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CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The Central Parliamentary Board and National Executive of the Party met in New Delhi on February 16. Those present included:

Mr. Lakshman Singh of Dungarpur, Mr. B. P. Singh, Dr. R. C. Cooper, Mr. Dahyabhai V. Patel, Mr. H. M. Patel, Mr. J. Mohammed Imam, Mr. S. S. Mariswamy, Mr. Loknath Mishra, Mrs. Kailash Rekhi, Mr. T. Krishnamma Chowdhury, Mr. G. Hanumantha Rao, Mr. K. Sundaram, Sardar Ram Singh, Mr. Lobo Prabhu, Mr. C. C. Desai and Mr. N. Dandeker.

CENTRAL PARLIAMENTARY BOARD

Party Performance in Mid-Term Elections

The Central Parliamentary Board reviewed the Party's performance in the recent mid-term elections in West Bengal, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Punjab. However, in the absence of adequate data the Board felt it would be premature at this stage to make a considered assessment of the circumstances leading to the disappointing performance of the Party's candidates. It therefore decided to undertake this after obtaining full data, reports and comments from the concerned State Units of the Party.

The following successful candidates were congratulated by the Board:

Bihar

Mr. Yashwant Kumar Choudhary — Dalsinghsarai
Mr. Shatrumardhan Shahi — Lauriya
Mr. Tej Narain Yadav — Baheri

Punjab

Sardar Basant Singh — Dakala

Uttar Pradesh

Mr. Bhanu Pratap Singh — Bhanwapur
Mr. Munshi Lal Chamar — Karhal (R)
Mr. A. G. Hashmi — Sadullanagar
Mr. Ram Charan — Bah (R)
Mr. Ahmedulla Khan — Thakurdwara

Attitude to Ministry-Making

Meanwhile, the Board decided that the elected legislators of the Party should in general support all efforts to establish stable governments in Bihar, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh provided that such governments did not include the SSP or the Communists. If invited to join in a coalition government, the Party's Groups should first obtain the approval of the Central Parliamentary Board before responding to such invitations.

Negotiations with the Jan Sangh*

The recent infructuous negotiations with the Jan Sangh were discussed in great detail. The General Secretary after reporting on the circumstances that had led to these talks which ended in complete failure said that in view of inaccurate press reports and un-

* The National Executive also discussed this matter and its discussions and decision were identical.

desirable speculation concerning the talks he had issued a Press Statement on 4th January, putting the whole matter objectively and in proper focus, viz.,

- (a) That the discussions were concerned primarily with evolving electoral understandings between the two Parties in connection with the then ensuing Mid-Term Elections in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh;
- (b) That a further objective was to evolve, if possible, a working arrangement whereby the Parliamentary Groups of the two Parties could henceforth sit together as one combined Opposition Group in the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha;
- (c) That there was no question of any merger of the two Parties, whether within or outside Parliament; and
- (d) That since the talks concerning electoral understandings were unsuccessful, all further discussion on other matters were discontinued because of the pre-occupation of all parties with the mid-term elections.

The General Secretary also referred to certain statements concerning national integration made in a long Press interview by the head of the R.S.S., Mr. Golwalkar, wherein he had urged the need for all religious minorities to accept Hinduism. He had also stressed that the division of Hindu Society into four major castes (*varnas*) was not by occupation or by their qualities but by birth, resulting from their *Karma* in their previous lives. This had naturally provoked the wrath of all right thinking persons, parties and groups. The General Secretary added that since the Jan Sangh was the political arm of the R.S.S., these views of Mr. Golwalkar were of great significance. The Board considered all aspects of the matter and reiterated the National Executive's decision (taken at Cochin in January 1968) not to undertake any further negotiations with the Jan Sangh except in regard to electoral adjustments and mutual support in elections to the Rajya Sabha and Vidhan Parishads.

Issues Before Parliament

Considering various issues that were likely to come up before the Budget Session of Parliament, the Board decided that the Party's Group in Parliament should oppose the proposed Bills to replace the Bonus and Customs Ordinance.

As readers are aware, the Party's Group in the Lok Sabha did not support the motion of no-confidence moved by certain Opposition Parties in Parliament. This was in pursuance of a decision to this effect by the Board.

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE

Annadurai Mourned

The Executive mourned the death of Mr. C. N. Annadurai, the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister and Mr. Ramaswamy Naidu, Swatantra MLA also of Tamil Nadu.

Party Elections

The following decisions were taken:—

- (a) While the last date for renewal of membership was March 31, 1969 (as prescribed in the Party's Constitution), the last date for enrolment of new Workers and Life Workers would be August 31, 1969. The General Secretary was authorised to make consequential adjustments in the time-table for Party elections so as to conclude them by December 31, 1969.
- (b) The General Secretary was authorised to settle the procedure for Party elections in consonance with previous procedures but with necessary changes in the light of
 - (i) Amendments to the Constitution effected at the Fifth National Convention in Bhubaneswar,
 - (ii) Difficulties experienced during the Party elections held in 1967.

Disciplinary Action

The National Executive expelled Mr. Raghubir Singh (ex-MLA of Uttar Pradesh) for gross indiscipline and disloyalty to the Party, he having defected from the Party on the eve of the mid-term elections though he had applied and been nominated as the Party's candidate. The Executive also confirmed the expulsion of Mr. N. Dokania (ex-MLA of Bihar) for identical reasons.

Resolutions

The following resolutions were unanimously adopted after discussion (Texts attached — see Annexure):—

- (i) The disturbances in Telengana,
- (ii) Abolition of Food Zones,
- (iii) Proposal to levy Agricultural Income-Tax,
- (iv) Proposed monopolisation of Imports of Industrial Raw Materials through the State Trading Corporation,
- (v) Famine conditions in various parts of the country,
- (vi) Mob violence in Bombay city.

In Memoriam

In the history of Tamil Nadu a chapter has been closed with the death of Mr. C. N. Annadurai, its Chief Minister. More than the leader of a political party he symbolised a way of life. He was the tribune of the people and that was his distinctive quality and contribution to politics. In broadening the base of democracy he made a valuable contribution to the flowering of the Indian Republic.

Rajaji, when he heard of the demise of Mr. Annadurai said: "I saw Shri Annadurai on the evening of Saturday and returned much depressed. My mind turned naturally to prayer which is the last resort when human beings are in distress. On Sunday, however, good news came and raised great hopes of recovery but I was roused from bed after midnight to be told the old truth: that in the midst of life we are in death. Annadurai's followers not only followed him but loved him. It is this capacity for attracting the affection of people that makes leaders. Everyone knows how grieved I am and why."

Prof. N. G. Ranga said "the toiling masses and the people who are striving to lift themselves out of this stranglehold of social and caste backwardness have lost one of their greatest champions in the death of Mr. Annadurai."

The Swatantra Newsletter records its profound grief and conveys its heartfelt sympathies to Mr. Annadurai's family.

As Rajaji observed that in the midst of life we are in death, we have also to record here with sorrow our grief on the sad demise of Mr. Ramaswamy Naidu, M.L.A., Madras, Mr. A. Trivedi, M.L.A., Gujarat, and Dr. K. C. Baghel, M.P. — all Swatantra legislators. The *Swatantra Newsletter* offers its deep-felt condolences to the members of the bereaved families.

