

Svatantra Party

CENTRAL OFFICE

PHONE 252076

SASSOON
143, MAHATMA
BOMBAY

Ref:

2831

18th January, 1961.

The Secretaries and the Chief Whips
of the Parliamentary Group
in the Lok Sabha and the
Rajya Sabha.

New Delhi.

Dear Friends.

At an informal meeting of the Sub-committee appointed by the Central Organising Committee of the Party which met in Madras on January 9 and 10, two measures coming up before Parliament in the next session, viz., Two Member Constituency Abolition Bill and the bill introduced by the Home Minister to amend the Criminal Law for the purpose of checking subversive propaganda on the frontiers, were discussed. The Sub-committee while appreciating that the Parliamentary Group should be free to take its own line in each House in the light of circumstances then prevailing, expressed, however, certain views which are given below :

Two Member Constituency Abolition Bill

The attitude to be taken by Party members in Parliament in regard to this Bill was discussed. It was felt that, apart from the danger of gerrymandering, the Party should support the position taken by Sri Sivaraj and the Republican Party who considered further reservation to be harmful to the Harijans themselves.

Bill for checking propaganda on the frontiers

The position to be taken by Party members in Parliament in regard to this Bill was considered. After considerable discussion, it was agreed that, while the Party members should stress their opposition to Communist subversive activities and reiterate the stand taken in the course of the debate on the Preventive Detention Bill that Government should outlaw the Communist Party in these circumstances, the dangers to Civil Liberty involved in the Bill should be also stressed. The present Government,

which had shown no zest in fighting Communists and Communism, could not be trusted with these powers, particularly since the way in which the Prime Minister had allowed the Chinese to occupy Indian territory showed an absence of seriousness on the part of his Government to preserve the Indian frontiers intact.

Members of the Party may introduce certain amendments to the following effect :

1. Limiting the offence to cases where there was evidence before the court that the activity was in furtherance of the territorial claims of a Foreign Power and excluding from the scope of the Act bona fide discussions in regard to the country's frontiers.
2. Deleting the clause prohibiting entry into frontier areas by non-residents as a violation of fundamental rights.

After Party members make this clear by speech and amendment, they may abstain from the final vote in order that their attitude may not be misunderstood.

Yours truly,

(M. R. Masani)

General Secretary.