

2813

EXPRESS

24th March, 1962.

My dear Rajaji,

I received your letter of the 20th only yesterday.

I am sending you herewith two alternative letters, one or the other of which you may sign and send to Aney at his Delhi address where he says he will be from the 19th onwards till the end of the month. If there is delay in your despatching the letter, perhaps you will send a duplicate at his Nagpur address which is Bobade's Bungalow, Civil Lines, Nagpur? I may explain that from both the texts I have cut out a sentence which I thought was needlessly provocative about the pooling of effort with the DMK in the newly elected Madras Assembly. Aney had only inquired in regard to past commitments and I see no reason to refer to something which is so vague and inchoate.

The difference in the texts is that in one paragraph I have given an indication of the thought of asking our Lok Sabha Group to nominate him as its Leader, provided of course he joined outright. I am not sure whether or not this should be conveyed to him. My anxiety is that we may or may not be able to persuade the Lok Sabha Group to accept him as Leader. This is based on reports that Kalahandi has been canvassing support for himself during his last meeting in Bombay and that Ramgarh has promised him his support. Others too may have done so. Till we decide whether the Lok Sabha Group should be allowed to elect its Leader or whether there should be a directive from the Parliamentary Board and till we consult our colleagues, it may therefore be premature to raise hopes now. All the same I thought he might raise this point. I leave it to you to decide.

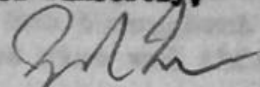
In so far as the Convention is concerned I sent you a telegram on the 22nd saying that, after consulting Munshi and other colleagues, it had been decided not to postpone the convention. I understood your suggestion to be to postpone it by four, five or seven days. This is not feasible since the newly elected members of Parliament and the Parliamentary Board have to meet in Delhi on April 15. We decided therefore to go ahead with the 7th and 8th as decided by the C.O.C. An announcement was made in the Press and notices issued. Your letter of 21st therefore came in late for me to make a change. We expect around 250 to 300 people to come and, if this number materialises, it will be all right. If the response is unsatisfactory, we shall not open any session to the press but treat the whole thing as a business meeting. In that case, numbers will not be very important.

I suggested in my telegram that, in the light of this, you may kindly

arrange to reach Bombay by the evening plane on the 6th and have informed Mumshi accordingly.

In so far as the public meeting is concerned, in view of your feeling re Chowpatty, this idea has been dropped. In so far as a Hall meeting is concerned, we do not want an anticlimax after the excellent meeting we had in the Sunderabai Hall. A public meeting is being fixed up on the night of the 8th in Mazagaon for the working class where Dandekar as the President will address the meeting in Marathi, you will speak in English, and I and some others will speak in Hindustani.

Yours sincerely,



(M. R. Masani)

Encl:

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MRM:BS