As we go to the Press we have learnt with deep sorrow about the passing away of Sir Homi Mody, one of the founders of our Party.

FOCUS ON ORISSA

CM INAUGURATES REFRACTORY BRICK PRODUCTION

Mr. R. N. Singh Deo, Chief Minister, inaugurated on January 28, the production of the first basic brick factory plant of Orissa Cement Ltd., at Rajgangpur. Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Singh Deo expressed gratification over the fact that the industries concerned were saving over Rs. 2 crores per annum in foreign exchange through import substitution of refractory bricks in the country. He said that while the State Government desired to utilise the maximum raw materials available within the country some quantity was bound to be exported for earning foreign exchange. This was specially with reference to chromite which forms the raw material for basic bricks.

BIMLAGARH-TALCHER RAIL LINK

Addressing workers of the Utkal Machinery Ltd., at Kansabahal on January 29, Mr. R. N. Singh Deo, Chief Minister, emphasized the need for the rail link between Bimlagarh and Talcher for the economic development of the Adivasi population of both Orissa and Bihar.

He formally inaugurated the new industrial housing colony consisting of 100 units. Expressing his satisfaction over the working of the Undertaking, Mr. Singh Deo said: "Along with industrialisation, socio-economic problems are bound to crop up which would have to be tackled jointly by industrial undertakings and the Government." He said that the State Government would consider in all seriousness about these and other problems that stood in the way of a more smooth functioning.

"SICK" PILOT PROJECTS

The Orissa Government would willingly entrust the management of "sick" pilot project industrial units to private entrepreneurs if they came forward, said Mr. Harihar Patel, Minister for Industry and Commerce, Orissa, on February 1, while inaugurating the production at the Orissa Concrete Products. He said that out of the 40 pilot project industrial units, 14 had been liquidated before the present Government assumed office. Of the rest, only a few were running reasonably while others were facing closure. In the pilot project scheme the Government provided 90% of the capital,

with the private entrepreneur bearing the rest and becoming the Managing Director. The main thing, Mr. Patel said, was to run these projects efficiently and without any loss.

ORISSA OFFERS INCENTIVES TO ENTREPRENEURS

(Reproduced below is a report that appeared in the "Economic Times" of 28 February.)

The Orissa Government has offered several concessions to industrialists in a bid to speed up the industrialisation of the State.

Industrial areas, such as Rourkela, Paradip and Sunabeda, will be developed by giving land, power, water and other facilities to industrialists on liberal terms. A site of 843 acres has already been earmarked in Rourkela. Steps to make it an industrial estate are in progress.

The Orissa Government has also plans to give financial assistance to entrepreneurs in the form of share capital, loans and Government guarantees etc. Several applications for investment in share capital have been received by the State Government.

The State Government has also decided to contribute upto 50 per cent to the cost of feasibility study and analysis and preparation of the project reports of new industrial units.

Raw Materials

Subsidy on account of sale tax and purchase tax on industrial raw materials for the first years of production will be made for the new industrial undertakings which will be set up in the State.

Industries will also be exempted from the payment of octroi duty on raw materials and machinery and power will be charged at 12½ per cent less than the usual rates. To encourage small industries, provision has been made to provide loans from the State Financial Corporation.

The Orissa Government is contemplating the setting up of a Paradip Development Authority and similar development authorities for Rourkela and other industrial areas in the State. Five more industrial estates will be established at Jagatpur, Paradip, Alcher and Sunabeda, where the aero-engine factory has come up, and at Rourkela. The existing industrial estates at Cuttack and Rourkela will also be expanded by the end of the current year.

The Orissa Government attaches great importance to adequate investments in the Central and private sectors. Currently it is pressing the Union Government to set up a local-based fertiliser plant at Talcher at a cost of Rs. 70 crores and another fertiliser plant at Paradip at a cost of Rs. 40 crores.

But the response of the Central Government to these demands is officially stated to be "discouraging". The State Government has, however, decided to continue its efforts at persuading the Centre to take up these projects.

The Orissa Government, it is learnt, is exploring the possibilities of setting up a ferro-vanadium plant in Mayurbhanj district, a chemical complex in Ganjam district and an integrated aluminium plant in south Orissa, besides medium, small and ancillary industries in different parts of the State.

PRIORITY FOR AGRICULTURE

Presiding over the prize distribution ceremony in the third week of February held in connection with the three-day Ganjam district Krushak Mela and the Young Farmers' Association, Mr. Raj Ballav Misra, Minister for Agriculture, Orissa, stated that agriculture should be given priority in India and particularly in Orissa which was purely an agricultural State.

To gear up agriculture, cultivators must be organised to take advantage of the facilities offered by the Government and appealed to all to do their best. Mr. Misra said that efforts must be made for irrigation and supply of manure and technical advice to the cultivators which would help production and stop food imports.

SALANDI BRIDGE OPENED TO TRAFFIC

The 1.026 feet Salandi bridge constructed at a cost of Rs. 30,35,700 at Agarpara was opened on 17th February by Mr. Dayanidi Nayak, PWD Minister, Orissa.

In his address, Mr. Nayak said that for a country to prosper there should be adequate communication facilities. This bridge would not only help in road communication but also facilitate export of forest and agricultural products from the hinterland. "The bridge is a symbol of Balasore's progress", said Mr. Nayak.

The Salandi bridge will reduce the distance between Agarpara and Balasore by 20 miles and benefit 5 lakhs of people. It is designed to serve a catchment area of 2,82,100 acres and discharge 1,25,000 cusecs of water for irrigation purposes.

The Absence of a Public Philosophy

The absence of a public philosophy giving shape and direction to national life since Independence was described by Mr. M. R. Masani, M.P., as a basic cause of the drift in Government policies and national affairs and the decay in the country's politi-

cal life which was creating a vacuum of public confidence endangering India's democratic Constitution. A short visit to Japan or Israel, he said, brought out this tragic contrast of the lack of a sense of national purpose in India.

He was delivering the Fourth Rajaji Birthday Lecture at the Gokhale Institute of Public Affairs in Bangalore on January 18 on the theme of "Too Much Politics, Too Little Citizenship".

According to Mr. Masani, the gap between India, which had been by and large stagnant during the last twenty years, and other countries in Asia such as Japan, Malaysia, South Korea and the Republic of China in Taiwan was widening. The overall picture was one of self-seeking, petty parochialism, linguistic chauvinism, widespread cynicism, corruption and economic stagnation. In this context, the smug complacency of the Prime Minister at her New Year Day press conference was pathetic and one's embarrassment at reading it was like that of talking to a sick person who is unaware of the doctor's verdict of an incurable disease and who goes on discussing plans for the distant future.

The main task before the country was modernisation in every walk of life without, however, turning our backs on our traditions. The real divide in our national life, said Mr. Masani, is not between "Right" and "Left", which have become meaningless terms, but between liberal and modernist forces on the one hand and obscurantist, chauvinist and totalitarian elements on the other. The recent efforts for a merger of the Swatantra Party and the Jana Sangh are unrealistic and misconceived and are bound to fail because there is very little in common between the liberal and non-denominational way of life for which the Swatantra Party stands and the tenets of the R.S.S. which dominates the Jana Sangh.

