**TNA FO 371/968**

**Casement to Tyrrell**

**19 January 1911**

**FO complaint about Casement response(and Conan Doyle)**

**See NLI 13081-2 for extract of cable message from Sir Edward Grey copied by Casement: “You will no doubt use great discretion in communicating with your correspondents in England your impression of the Putumayo as you were deputed by Secretary of State to report to him.”**

**Marked received on 20 or 29 November 1910.**

Private

110 Philbeach Gardens

Earl's Court S.W.

19 January 1911

[Seen by Mr. Spicer

& ansd Jan 21. 1911]

My dear Tyrell,

Several friends have sent me cuttings from the press of 21 October last giving accounts of a meeting at the City Temple held on 20 Oct. in support of the Morel testimonial at which I and A. Conan Doyle spoke. As reported, Sir A.C. Doyle's speech constitutes a somewhat serious reflection upon me - as an official I mean.

He is reported to have said that “Casement when out on the Congo investigating sent a message to Morel and told him to chuck up everything. etc. etc.” That statement is quite wrong.

When I was Consul on the Congo I did not know Morel. I sent no message at any time from the Congo; and I never met him, nor corresponded with him directly until after I came back from the Congo in Decr. 1903. Then I met him but with the prior sanction of Farnall. Many men wanted to meet me then. I could not go to my club owing to Reuters and the Press Association man trying to interview me and I asked Farnell what I should do in these circumstances.

Morel also sought to see me, and his first letter to me (the first communication I ever got from him) shows that it was not I but your own people in the FO who authorised his communication and brought us first together.

It begins “At last I am told I may write to you” and the subsequent meeting between us was the outcome of Farnell's approval and sanction.

Farnell said that I must see some of the people - that I could not “shut myself up in a tower of brass”, and he spoke in such high terms of Morel that I looked forward with pleasure to

meeting him. I asked him to visit me at Chester Square where I was then staying. Nothing was said to Morel that I should not rightly have said under the circumstances and I told Farnell and

probably others at the F.O. of what had passed between us.

My subsequent meetings with Morel, and particularly the one in Ireland that Sir A.C. Doyle referred to in most dramatic fashion were friendly personal interviews - and that meeting took place after my Report was a public document.

It did not take place in a “country inn” at all - & there was no “planking” money down on the table as related to Sir A.C. Doyle's audience.

I gave money to aid the cause of Congo Reform as I was quite entitled to do, on condition that my name was withheld – which had been faithfully observed by Morel.

Subsequent help that I gave to the C.R.A. was given at a time when I was entirely free - for on 1st January 1905 I was off the active list at my own request, being seconded with no pay until I returned to duty to go to Santos in July or August 1906.

These remarks on Doyle's inaccurate speech, which of itself I should not have thought it necessary to draw your attention to, are due to a telegram I received from the F.O. while at Iquitos which from its date (22 October at Para) and the purport of its reproof to me I rightly or wrongly now attribute to the City Temple meeting and the press reports of the speech referred to.

Of course I may be wrong and you may have had legitimate grounds of complaint against me or for harbouring suspicions of me to account for an official message which seemed to imply both.

If so perhaps you would not mind letting me know privately what these were.

They may have no better foundation than Conan Doyle's speech, or I may have sinned, more or less unwittingly, and it would be only kind to let me know when, where and how so that I may guide myself more discretely.

Or it may be, and possibly is due to the fact that you probably all know now how much I loathe “discretion”, and how infinitely I prefer being “indiscreet”, and that feared I might carry this dangerous and irresponsible quality too far.

If so - if that was all I quite forgive you, but your fears were premature!

When may I hope to find you at F.O.? I want, if possible, to go to Ireland end of next week, and am now very busy but always at your orders

Yours sincerely

Roger Casement