

2946

Extract from Mr. M.R. Masani's speech in the course of the discussion on the Motion of No Confidence in the Lok Sabha on 28th July 1970

We want a change of government, but there are ways and ways of changing the government. There is a democratic way of changing the government and there are some doubtful ones. The undemocratic way of changing the government has been practised in many countries. It was practised in Britain in the days of Sir Robert Walpole, who was a very corrupt Prime Minister, who bought up members of the Opposition and who said that "every man and woman has a price". It happened in the Fourth Republic of France where, with constant defections, France came to have no stable government until the people of France turned to DeGaulle and instituted him as President with superpowers which were not there under the Constitution. This has been happening in our country and we call it "toppling". It is a rather indecent game which we have invented.

"Toppling" has nothing to do with democracy. That is not the way in which self-respecting people come to power. Democratic people come to power after an appeal to the people and a mandate of the electorate in the way that Mr. Ted Heath came to power in Britain a few weeks ago. That is the way we want to come to power, as we did in Orissa. We want to come to power by the mandate of the people. We will not listen to the advice of people who say: "Let us topple Shrimati Indira Gandhi and then see what comes to India."

You cannot fight something with nothing. You have got to fight something with something better. I do not want to remove Shrimati Gandhi until I can put in her place a better Prime Minister and a better government. I do not want to bring chaos to the Centre as there was chaos in the States of North India under the SVD. We want, therefore, an alternative government to come into existence before we remove this government. That is why I believe this country needs above all an alternative government, a shadow Cabinet, which the people can judge and see sitting on these benches and say: "Do we prefer that lot of people or do we prefer this lot?"

CONSOLIDATION OF NATIONALIST & DEMOCRATIC FORCES

Text of Resolution adopted by the National Executive at New Delhi on
8th November, 1970

Having received a report from the President of the Party on his discussions and correspondence with the Presidents of the Congress (O), Jan Singh and B.K.D., the National Executive recorded its disappointment at the absence of any progress and the failure to bring into existence a bloc of nationalist and democratic parties and groups in Parliament in time for the session commencing on the 9th November, 1970.

While approving the initiative taken by the Party's President, the Executive felt that the ball was squarely in the court of the Congress (O) which having adopted its AICC Resolution of June 28, was failing to cooperate in its implementation.

The Executive reiterated the Party's well-known opposition to the resort to heterogeneous, hotch-potch and opportunistic combinations and once again reaffirmed its willingness to cooperate with all those parties and groups which were prepared to go ahead on the basis of the AICC Resolution of June 28 as a provisional programme of agreed action.

The need for such coming together becomes all the more urgent in view of the possibility of an early dissolution of Parliament.

Mr. Masani's Press Statement from Delhi on the evening of
January 3, 1971

3rd January 1971

It is with a deep disappointment that I shall have to leave for Bombay tomorrow morning.

For a long time now the Swatantra Party's stand has been well known that a Democratic alternative to the present Government is what the country needs. It is our view that nothing less than a full-fledged alliance with an agreed programme and one agreed candidate in each constituency throughout the country supported by all the parties to the pact can provide such an alternative.

We thought this was well understood and therefore as you are aware after protracted discussions it was arranged and announced that the Presidents of the Congress (O) and the Jan Sangh and myself would meet the Press this evening and announce the establishment of the Democratic Front in a statement the terms of which were agreed upon by all three of us.

Unfortunately, it would appear that some last minute rethinking has once again led to vacillation.

What is now proposed at the instance of the SSP is an attempt at a mere electoral adjustment without a Democratic Front and without a common programme.

I have no authority from my Party to agree to this proposal or to anything short of a principled electoral pact of the kind that was intended to be announced. I shall, therefore, place this new proposal before the National Executive of my Party when it meets in Madras on the 13th instant. It will be for that body to define the Party's attitude to this development.

Text of Resolution adopted by the National Executive at Madras
on 8th January, 1971

" The National Executive of the Swatantra Party has received a report from the President, Mr. M.R. Masani, of recent developments in connection with the Party's efforts for the establishment of a democratic alliance to contest the Lok Sabha elections, and, in particular, the developments in Delhi on January 3. After discussion, the Executive records its sense of deep disappointment at the abandonment of the effort at establishing a Democratic Alliance or Front with a common programme based on the AICC Resolution of June 28. The President of the Party was fully justified in asking for time to consult the National Executive of the Party when suddenly faced with a new proposal and it is a matter of regret that this was not agreed to despite the sincere pioneering efforts of the Party to bring about a full fledged alliance.

Having regard to the totality of the circumstances including the threat to the Constitution and the imminent danger to vital national interests which require a change of government through the impending General Elections, the Executive decides that the Party should join the Front formed in Delhi on 3rd January 1971 so that there shall be one agreed candidate for each Lok Sabha constituency throughout the country who will be supported by all the participating parties in the front. The Executive has come to this decision in the light of the clear assurance given by Mr. Nijalingappa, the Congress (O) President, at a press conference in Bombay on 5th January that no Communist Party would be allowed to associate with the front formed in Delhi. "

For favour of publication

Bombay, March 11.

Mr. M.R. Masani, President of the Swatantra Party, has issued the following statement commenting on the result of the General Elections :

"The electorate has given a decisive vote of confidence to the Prime Minister and her Party and we as democrats accept the verdict and its implications. As it happens, the Swatantra Party had never accepted the slogan "Indira Hatao" which the electorate has now rejected.

"The Central Parliamentary Board of the Party will meet in New Delhi on March 20 to consider the implications of the popular verdict and determine the attitude the Party should, as an Opposition Party, adopt towards the new Government and towards other Opposition Parties."

(M.R. Masani)