Modernisation does not mean trying to catch up with the West by attempting to ape the Industrial Revolution of the 19th Century based on iron and steel and coal. At a time when the United States are entering the post-industrial or "technotronic" society, the only way to catch up with those in the vanguard is to bypass the old industrial revolution by applying the latest advances of technology to agriculture and the processing of raw materials, power, transport and communications on the one hand and to the problems of human organisation and management on the other.

In our political life, the outstanding phenomena were the politicisation of all aspects of life such as the economy, education, language, sports, radio and TV, on the one hand and weak, incompetent and indecisive Governments on the other. It was the concentration of economic and political power in the same hands that was largely responsible for the increasing corruption and demoralisation in our public life which had resulted in people losing faith in almost all parties and politicians. Mr. Masani mentioned that, during a visit earlier this week to U.P. and Bihar in connection with the General Elections there, mis-called 'Mid-term' elections, he found very little interest among the general public. The causes of the bad odour in which politicians found themselves were a general

reluctance to be in Opposition or to be unpopular, putting the party first and lack of discipline.

The situation could be greatly ameliorated if the present governments at the Centre and in the States, which meddled in every aspect of life and everyone else's business, but were weak and ineffective in performing their own obligations to provide law and order, justice, education and the infrastructure, were to be replaced by governments which minded only their own business and which were strong and purposive in their own legitimate spheres. Strong Government, said Mr. Masani, should not be mixed up with Big Government, which was quite different.

While it was true that politicians in their selfishness and petty-mindedness might be taking the country to ruin, the responsibility of the individual citizens for the current state of affairs should not be minimised. There were many among the educated people in India who cast the blame for the deplorable state of affairs on "they", meaning those in office. This division of the people into "we" and "they" was a false one. Those in positions of power in a democracy such as ours owe their position to the people who put them there. The daily exercise of vigilance and participation in the processes of democracy was the price to be paid for the maintenance of democratic freedoms. There was need for better communication and greater participation by the common people. Just as a war is too serious a business to be left to the generals, politics is too serious a business to be left to the politician.

In this connection, the classes which had let down the country most were businessmen and the intelligentsia, neither of whom had shown a capacity for citizenship and grassroots or "rice roots" action which was essential to supplement the parliamentary process. While Mr. Masani shared Mr. Jayaprakash Narayan's disgust and disillusionment with parties and politicians and agreed with his recent remarks in Colombo that "most people even in politics in India were getting fed up with politics and there was disenchantment among the people", he found it difficult to go along with Mr. Jayaprakash Narayan in making of non-party democracy a principle or virtue. In a representative government on the scale of this country, it was difficult to have any politics of a purely non-party nature. Mr. Jayaprakash Narayan has still to work out and show the country how his concepts can be implemented in practice in the next two or three years.

While a change in the national character and public morality could only be brought over a period of time by the correct upbringing of the young whether at home or in schools and colleges, there was urgent need of training for citizenship and leadership. Only the totalitarian elements such as the Communists and the R.S.S. were at present providing training for their cadres, while all democratic parties ignored this vital task. The Leslie Sawhny Programme of Training for Democracy was making a modest contribution to meet this need.

Mr. Masani ended on a note of optimism based on the maintenance of a free press, a free opposition and a democratic dialogue and faith in the people. India had valuable assets in a peasantry endowed with robust commonsense and simple faith, an abundant work force which needed to be given the right leader-

ship, a small and growing group of professional managers and executives with the necessary knowhow, and Armed Forces that were brave and loyal. He had no doubt that the patriotism and intelligence of the people would help to pull India out of the present morass.

Stable Governments — Swatantra Policy

The following press statement was issued by the General Secretary, Mr. N. Dandeker on March 3, 1969, spelling out the Party's policy in regard to the formation of coalition governments in some States in North India in the context of the situation prevailing in the legislatures of those States where no single Party has an absolute majority:

"In the situation prevailing in the Legislatures of some of the States in North India, where no single Party has an absolute majority, the Swatantra Party holds the view that all efforts to form *stable non-Communist non-Congress coalition governments* should be supported; and that where stable governments cannot be formed by non-Congress Parties without Communist support, even Congress-led coalitions should be supported.

"The Congress Party having been returned to the Bihar State Legislature as the largest single Party, the Swatantra Party recognises the claim of the Congress to endeavour to form a Government in Bihar. If such a Government is formed, it would necessarily have to be a coalition consisting of several Parties and Groups besides the Congress Party.

"While not wishing to participate in such a coalition with the Congress, especially if it took defectors from other Parties into the coalition, the Swatantra Party would not oppose it merely for the sake of opposition.

"But it would be a mistake to suppose that the Swatantra Party would support such a Government merely for the sake of stability. Only that Government would be deserving of support, even in the name of stability, which would promote the well-being of the common man. And the principal common man in Bihar is the peasant.

"Therefore, the Swatantra Party would retain its

independence of action to judge a Congress-led Government by its attitude towards the peasants. It would support a Congress-led Coalition Government only so long as it did not seek the support of the Communists and provided it gave the assurance that it would not levy any direct taxes on the peasants, nor would resort to compulsory procurement of food grains.

"Some of the other major objectives of the Swatantra Party in supporting such a Government would be:

- (1) Removal of the existing zonal barriers on the movement of foodgrains and the restoration of free trade in foodgrains.
- (2) Abolition of land revenue on the pattern of the Orissa Government.
- (3) De-nationalisation of the Road Transport.
- (4) Implementation of a Crash Programme for constructing Roads.
- (5) Development of Agro-Industries in the rural areas.
- (6) Simplification of and relief in the present tax structure in urban areas, especially in regard to sales-tax.
- (7) Measures for the amelioration of the lot of the Harijans, Girijans and other backward classes.
- (8) Fair deal for labour.
- (9) Abolition of "minimum guarantee" for off-take of electricity used for agricultural purposes and by small scale industries."

The Fourth Plan

MR. N. DANDEKER, M.P.

Speaking under the auspices of the Forum of Free Enterprise in Bangalore on 19th December, Mr. N. Dandeker, General Secretary, expressed grave doubts about achieving the targets set by the Planning Commission.

He was critical of the social and economic objectives of the draft Plan and said that planning for a capacity which cannot sustain has not only brought about dis-

tortion but diversion of resources from directions required. This had resulted in merciless taxation and deficit financing.

Referring to the series of meetings held among State Chief Ministers to find resources to meet the targets, Mr. Dandeker said that any number of such meetings would not bring them nearer the solution. "The only silver lining is that they will go on arguing, they will neither find resources nor will there be a Fourth Plan at this rate", he added.

Continuing, he said that it was only in agriculture that there was any scope for the prosperity of the country and by putting greater inputs than what was being done now, a break-through could be achieved. Unfortunately, there had been over investment in public sector undertakings.

The meeting was presided over by Mr. B. V. Narayana Reddy.

MR. M. R. MASANI, M.P.

The Fourth plan will also fail like the Second and Third declared Mr. M. R. Masani, M.P., while delivering the concluding lecture on 9th February in the series on the approach and objectives of the Fourth plan sponsored by the Ahmedabad Management Association at Ahmedabad.

