

2017

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE MEETING
HELD BY HOME MINISTER WITH LEADERS OF POLITICAL
PARTIES ON 26TH FEBRUARY, 1964.

Home Minister said that the task of rooting out corruption and introduction of administrative reforms to create an honest administration for speedy disposal of work was very important indeed. At the same time the magnitude of the problem was very large; it should not be treated as a political issue but as a national problem. There was considerable common ground for political parties to cooperate in spite of their differences in other spheres. One of the activities to be undertaken on the non-official side would be the creation of a climate and an atmosphere in which the outlook of the people would be changed; the idea was to facilitate creation of an environment which would inhibit growth of corrupt practices. If all the political parties having a significant strength were to be represented on a Committee to be associated with this work, it could provide assurance that the work in this limited field would not be retarded by political stresses.

2. The setting up of Vigilance Commission was a step forward because it meant establishment of an authority with full responsibility and complete independence alongwith the means and facilities to pursue its task without any hindrance. But this in itself may not be enough and there could be a forum which could serve as a transmission agency as well as a screening agency. A layman did not always know legal technicalities and the distinction between what is actionable and what is not and a forum to explain these things would be welcome. Further, it could also remove a sense of fear or shyness that a common man may otherwise nurse in approaching a formal authority.

3. Shri H.V. Kamath mentioned three things in this connection. Firstly, he was not happy over the choice of the Vigilance Commissioner; secondly, he felt the Government's opposition to the Bill about the Ministers' Assets was not a happy feature and thirdly, the Vigilance Committees to be associated at the District and State level did not have powers to be effective.

4. Several of the members present wanted clarification about the constitution, aims and objects of the Samyukta Sadachar Samiti and copies of the constitution were circulated to them.

5. A point was made that complaints were being voiced about persons holding high political offices and unless something was done to remove suspicion at the top level, the entire structure and resolve get weakened. Home Minister agreed with this and said that he was trying to do his best in this direction.

6. A question was raised that as the members were to be associated as representatives of political parties, they would like to know all about the Committee, its scope of action and plan of work. It was necessary in view of the fact that their presence would imply committal of the political party they represented.

7. A question was raised that as all the parties were unanimous about the desirability of rooting out corruption,

the word "Samyukta" from Samyukta Sadachar Samiti should be removed. Home Minister thought that this point could be finalised alongwith other relevant issues later.

8. It was agreed to have the next meeting on Thursday, the 5th March, 1964, at 5 P.M.

Note :- A point has been raised that if a member of the Samiti receives a complaint and puts questions to find out whether the complaint was genuine or not, and later on, after the case goes to the Court or any other authority where formal proceedings are started, the accused may want to call the member of the Samiti who had recorded statements or made enquiries into the case in the beginning. In such circumstances, the members of the Samiti may have to be prepared to appear before formal authorities and be subjected to cross-examination.