printing involved. All this ought to be done before the Committee meets otherwise there will be much waste of the time of the Committee and of Government money.

(b) The above will take 2 or 3 months and an officer will probably have to be placed on special duty for the purpose.

(c) The rainy season is an inconvenient time for the Committee to work. It will be very uncomfortable for the members as there is no proper accommodation at Bettiah or Motihari. Touring will be exceedingly difficult. Inspection bungalows are very few. The area in the north, the chief field of enquiry, is liable to floods and it will be difficult for the members to go out to villages or for witnesses to come into them. September and October are two very unhealthy months in North Bihar.

(d) The Civil Court vacation lasts from the middle of August to the end of October. It is hardly likely that a High Court Judge would accept the invitation to sit on the Committee before the 1st November. The Puja holidays last from the 18th to 31st October. The 1st November is then a very convenient date for meeting.

The settlement proceedings will be further advanced by them (then ?).

III. *Date by which to report.*—Within six months.

IV. *Public or Private.*—Informal, meetings private, *i.e.*, Press Reporters not allowed and not open to public: witnesses' statements to be kept confidential, if they so desire. No pleaders. Access to confidential papers with consent of Government under guarantee of secrecy.

V. *Pay of non-official members.*—Rs. 2,000-travelling allowance at first class rates.

[No. 101.]

*Letter, dated Motihari, 25 May, 1917, from M.K. Gandhi to W.B. Heycock, District Magistrate, Champaran, and the latter's reply.*¹

Dear Mr. Heycock,

I have just now before me men from Ramsingh Chhatauni who tell me that they were beaten by Mr. Irwin on Sunday night. They say there are men two who saw an assault committed on a third man and themselves by the factory men.

Another man tells me that over fifty *bighas* of their own land was taken away from them by the *kothi* in exchange for some other land for which they did not then care and do not now care.

If these statements are true, they are serious. As there appears to be some tension, I want as far as is possible to avoid for a little time having to go to the *Dehats*. But I feel however that I should visit Chhatauni this evening. And I shall leave here at 5.30 P.M. precisely unless you desire me to adopt any other course.

Yours truly,
M.K. GANDHI.

Reply.

Dear Mr. Gandhi.

Thank you for your note. I have no wish to advise in this case as I am not aware of the facts. I prefer to leave it to you to do as you think best.

Yours truly,
W.B. HEYCOCK.

¹. Champaran Collector's Confidential file of 1917.