"It will be a wishful thinking to hope for economic advancement without political change", remarked Mr. Masani. He said that the Planning Commission should be dissolved, politicians sent home and the country be saved from the disaster of defective plan-

ning. He squarely placed the blame on the planners for their failure to understand human nature and utilise properly resources to meet the country's needs.

Heavy Loss

According to Mr. Masani the share of public sector undertakings had risen from 9% in the 1st plan to 57% in the 4th plan. Inefficiency in these units caused a loss worth crores of rupees, he said.

Another defect in planning, Mr. Masani pointed out, was the lopsided order of priorities. Road building, fertilisers and agriculture were neglected and unproductive programmes like engineering were accorded preference. Added to this were controls, autocracy and excessive taxation.

Quoting statistics to prove his allegation about the planners consistently neglecting agriculture, Mr. Masani said that in the 3rd plan agriculture was allotted 24.4% while 20.09% was allotted for industry. In the annual plan of 1967-68 the allotment to agriculture was 23.18% and to industry 23.16%.

Election Petitions

Gujarat

In a decision delivered on November 4, the Supreme Court dismissed the election appeal of Mr. Sutaria against the election of the Swatantra member Mr. N. P. Bhuvadiah to the Gujarat Assembly from the Jamjhodpur Constituency.

But our M. P. Mr. Manubhai Amersey's election to Parliament from Banaskantha was set aside by the Supreme Court. Mr. Amersey has however *not* been disqualified from contesting again.

The Supreme Court upheld on January 23 the election of our member Mr. A. T. Kundiwalla to the Gujarat Assembly from Jamalpur dismissing the appeal of Mr. Karimji Rehmanji Chaipa, the defeated Con-

gress candidate, against the judgment of the High Court dismissing his petition.

Andhra

The Andhra Pradesh High Court in a decision delivered on January 3, ordered the issue of a writ prohibiting the Election Commission from proceeding further with its notice issued to Prof. Ranga concerning the account of his election expenses.

Their Lordship held that "it is only when the facts, as alleged, show that a disqualification has arisen the need for an enquiry into the truth or otherwise of the same, would arise and not otherwise, for that would be an enquiry without purpose".

Panchayat and Municipal Elections

Gujarat

Mr. Ambubhai Chimanbhai, Swatantra member, was elected to the Executive Committee of the Dharampur Taluka Panchayat defeating his Congress rival, Mr. K. Janakbhai by 16 votes.

Madras

In the recently held Madras Municipal Corporation elections, the Swatantra Party captured three seats.

Orissa

In the results declared during the first week of February, the Swatantra Party secured 7 seats in the 17-member Balangir Municipal Council. Out of the seven sitting councillors, Mr. B. S. Joshi, Mr. B. Mishra, ex-Vice-Chairman of the Municipality and Mr. P. Bhoi,

all Swatantra members, were re-elected to the new Council. However, our Mr. N. C. Misra, General Secretary of the Balangir district unit was defeated by an independent candidate.

In the N.A.C. election of Titilagarh, the Party won eight seats, Congress two, and one by a dissident Congress candidate.

12 Independents supported by the Swatantra Party won in the Rajgangpur N.A.C. election, the P.S.P. bagging three seats and the Jharkhand one.

The coalition partners, the Swatantra Party and Jana Congress secured five seats each out of a total of 17 in the elections held recently at Baripada to the Municipal Council.

The Party has secured two seats in the Civic elections held in Balasore.

Famine & Drought Situation

After an on-the-spot study of the cyclone affected areas of Srikakulam district in Andhra Pradesh, Prof. N. G. Ranga, President, submitted a detailed report to Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. In his report Prof. Ranga spelt out in clear and unmistakable terms the sufferings that were caused to the people by the cyclone which "had to be seen to be believed." Prof. Ranga in his Report complained that for as many as ten days, the State authorities remained indifferent to the situation which, he characterised as a criminal neglect. According to him, the total loss was about

Rs. 20 crores and this large-scale destruction in effect would mean no income or employment to the people of this area for the next seven to ten years.

In her reply to Prof. Ranga, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi said that she was very distressed to hear and that she was informing Mr. Jagjivan Ram, Minister for Food and Agriculture, to get in touch with the State authorities and that she was immediately sending a sum of Rs. 10,000 to the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh from the Prime Minister's National Relief Fund.

The Indecisive Centre

In a chat with newsmen on January 14, Mr. C. C. Desai, Swatantra M.P., cited seven "classical cases of indecision by the Government of India."

The first of these was the delay in the filling of vacancies in the Cabinet relating to very important portfolios like foreign affairs, steel, mines and metals and petroleum and chemicals, which ministerial posts have remained vacant after the resignation of Mr. M. C. Chagla, Dr. Chenna Reddi and Mr. Ashoka Mehta.

Second on Mr. Desai's list was the Narmada Valley project. As there was no possibility of arriving at an understanding the Centre should have attempted to solve it instead shelving it.

Following this was the delay in taking a decision on the Tata Fertiliser project at Mithapur in Gujarat, which was inexplicable.

The next was the Mysore-Maharashtra boundary dispute wherein the Centre in spite of the submission of the report by the Mahajan Commission was delaying a political decision.

The fifth "classical" case was the procrastination as regards the choice of a suitable aircraft to replace the Viscount for Indian Airlines.

The reluctance to go ahead with the Company's Amendment Bill, seeking to impose the ban on Company's donation to political parties was another example of the Cabinet allowing itself to be subjected to pressures within the ruling party.

The last example cited by Mr. Desai was the Government's attitude towards Mr. Nath Pai's Bill on Fundamental Rights.

In this connection we would like to refer to a letter handed over to the Minister for Civil Aviation, Government of India, Dr. Karan Singh, by four M.P's, three of them belonging to the Swatantra Party and one to the Jana Sangh. The letter is signed by Mr. C. C. Desai, Mr. M. K. Mohta and Prof. R. K. Amin, and Mr. M. L. Sondhi of the Jana Sangh. It states that "indecision has become the order of the day and runs right through the entire gamut of the Government resulting in loss of public money." They have referred to the recommendation of the Indian Airlines favouring the purchase of DC-9 aircraft and stated that they could not understand why there was a delay in taking a decision when the entire subject had been subjected to a minute scrutiny by Committee after Committee and authority after authority.

NEWS FROM STATE UNITS

ANDHRA

Srikakulam District Unit

The General Body of the Srikakulam district Swatantra Party, met on 4th February 1969.

Mr. G. Latchanna, President of the State Unit referring to the disturbances in Telengana said that the State Government had "miserably failed" in maintaining law and order in Telengana and in protecting the lives and properties of the people.

The General Body of the district Unit in a resolution thanked the student organisations in Andhra

region especially the Srikakulam district for their peaceful and non-violent behaviour.

Among other things decided at the meeting were:

- (1) A request to the State Government to give up its proposal of reimbursing from out of the Cyclone Relief Fund (Central) Rs. 50 lakhs which was utilised for Ceylone Relief from the Draught Relief Funds;
- (2) Allotment of funds for the Vamsadhra project;
- (3) Explore Construction of drinking water wells in the district.

The meeting by a separate resolution mourned the death of Mr. C. N. Annadurai, Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu and conveyed its condolences to the members of the family.

