

85, Lodi Estate
New Delhi - 3
February 19, 1963

My dear Rajaji,

I have been thinking of writing to you for the last two days, ever since I heard of the decision to hold all the bye-elections that have been pending for the last several months. I understand there are six bye-elections to the Lok Sabha and twenty-nine to the various State Assemblies as a result of the decision not to hold them during the emergency, they will now take place more or less at the same time. I believe instructions have gone from the Election Commission to the Election officers of the various State Governments to make arrangements for polling in the second week of April. The preliminaries, of course, will come earlier in the first half of March.

The point I would submit to you for your consideration is whether this in a sense will not be a miniature general election. It occurs to me that if you can take the initiative and make a public statement in the first place appealing to all non-Congress Groups to agree on a single candidate wherever possible to fight the Congress nominee you will get on the whole the most satisfactory results.

It will be necessary, in my view, for you to reach an electoral understanding with the P.S.P., the Jana Sangh, the D.M.K. — in fact all but the Congress and the Communist parties. You adopted this procedure in getting Prof. Ranga into the Lok Sabha last year.

I think the bye-elections afford an opportunity for testing the soundness of the Congress Government's policies both at the Centre and in the States.

With warmest regards,

Yours affectionately,

sd. B. Shiva Rao

(true copy)