

2589

SWATANTRA PARTY (Bombay Region)

DRAFT OF
ELECTION MANIFESTO

The forthcoming Elections to the Maharashtra Assembly affords to the Swatantra Party, Bombay Region, an opportunity to place before the citizens of Bombay constructive and well thought-out suggestions concerning the most pressing problems of this Premier City. No one can dispute that these have to be solved if Bombay is to be spared the fate of Calcutta.

HOUSING

The core of the colossal housing problem confronting the city is the speedy rehabilitation of its slum and hutment dwellers. The Party will advocate the establishment of a high-powered Housing Authority, consisting of specialists in urban housing, to promote the construction of houses, flats and tenements, using the latest techniques and materials so as to reduce costs. The Party will also urge appropriate subsidies for tenancy as also ownership in respect of weaker sections of the population of tenements occupied by them. The Party will further press for the enactment of laws to counter unhealthy speculation in real estate, which has, in recent years, sent land prices and, therefore, building prices also sky-rocketing.

TRANSPORT SERVICES

The Party will advocate the establishment of an autonomous Metropolitan Rapid Transport Body to be in overall operative command of the existing surface transport systems (suburban trains and municipal buses). ^{⊗ The Party} and will also explore the possibility of water transport services on the western sea front of Bombay so as to ease the pressure on the existing facilities.

....2

⊗ to ensure coordinated planning of transport needs.

EMPLOYMENT

The city, harbouring, as it does, a heavy concentration of job-seekers, is a microcosm of the nation's colossal unemployment problem. This over-concentration of idle population leads to as yet unrecognised social consequences. The continuous influx of job-seeking rural folk into the city must therefore be halted and reversed. This can only be done by increasing job opportunities in the rural areas. The Swatantra Party has been earnestly campaigning for the allotment of funds to organise a massive Public Works Programme of road-building (both village roads and main national highways), minor irrigation and construction of low cost houses, cheap medical facilities and conservancy services in villages throughout the country. As far as Bombay is concerned, dispersal of industries into the Trans-Thana belt and further into the mainland should greatly help the process of halting the influx of village people into the city. The Party will support all schemes that afford incentives for the establishment of new and rehabilitation of old industries in this region. Further, the Party will advocate an extensive programme of imparting basic skills (to the large number of unskilled job-seekers) such as welding, smithy, carpentry, machining, etc. which will increase the productivity of these people wherever they get employment. Party will, through a programme of adult education, also give opportunities to these people to educate themselves in rudimentary civics, economics and politics so as to make them more responsible and enlightened. The co-operation of the student community will be enlisted in this adult education programme with a view to giving

a creative outlet to students' abundant energies.

CITY DEVELOPMENT

The city's population has/well-nigh reached a point where its civic services, 'already showing visible signs of strain, bid fair to break down completely. Rather than allow this to happen, the Party will support all action towards an early realisation of the Twin City Project which is the only realistic solution suited to the peculiar topography of Bombay. It is high time the island city break out of its cramped frontiers into the mainland across the sea.

The Party pledges itself to the pursuit of these aims in particular and all problems that concern Bombayites generally through its elected representatives in the Assembly so as to make this urbs prima a better and healthier place to live in. It is to be hoped the enlightened voters of the city will recognise that lack of adequate and timely measures to counter the various problems which have nearly set our beloved city on the path of utter degradation and decay, and will send as many Swatantra Legislators as possible to speak for them and pursue the aforesaid objectives.

.....