The State Executive Meets

The Executive Committee of the State Unit met at Nellore on 7th February. It demanded the resignation of the State Chief Minister, Mr. Brahmananda Reddi, for his failure to maintain law and order during the recent agitation. It demanded the appointment of a Commission with an Advocate and two others from the ruling Party and the Opposition to go into the recent disturbances and fix the responsibility for acts of "deliberate commission and omission and lapses in the implementation of the Telangana safeguards." It was the opinion of the Executive that the Commission should go into the motivation for provoking violence and suggest measures to bring about confidence among the people of both Telangana and Andhra regions.

BOMBAY

Minimum Levy on Power Unjustified

In a statement issued on 17th January, Dr R. C. Cooper, Vice-President, Bombay Regional unit, said that there was no justification for the levy of minimum charges on consumers of electricity by the B.E.S.T. It was indeed surprising, he said, that the minimum charges should be levied when there was a severe shortage of electricity.

End Food Rationing

Party workers in Bombay collected on 19th January more than 20,000 signatures on a memorandum demanding that the Maharashtra Government scrap food rationing. The campaign is a sequel to the Civic Grievances Bureau's investigations on the desirability of ending food rationing and making food grains available to people through fair price shops.

India Today

At a public meeting organised by the Bombay Regional Unit on 4th February Mr. M. R. Masani, Mr. Piloo Mody and Mr. N. Dandeker presented a bleak picture of India that is seen today. The blame was squarely laid on the ruling party at the Centre, self-seeking politicians and the educated classes who had become indifferent to politics.

According to Mr. Masani, the main evil was too much meddling by the Government and politicians in every aspect of national life. For instance, the universities had become a battle ground for politicians, the medium of education their football to kick around.

Mr. Piloo Mody said that if the people were not prepared to do anything the country would be ruled by the butcher, the bartender and the boot-legger.

Mr. Dandeker, following in the same vein said that

there were too many arm-chair politicians who were interested in politics but not sufficiently interested to do something about it.

The meeting was presided over by Prof. P. J. Shroff, Vice-President, Bombay Regional Unit.

Luggage Levy

In a press statement issued on February 7, Mr. P. S. Koppiker, General Secretary, Bombay Region, said that it was rather intriguing that the Railway Board should think of levying an increase in the luggage charges even before Parliament got a chance to discuss it. The Party Unit has sent a telegram to the Prime Minister condemning the increase.

During the Riot-hit Days

The Party Unit in Matunga chartered trucks to distribute milk to the residents during the days when the city of Bombay was riot-torn. In a statement issued on 10th February, Mr. Nana Chudasama, Joint Secretary of the Bombay Regional Unit stated that the Party had organised an Emergency Assistance Service for those who may be handicapped due to the riots in Bombay. Mr. Chudasama expressed his grief on the ugly turn taken by the border agitation and said that democratic methods alone must be the path for solving issues.

GUJARAT

Surat District Unit

At a meeting on January 29, of the Surat District Unit, Mr. H. M. Patel, President of the State Unit and Mr. Bhailalbhai Patel accepted the resignations of Mr. Dhirubhai Desai, President of the Surat District Unit, Mr. Bapubhai Desai, Vice-President and Mr. Champaklal Shah, Associate Secretary. In their places Dr. Mahendra Shah, Mr. B. Patolawalla and Mr. Jagdish Gandhi were elected. It was decided at the meeting to maintain the district headquarters at Vyara and the city unit office at Gujarat.

The State Council Meets

The State Council which met on 2nd February passed a resolution demanding that the Gujarat Government should immediately undertake the Narmada Project according to the Khosla Commission without waiting for further negotiations or discussions. Mr. Bhailalbhai Patel who moved the resolution recalled the Chief Minister's assurance in the Gujarat Legislative Assembly on February 1, 1968, according to which he (the Chief Minister) and his colleagues were prepared to resign if that would solve the problem. Mr. Patel said that if the State Government was not able to go ahead with the project, the Chief Minister should resign. By another resolution, the Council demanded an impartial inquiry into the incident at Titara Flag Station, where a train ran over the satyagrahis and killed one of them. The Council

indicted the State Government for its failure to report effectively to the Union Government the urgency of projects like the Mithapur Fertiliser and Petro-Chemical Complex, the Co-operative Fertiliser Factory, the Pig-Iron Factory at Bhavnagar etc.

ORISSA

Rejoinder to Mr. B. Patnaik

In a rejoinder to Mr. Biju Patnaik's statement on the Khanna Commission's findings, Mr. K. M. Panigrahi, General Secretary of the Orissa State Unit, said that the report had clearly established the charges of impropriety and abuse of power against the former Chief Minister and two of his colleagues.

"I would ask Mr. Patnaik to reread carefully the findings of the Khanna Commission on the matter of taking over the low shaft furnace plant at Barbil," said Mr. Panigrahi. Continuing, he said, "these findings clearly establish the magnitude of corruption." According to Mr. Panigrahi the total amount received by Mr. Patnaik and his colleagues and spent for Kalinga Iron Works were Rs. 9.93 crores. "Let him come forward to pay the amount within a month without consideration for interest so that it shall surely save the Government from follow-up actions in the form of litigation or otherwise", said Mr. Panigrahi.

Sundergarh District Unit

The first annual conference of the Sundergarh district unit was inaugurated on January 29 at Rajgangpur by Mr. R. N. Singh Deo, President of the State Unit. Among the various resolutions passed were:

- (1) Liberalisation of nationalised bus routes giving scope to private enterprise;
- (2) The free movement of rice and paddy within the State barring areas falling within five miles of full rationing areas;
- (3) The enforcement of the amended Orissa Commission's Act;
- (4) The gradual enforcement of prohibition in the State.

Sambalpur District Unit

The two-day district Swatantra Party Convention of Sambalpur met on February 15th and 16th. Among the various resolutions passed were:

- (1) Necessary follow-up action against persons found guilty in the Khanna Commission.
- (2) Abolition of the Forest Corporation;
- (3) Commending the State Government's Kendu leaves policy;

The Convention was addressed amongst others by Mr. R. N. Singh Deo, President of the Orissa State Unit, Mr. Harihar Patel, Mr. Murari Prasad Misra, Mr. Raj Ballabh Misra, Mr. K. M. Panigrahi, General Secretary, State Unit, Mr. Tribikram Tripathy, District

Secretary, Mr. Sundermani Patel, M.P., and Mr. D. Deb, M.P.

RAJASTHAN

The State Executive Meets

The meeting of the Executive Committee of the Rajasthan State Unit was held at Jaipur during the 2nd week of February. It criticized the State Government for its failure to tackle the famine situation in the western districts and to find a permanent solution to the recurrence of famine. By another resolution it urged an early publication of the report of the one-man Commission on the March 7th firing in Jaipur. A third resolution demanded that the two impending by-elections in the State should be postponed in view of famine conditions. The executive charged the State Government with misusing Government machinery and relief funds.

Releasing these resolutions Mr. Surendra Tapuriah, M.P., and Vice-President of the State Unit said that the Executive took stock of the political situation in the State and considered the reasons in the slackening of party activities. The Executive resolved to meet again at Jaipur on March 29th.

