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Swatantra Asks Centre To End All Controls

FROM OUR SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE

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MADRAS, April 15—The Sixth National Convention of the Swatantra Party concluded here today after passing a series of resolutions on issues ranging from the desperate economic situation in the country to the local power crisis, almost all of them with total unanimity.

The resolution on the economic situation noted it should have been evident by now that it was not possible to increase the national product by the State taking over all privately-owned means of production, distribution and exchange.

"Experience of the past 25 years has proved amply that it has helped us in raising our production to a far smaller extent than it would have been otherwise possible", it said. Similarly the policies of control had placed the ordinary citizen at the mercy of an administrative machinery which was both inefficient and corrupt.

The party urged the Government and the people to set aside ideological predilections and adopt and approve only policies that were conducive to the increase of production. It also recommended "most emphatically" the freeing of the economy from the stranglehold of controls.

The party also deplored unreservedly "the elevation of Statism and bureaucracy to the status of saviours and guardians of the consumer and the ordinary man".

CYNICAL ATTEMPT

In a separate resolution on nationalization, the party noted that "the predilections, prejudices and megalomania of individual Ministers" can alone explain the recent instances of nationalization, although a cynical attempt had been made in every case to show that the take-over was in public interest.

According to PTI, the convention denounced socialism in any form.

(The party President, Mr Piloo Mody, described socialism as an "opiate to intoxicate people" into believing that it was something good Mr Mody said every evil in society could be attributed to it.)

(The convention rejected attempts made by two members—Mr Lobo Prabhu and Mr H. K. Acharya—who sought to eliminate critical references to socialism in the policy statement, which was later adopted by the convention.)

GRAIN TRADE

In a resolution on the take-over of grain trade, the party stated that this would lead ultimately to collectivization of agriculture, pledged its support to the cause of farmers and traders "with the intention of safeguarding the interest of consumers, and called upon the Government to reconsider this matter even at this stage.

An amendment sought to be moved by one delegate added a threat of a massive agitation if the Government did not accept the Swatantra Party's suggestion. But Mr H. M. Patel resisted any such threats and the amendment was lost.

The resolution on international relations—calling for establishment of the friendliest relations with India's immediate and near neighbours and creation of an area of peace amongst the South-East Asian countries, and condemning the Indo-Soviet treaty—was moved by Mr M. R. Masani.

Taking the matter of the Indian

Ocean as a test case, he asked how far was the present Government able to keep it an area of peace. The Soviet fleet dominated the Indian Ocean, almost turning it into a Soviet lake. In the last calendar year for instance the Soviet Union had had 8,000 ship days in the Indian Ocean against the USA's 2,000 ship days. He said that the Government had gone out of its way to give bunkering facilities to the Soviet ships at two major ports.

Mr Dahyabhai Patel, who seconded the resolution, noted that because of current policies India had failed to make good friends even with progressive Asian countries like Japan.

POWS' ISSUE

Mr Patel also asked India to adopt what he described as the truly Indian and Hindu generous attitude to the POWs' issue. If India took the initiative in this matter, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was bound to respond suitably.

On the Andhra issue, the convention called upon the Prime Minister to concede the demand for the bifurcation of the State "or in the alternative to dissolve the Assembly and hold a referendum so as to ascertain the wishes of the people in a democratic way". It also warned the Prime Minister against any manoeuvre for unwanted integration against the wishes of the people of both regions.

Speeches on the resolution on Orissa—which noted "with grave concern the misuse of the institution of governors in subverting the Constitution and in butchering democracy"—were among the strongest heard at the convention.

Mr K. P. Singh Deo thought this was a fit case for even the impeachment of the President.

The resolution on the inter-State river waters carried a mild stir. The resolution suggested the assumption by the Central Government through a statutory commission of control of all inter-State rivers. One delegate from Mysore, however, thought the resolution had overtones that were dangerous. Another spelt it out by adding that the resolution seemed loaded in favour of Tamil Nadu. Both opposed it and demanded its withdrawal, but it was nevertheless passed.

D.K. CONFERENCE

One originally unscheduled resolution was on the recent conference of the Dravida Kazhagam, attended by five State Ministers and presided over by one of them, which had declared that the D.K.'s main demand was the formation of a separate and independent Tamil Nadu. The convention demanded an immediate probe into the matter. The resolution was moved by a Madras delegate, who is also a civic councillor, and was adopted by the convention unanimously.

The convention observed a minute's silence as a mark of respect to the memory of Mrs. Prabhavati Devi, wife of Mr J. P. Narayan. Mr Masani said that she had been one of the most dedicated workers attached to Mahatma Gandhi.