

SWATANTRA PARTY

FIFTH

NATIONAL

CONVENTION

Bhubaneswar

October 5 & 6, 1968

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Welcome Speech

BY

Shri R. N. SINGH DEO

CHAIRMAN,

CONVENTION COMMITTEE

SWATANTRA PARTY

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Welcome Speech

By

Sri R. N. Singh Deo,

Chairman, Convention Committee

Pujya Rajaji, Acharya Rangaji, fellow Delegates and Distinguished Friends,

I deem it an honour and a privilege to welcome all of you to this Capital of the ancient State of Utkal. Lacking in facilities and amenities of a modern city, it will not be possible to make your stay here as comfortable and pleasant as we would have wished, but we will earnestly try to make up for the deficiency by the warmth of our comradely feeling and the sincerity of our welcome.

We feel proud to have the opportunity of holding the Fifth Annual Convention of the Swatantra Party in Bhubaneswar. I am prouder still to have our beloved Leader Rajaji here among us. During his last August visit before the Fourth General Elections, he had given a clarion call to the people of Orissa at his public meetings to change the Congress Government. Now that our people have acted according to his advice, I sincerely hope that he

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which, necessarily could not and did not continue long. As a result President's Rule was introduced in Hariyana, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Bihar and West Bengal. It was more because of these weaknesses of the non-Congress parties than because of its own strength that the Congress won back in Hariyana in the midterm election. The alternative that people desire is not a coalition of only different non-Congress parties to get in to Governments for sake of power, but a solid programme acceptable to them.

The Swatantra Party, on the other hand pioneered a political path which has proved a great success. I use the word "pioneer" advisedly, because we are the only coalition Government in the country that fought the Fourth General Elections with a definite programme, irrespective of the fact, whether we formed the Government or remained in the Opposition. Therefore, it was amply made evident before the election that it was neither an adjustment nor an alliance of convenience but a purposeful, positive programme which was meant to be implemented whether in office or out of office. I would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation of the manner in which, our partners, in the Coalition Government, the Jana Congress, have been

would thank them and bless the Government born out of his goodwill. It is needless to say that his presence is an abundant source of inspiration to all of us to work with greater vigour for achievement of the ideals for which we stand.

We are meeting here at a time of great political importance. The last General Elections made a significant change in the contours of our politics. People voted for a change in more than half the States of the union, a change which was, of course, long overdue. Twenty years of Congress misrule through all sorts of undesirable political manoeuvres including defections had brought the people to the point of suffocation from which they seriously desired respite. But since a solid alternative was not conspicuous their feelings could not be pointedly mobilised and channelised. Of course, the Swatantra Party offered a clear-cut brave alternative, but the Leftist parties were the biggest hindrance for the shaping up of a channelised non-Congress purposeful alternative. Therefore, in many of the States non-Congress parties fought the Election against the Congress and at times against each other without a common programme, and after the defeat of the Congress attempted to form Government,

mainly from poor agriculturists and villagers. Probe Committees have been formed to go into charges of corruption against the Panchayats and Panchayat Samitis.

- (3) We have raised the Sales Tax turnover limit to Rs. 25,000/- which would be great relief to small traders.
- (4) We appointed a Committee to evaluate the working of Public Undertakings, whose report is under active consideration. *
- (5) We appointed a Commission to enquire into charges of corruption against former Congress Ministers. We subjected even ourselves to such scrutiny by a retired Supreme Court Judge, ~~for~~ maintaining high standards in public life, when there was a memorandum by Congressmen, even though it was not taken notice of by the Centre. *
- (6) We constituted the Pay Commission.
- (7) We have set up a Code of Conduct for the Ministers, which we strictly adhere to.
- (8) We have completed the separation of Judiciary from Executive.

* The report has subsequently been published and action is being taken on it.

co-operating in making this experiment a success.

It would not be irrelevant to outline briefly some of our achievements, since we assumed Office, inspite of heavy odds. We were very much fettered by the bad legacy, we inherited, which had brought the finances of the State to the point of bankruptcy through reckless and wasteful expenditure. As if that was not enough misfortune to the State, Nature became unkind, when there were successive years of drought and an unprecedented cyclone and floods. But all these odds could not deter us from our determination to carry out our promises to the people, and where necessary we departed even from the conventional bureaucratic methods of Government functioning and implemented the following points of our programme, some of which are outlined in the Swatantra Party Souvenir.

- (1) We have abolished Land Revenue in the State completely ;
- (2) We have done away with the Panchayats which were the hotbeds of corruption, and are trying to reorganise it to enable it to serve the people. We have also abolished the Panchayat taxes, including professional taxes, because those were being collected

described. It is said that when a dog bites a man it does not make news but what certainly makes news is when a man bites a dog. There has been a lot of news in this sense, in the States that have already gone under the President's rule. We are happy and proud that we are not in it. Thousands of planes fly every day but no newspapers report that they flew and landed safely. But if there is a crash it is splashed in headlines. Judged against this background, it is a matter of great satisfaction to us that our Government has neither crashed nor are we at each other's throats to make news.

I would take this august opportunity of heartily thanking the people of Orissa for reposing their confidence on this Government after the Fourth General Elections. At the preparatory Convention in Bombay in August, 1959, our Party had displayed "The Swatantra Party has faith in the people". I gratefully congratulate the people of Orissa for their magnificent reaction to this thesis of the Swatantra Party and they have displayed "The people of Orissa have faith in the Swatantra Party".

Before concluding I would offer my respectful thanks to Pujya Rajaji for the strenuous journey he has undertaken to grace this occasion and enthuse and bless us with his illuminating presence.

- (9) We have taken radical steps to boost production in the field of agricultural by putting greater emphasis on people's cooperation, high-yielding variety, irrigation projects and to industrialise the State through pragmatic approach to rapid industrialisation, better utilisation of mineral and forest resources, and concession to intending entrepreneurs.

Our party is nine years old and can boast of being the youngest but the most successful party. It is true that we in Orissa have not achieved everything that we would have liked to, so far as all aspects of our Swatantra political philosophy is concerned. Apart from the odds already enumerated by me, there is a major limitation on us, ~~of being a State Government~~ with a party complexion different to that at the Centre.

I have heard people, including some of our friends and wellwishers, complain that even if our Government is doing so much of good work, it is not getting the publicity due. There is no doubt that we are not advertising our achievements nor do we believe in drum beating. Further it reminds me of a saying that "No news is good news". In the newspaper world, what is news and what is not very picturesquely

Even though it might appear as a repetition, I cannot resist the temptation to mention here that it was at Bhubaneswar that the call of a change in Orissa was given by Pujya Rajaji, and it came. Let there be a second call from this auspicious venue by the same illustrious elder Statesman of India, whom I have no hesitation in calling "Bhisma Pitamaha" of Indian politics, for every one to work for a programme-based alternative and for its realisation.

In the end I welcome again all of you, Delegates, friends, well-wishers and sympathisers and thank you for the trouble you have taken to come from all corners of India to inspire and encourage us and to make this occasion a success.

~~JAI~~ SWATANTRA