Poor Famine Handling

Maharani Gayatri Devi of Jaipur after a tour of several famine-affected areas in Rajasthan met the Press and expressed her dissatisfaction with the tardy progress in dealing with the famine situation in Rajasthan. The Maharani said that the Government was tackling the issue in a disorganised and piece-meal manner and if something was not done to arrest this, she feared there might be large-scale starvation of both men and animals.

She said that wherever she went the plight of the people was appalling and the Government's "negligence, apathy and wrong handling" was in evidence. She regretted that in Jaisalmer which had an acute shortage of water only three out of the 59 tube wells were functioning and the rest were lying idle for one reason or another.

Wastage of Funds

According to her, the Government claimed to have incurred an expenditure of Rs. 10 crores on famine relief works. So far all this amount seemed to have gone to waste as some of the roads, newly constructed, have been covered under sand. What is the use of making embankments in an area which gets on an average one inch of rainfall annually?, she asked.

When Prime Minister Indira Gandhi visited Barmer and Jaisalmer in October 1968, the State Government had put up a false show by bringing heaps of grass and opening new fodder camps on the villages along Jaisalmer-Barmer road. As soon as the Prime Minister's car had passed along this route all the "arranged show was dismantled and things have returned to their old state", she added.

from the General Secretary's desk

"WHY SWATANTRA?"

Dear Friend,

The Mid-term elections in North India have come and gone. In West Bengal the Communist dominated "United Front" has come back in great strength, reviving once again memories of Gheraos and Naxalbari. In Bihar the elections have resolved nothing and the unedifying spectacle of post-1967 instability compounded by the "Aya Rams and Gaya Rams" looms large on the horizon. In Uttar Pradesh the prospects for a stable government seem better; but here, too, the story may well be repeated. In Punjab, former foes are now partners in a coalition. For the Congress the Writing on the Wall is clear, namely, that the electorate can no longer be taken for granted; no longer can they hope for steamroller majorities achieved with the help of charismatic personalities.

The Swatantra Party's performance was certainly disappointing. Of 1,127 seats to be contested in all the four States, the Party contested only 121 and returned just nine. Does this mean that the Swatantra Party had better shut shop and disappear from the Indian political scene, at least in North India? I ask this because people have been heard to remark that the Swatantra Party is 'finished', as if we had no other mission, no other objectives except to get into power by the mere counting of heads and by horse-trading for offices and ministerships. If these were Swatantra's aims then we might just as well have not been founded at all.

So let us first take a look at other political parties, the better to understand our own. We have on the left side of the spectrum the Congress, the PSP, the SSP, a host of smaller so-called "left wing" parties, and finally the Communists (both varieties). On the right, we have the Jan Sangh, the Muslim League and Parties of that kind. We are somewhere in the middle. I use the words 'right' and 'left' for identification only as I agree these terms have lost all significant meaning.

Socialism

There is little to choose in the general outlook of the Left Parties ranging from the Congress Party on the one hand and the various other leftist parties, right upto the Naxalite Communists, on the other. They all claim to want to establish "socialism" in this country. None of them cares to define "socialism" in positive terms, with sufficient lucidity so as to be intelligible in clear terms to the ordinary voter. It remains as true today as when Khrushchev said it some years ago that you cannot be a good socialist without being a communist. That indeed is why all these socialist parties,— and

that includes the Congress who advocate socialism but pretend to abhor communism, — do not dare to clarify their various brands of socialism and what precisely differentiates any one of them from the others.

In reality, there is in fact little distinction between the pink socialism of the Congress Party and the red hot communism of the CPI(M). None of the various brands of socialists and communists will hesitate to jettison democracy, — and certainly democratic processes, — when these stand in their way. They will not hesitate to bend the constitution or to amend it to suit their ends; and when even that ceases to serve, none of them will hesitate to jettison fundamental rights or the supremacy of the judiciary until all that remains of our Constitution will be a hollow mockery of what we wrote into it in 1950.

The fact of the matter is that the "democratic socialism" which, at one end, the Congress Party advocates and the communism with "democratic centralism" which, at the other end (more honestly), the communists wish to impose are in the end one and the same thing, namely, a communist society with "democracy" only for the party-in-power. The only difference between them is the speed with which and the manner in which they wish to achieve their goals. The Congress would prefer to get there slowly, like a thief sneaking in at night when everyone is asleep; whereas the professed Socialists wish to achieve it in a hurry; and the Communists by naked force.

Jan Sangh

But what the Jan Sangh has to offer in terms of socio-economic policies and democratic values is anybody's guess. It is a party looking back to the middle ages of Hindu hegemony. Its obscurantism is boundless. It has no use for those professing other religions except, at best, as second class citizens. It seeks to ban cow slaughter throughout India regardless both of local opinion in the various States where it is not now banned and of the awful economic problem which the ban would raise in all States. It favours the complete jettisoning of English and the imposition of Hindi throughout India regardless of consequences, whether in terms of national solidarity or of higher education and learning. It advocates a perpetual state of war with Pakistan until, at least, the part of Kashmir now in that State is forcibly annexed. It insists on the continuance if not intensification of what virtually amounts to colonial rule in the territories of Jammu and Kashmir now part of India. It is plainly a fascist organization backed by a private army whose bosses really dictate its policies; and with this backing it

claims to be the only party capable of disputing the main issue with the Communists at one end and with Pakistan and China at the other.

Swatantra

In this Jungle comprised of undemocratic socialist parties on the one hand, and communal obscurantist fascist parties on the other, the one and only Party which stands out for the democracy our constitution-makers gave us is the Swatantra Party. It believes in the sturdy individualism and free enterprise of the ordinary citizen of this country, based on the liberties and freedoms embodied in the Fundamental Rights originally written into our Constitution. It insists on equality of opportunity for all. It does not advocate *laissez faire*, but free enterprise subject only to the minimum necessary limitations, to be imposed by law, against the excesses of individual enterprise which may sometimes result in exploitation of the underprivileged. Subject only to this limitation it believes that prosperity and growth can only come through the free enterprise of free men, where *the State is for the citizen, not vice versa*.

This has mass appeal. Freedom for agriculture, which means freedom both for the farmer and for the landless workers on land, is something the rural folk understand easily. They know that upon the freedom and prosperity of the farmer depends not only the freedom and prosperity of the landless workers, but also of the entire population of this country including, — what is so often forgotten, — the consumer. The prosperity of the vast majority of the population directly depends upon agricultural prosperity.

Similarly, the Swatantra Party stands for steadily freeing industry and trade from the shackles of controls and permits, licences and quotas, which at present have such a stranglehold on industry, trade, transport, banking and commerce. Those engaged in these productive activities so vital to the well-being of the nation are today the slaves of the party or parties in power and of the bureaucracy which acts under their command. Bribery and corruption, nepotism and favouritism, paying homage and doing *khushamat*, which have become the normal rule of life in this country, cannot promote but only strangle healthy economic and industrial growth. The Swatantra Party would sweep away this obnoxious atmosphere so that the citizen of this country may once again be free to go about his business.

Despite the oft-repeated lie to the contrary, the Swatantra Party believes in planning. But it rejects out of hand the sort of authoritarian planning by Government of everybody's business; it also rejects planning for bankruptcy. These have been the main characteristics of planning in the country for the past eighteen years. The Swatantra Party believes that the Government must first plan its own business. It must be concerned with planning for the provision of an efficient infra-structure of public utilities and services

without which progress is impossible. Law and order; good, efficient and honest administration; roads, railways, post and telecommunication; irrigation and power; transport, harbours and shipping; water supply, health and sanitation; education, especially technical education, scientific research and technological development. These and many other urgent needs remain woefully neglected. Together, they constitute a formidable task of great urgency. The resources to provide these services and utilities are limited in terms of managerial, technological and financial resources. Nevertheless for the Swatantra Party, this is the first task of planning. And all this must be undertaken with the utmost economy, efficiency and expedition, within the available resources.

In other words, *we believe in planning first things first*. Some of these I have indicated above, as also the limitations within which the plans must be devised and executed. Meanwhile, so far as planning for development outside the ambit of this infra-structure is concerned, the role of Government should be to guide and, where necessary, to assist, but *not* to regulate and curb, individual endeavour in a free enterprise economy operating in response to genuine needs represented by market forces. Above all, the central person in the Swatantra Party's view is the individual as a consumer, as a producer and as a political and social being. The State must be his servant, not his master. Political parties must serve him, not exploit him. He must have, not barren meaningless equality, but equality of opportunity to grow to his best stature in a free and competitive world. And the weak must be protected, not pampered. There must be maximum incentive for self-help based on hard work, and least for unproductive parasitism.

Educative Task

While this, in brief, is the philosophy of the Swatantra Party, it is essentially an appeal to reason. As Rajaji said, *our task is at present mainly, if not wholly, educative*. We have no emotional clap-trap to offer, whether in the religious or the economic or in the political field. This imposes the limitation that we must, for some time to come, remain at a competitive disadvantage with the masses, compared with the Congress which has so long enjoyed the monopoly of power and of the patronage that goes with it, or the Socialists and Communists who offer a Utopia based on envy, greed and hatred, or the Jan Sangh and various brands of revived Muslim League who play upon the religious emotions of the ignorant masses by resurrecting obscurantist and outdated doctrines of communal and religious dominance.

Viewing the current scene from a detached standpoint, I cannot help feeling that our experience of the experiments in "United Front" Governments over the past two years has been of considerable value. Firstly, they have demonstrated that the Communists and, I fear, also the SSP are unworthy of being entrusted

with democratic responsibility. Secondly, the Jan Sangh has yet to make a choice between orderly stable democratic government and plain manoeuvring for power backed by agitational chaos. Thirdly, the multi-party scene has come to stay at any rate for some time to come. Fourthly, "polarization" will take time. And finally, until one can see clear signs of two (or perhaps three) polarized parties emerging, the responsibility rests squarely on the Congress to be ready and willing to work in coalition governments. Again and again, one is driven to the Orissa example as the only possible alternative to a chaotic state of affairs. As long as no single party can obtain an absolute majority, sufficiently large to provide a stable government but not so large as to become a monolithic power-corrupted government in the pre-1967 Congress style so long will it be necessary to have coalition governments of like-minded parties.

In this context, I think it is necessary to be clear what "like-mindedness" among political parties means. It does not necessarily imply so much an identity of social and economic policies as it does of democratic values. In this sense the Congress, the BKD and the Swatantra, possibly also the Jan Sangh and the PSP, must be

regarded as "like-minded" parties. Their working together in coalition Governments would not involve a major break with the basically democratic values they profess to cherish even though it will doubtless necessitate that they "lock up" their particular "isms" for the time being in the interest of providing the people with a stable and efficient administration as in Orissa. It is only in this sense that "polarization" would be possible at this stage. Indeed, it may be the necessary intervening prelude for the ultimate development of a polarized situation in the Indian political scene.

The Swatantra Party may yet have a critical role to play in developments of the kind I have envisaged. Our Party may yet become the stabilising force everyone is so eagerly looking for. Meanwhile, we must continue and persist with our educative role.

Jai Swatantra

Resolutions passed by the National Executive on February 16, 1969

ON TELENGANA DISTURBANCES

The National Executive of the Swatantra Party views with grave concern the recurrence of violence in Andhra Pradesh resulting mainly from agitation by pressure groups within the Congress Party itself and by communists to exploit local grievances.

The Telengana agitation which culminated in great violence and resulted in the loss of many lives and the destruction of much property was the direct result of the disinclination of an insensitive administration to give adequate attention to some of the most urgent and live problems facing the people living in Telengana. A more responsible administration could surely have provided less scope to irresponsible groups for exploiting the grievances which provoked the local population to resort to violence. Also, there is room to suspect that at any rate in the initial stages after the outbreak of violence there was almost a deliberate reluctance on the part of the State Government to exercise its authority firmly to restore law and order.

The National Executive of the Swatantra Party condemns the part played by pressure groups within the Congress Party in engineering these disturbances and holds the Government of Andhra Pradesh responsible for the outcome. The Executive demands that just and fair compensation should be paid by the Government to the dependents of those persons not guilty of violence who lost their lives and to those whose property was damaged or destroyed in the disturbances.

Meanwhile the National Executive appeals to all political groups, parties and organisations to adhere to democratic processes and constitutional procedures for redressing their grievances, however frustrating such efforts may seem in the short run. Anti-democratic parties are waiting for precisely such opportunities to create chaos and disruption in their grand design to overthrow the established order. Patriotic national parties have a duty to the country to deny such opportunities to the enemies of democracy.

ON ABOLITION OF FOOD ZONES

The Swatantra Party is of the opinion that abolition of Food Zones has been long over-due and must be effected immediately. The present is the most opportune time for abolition of Food Zones which are being quite unnecessarily continued. The Food Zones in the context of present conditions in India are neither for the benefit of the consumer nor the producer of food grains. In fact they are depressing agricultural prices in surplus areas, causing hardship to the cultivator and thereby jeopardising the food grains production of the next year. At the same time, they result in maintaining prices at unduly high level in areas of short-fall

causing inconvenience to the consumer. If Food Zones are continued any longer, they are likely to act as a direct disincentive for the farmers and will adversely affect agricultural production in the country, as also perpetuate shortages. It is obvious that the ruling party is clinging to these artificial barriers purely to promote their own political ends.

In view of this, the Swatantra Party demands immediate abolition of Food Zones by the Central Government.

The Swatantra Party further resolves that if Food Zones are not removed with immediate effect, the Party should start an organised country-wide movement at all State and Unit levels to demand the abolition of Food Zones.

ON AGRICULTURAL INCOME-TAX & OTHER LEVIES ON LAND

The National Executive of the Swatantra Party condemns in unequivocal terms the proposals said to be under consideration by the Central Government and some State Governments to impose Agricultural Income-tax and other levies on land thinly disguised as "Debentures" and the like.

The peasants, farmers and landless workers on land, together with their families, constitute about 80% of the population of this country. They have been perhaps the worst affected by the steadily rising prices, especially of non-agricultural commodities, over the past twenty years. They have also suffered most by floods, droughts and famines. And all the futile experiments in Food Zones and all the restrictions on the free movement and sale of foodgrains have been at their expense. In these circumstances, the relative prosperity that has come to the rural communities in some parts of the country during the past two years is something about which the entire nation should feel happy, instead of converting it into an opportunity for penalising the farmers and the peasants still further by imposing Agricultural Income-tax and other levies.

The National Executive of the Swatantra Party rejects the specious plea that Agricultural Income-tax, with its normal exemption limit of Rs. 4,000/-, will affect only the "rich" farmers and peasants, as wholly misleading and altogether fallacious in its implications. In the first place, it is an axiom that the well-being of the landless workers on land depends entirely upon the prosperity of the farmers and peasants who employ them. Secondly, with comparatively low "land ceilings" operative in most States, there are now very few rich farmers and peasants. Thirdly, to subject these few persons to such new or additional exactions is to introduce strong and positive disincentives to improved farming precisely at those points where it

would be most injurious to the best interests of the country. Finally, to talk simultaneously about "draining away surplus resources" in this way from the so-called "rich" farmers and peasants, on the one hand, and the urgent need to maximise the availability of Agricultural Credit so as to facilitate capital inputs into land, on the other, is a complete contradiction in terms.

The fact of the matter is that India needs more, *not less*, prosperity in Agriculture, which is by far the most important sector in our national economy, contributing as it does nearly fifty per cent to our national income. And the Swatantra Party insists that the fruits of that prosperity must remain in the hands of the farmers, the peasants and the landless workers on land, *either* to be "ploughed back" into land by way of various inputs so urgently needed for a genuine and sustained break-through in Agriculture *or* to be spent and so to generate genuine and broad-based "real demands" for goods and services throughout the country so necessary for re-activating the presently sluggish economy. The Swatantra Party will therefore oppose all proposals to impose Agricultural Income-Tax and other new levies on agricultural land and agricultural income.

ON PROPOSED MONOPOLY OF IMPORTS OF INDUSTRIAL RAW MATERIALS THROUGH THE STATE TRADING CORPORATION

The National Executive of the Swatantra Party views with grave concern the recent repeated utterances by the Commerce Minister to monopolise the import trade in Industrial Raw Materials in the State Trading Corporation. It is plain that this move is motivated by purely political considerations.

A close scrutiny of the working of both the State Trading Corporation and the Minerals & Metal Trading Corporation over the last several years has brought to light serious irregularities in their handling of imports. These include:

- (i) Purchases from abroad at exorbitant prices;
- (ii) Imports at wrong time, causing serious dislocation of Industries through shortages;
- (iii) Profiteering in a number of instances by both S.T.C. and M.M.T.C.;
- (iv) Lack of expertise and experience in the complicated mechanism of import trade in several commodities;
- (v) Contracting with foreign firms without investigating their credentials; and
- (vi) Locking up of Capital in heavy industries.

It is on record that these evils have been rampant and resulted in heavy losses running into crores of rupees.

The Swatantra Party is convinced that the bogey of cartels, consortia and the like in exporting countries is being grossly exaggerated. In fact, private agencies

so far operating in the import trade have derived substantial advantages of bulk purchases in a large number of commodities and also economies of efficient purchasing procedures.

The National Executive of the Swatantra Party therefore strongly condemns the proposed move for "nationalisation", that is to say, monopolisation of import trade in industrial raw materials which is actuated by wrong economics, faulty ideologies and corrupt political considerations.

ON FAMINE

The National Executive of the Swatantra Party has repeatedly drawn the attention of the public and of the Governments concerned to the acute state of famine prevailing since last year in Rajasthan, Gujarat and some other States. But the conditions in most of these areas continue as bad as ever.

In particular, the National Executive views with deep concern the apathy of the Government of Rajasthan in regard to relief works in extensive areas of the State.

The measures taken by the Government are grossly inadequate as compared with the magnitude of the problem which is becoming chronic. Famine in Bikaner, Jodhpur and Jaisalmer areas is in fact a recurring phenomenon; but the State Government has repeatedly failed to take measures of a permanent nature to minimise the rigour of this calamity.

Whatever relief works have been started are motivated by political considerations and are being used to further the interests of the Party in power; and corruption is rampant in connection with these works. In the result no heed is paid to the real work of ameliorating the lot of the famine affected population.

The famine affected areas being mostly on the Indo-Pak Border, it is urgently necessary that the Central Government should also pay special attention to this problem, particularly in regard to the completion of the Rajasthan Canal.

ON VIOLENCE IN BOMBAY

The National Executive of the Swatantra Party views with deep concern the recurrence of violence in public life resulting from agitations by political parties and pressure groups which thrive on emotional issues, with little regard for the democratic process.

Whether it is inter-State border disputes or linguistic loyalties, these parties and groups appear to have come to the conclusion that violence pays because through violence alone can they secure their objectives. The overt commitment of some State Governments themselves to such disputes and the weak and vacillating policies of Governments both at the Centre and in certain States have contributed to such attitudes.

The recent outbreak of wide-spread violence in

Bombay City when mobs looted, burnt and destroyed both public and private property with impunity while the law enforcement agencies at first helplessly looked on, gives room for the suspicion that the State Government was at first half-hearted in its efforts to restore law and order. Regardless of the merits of the border dispute between Mysore and Maharashtra, the primary duty of Government was to have ensured the safety of its citizens, even if the Government itself were in sympathy with the alleged objective of the agitation. This duty the Government failed to discharge.

The National Executive of the Swatantra Party holds the Government of Maharashtra responsible for allowing the demonstrations connected with the border dispute and occasioned by the visit of the Deputy Prime Minister to Bombay to get out of hand and to degenerate into an uncontrolled orgy of violence and

destruction. The Executive demands just and fair compensation to the dependents of those persons not guilty of violence who lost their lives and to those whose property was damaged or destroyed in the disturbances.

Meanwhile the National Executive appeals to all political parties and organisations to adhere to democratic processes and constitutional procedures for the settlement of their grievances, however frustrating such efforts may seem in the short run. Anti-democratic parties are waiting for precisely such opportunities, as was indeed made abundantly clear in Bombay, to create chaos and disruption in their grand design to overthrow the established order. Patriotic national and local parties and groups have a duty to the country to deny such opportunities to the enemies of democracy.

The Huge Cost of Delay

Our Government hardly realise the fact that delays cost the exchequer a lot of money. Progress was possible only through quick and decisive action. Economic progress was suffering because of inordinate delays in arriving at vital decisions. The fact that delays cost the exchequer heavily was not realised by the Government. Important projects like the Tata project, the Dharamsi Morarji project, the small car (which had taken only nine years so far), the question of fixing steel prices etc., were still awaiting decisions of the Government. The delay of 300 days in taking a decision on the Tata project had already cost the exchequer Rs. 75 crores. Besides the loss to the national income, there were intangible losses like the endless trips to

Delhi, the frustration, the disparagement, the loss of time and money and the disincentive to the foreign investor. The Tata project at its fully developed stage and at present prices, will save about Rs. 92 crores per year in foreign exchange. Nine months have already been lost at an ultimate cost to the country of some Rs. 67.5 crores in foreign exchange which will be increased by a further Rs. 7.5 crores for every month's delay or Rs. 25 lacs per day or over Rs. 1 lac per hour. The Tata project is by no means the only project which has suffered or is suffering from Government's inability to come to a decision for months and even years in some cases.

J. R. D. TATA

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