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Minutes of the Meeting of the Central Parliamentary Board

held in Madras on March 1, 1967, at 3 p.m.

Present :

1. Prof. N. G. Ranga (in the Chair)
2. Mr. C. Rajagopalachari
3. Prof. M. Ruthnaswamy
4. Mr. R. N. Singh Deo
5. Mr. B. P. Singh
6. Mr. G. Latchanna
7. Mr. Jaideepsinh of Baria
8. Mr. Dattabhai V. Patel, and
9. Mr. M. R. Masani

By Special Invitation :

10. Mr. N. Dandekar
11. Mr. Bhailalbai D. Patel
12. Mr. Vadillal Lallubhai
13. Mr. H. M. Patel

1. The minutes of the last meeting held in New Delhi on December 10 and 12, 1966, were confirmed.

2. The move to drop the "Lame Duck" Session of the old Lok Sabha and call an early session of the newly-elected Parliament was noted and welcomed.

3. In view of this development, it was decided that the National Executive should meet in Delhi on the morning of March 15th to be followed by a meeting of the Parliamentary Group to elect the Leader and other office bearers.

4. The Board then received reports from the General Secretary and others about the results of the General Elections and a statement tabulating the results for Parliament and State Assemblies was recorded.

5. The Board expressed general satisfaction at the results of the elections and, in particular, its appreciation of the excellent performance put in by the Madras and Mysore State Units. While the results in Orissa, Rajasthan and Gujarat were not unsatisfactory, the Board felt some disappointment that our Party did not do better. On the other hand, the Board noted that the results of the elections had been very unsatisfactory in so far as Bihar, Bombay, Haryana, Kerala, Maharashtra, Punjab and UP were concerned. The offer to resign as President of the UP State Unit made by Mr. B. P. Singh in his report was not accepted.

6. Mr. Latchanna conveyed to the Board the public feeling in Srikakulam that he should not resign his Parliamentary seat. While the Board appreciated the sentiments of the Srikakulam people, it felt, that in the wider interest, Mr. Latchanna should resign his Parliamentary seat and retain his Assembly seat. This will enable Mr. Latchanna to lead the Party in the State Assembly as its Opposition Leader and enable Prof. Ranga to seek re-election to Parliament from Srikakulam in the by-election that will ensue.

7. The General Secretary reported on the situation in so far as the Party's position in the Lok Sabha was concerned and mentioned that he had addressed letters to independent and unattached MPs inviting them to join the Party in Parliament. The Board felt that the Party should welcome such members to the Party's Group in the Lok Sabha, whether as full or associate members. Other members of the Board should contact such persons in this connection.

8. There was a discussion about the suggestion that had been mooted in certain quarters that the Swatantra Party should endeavour to draw together in one bloc like-minded parties like the DMK and the Jan Sangh and other democratic Opposition Parties. It was felt that the possibilities of such a development should be explored with a view to achieving the highest possible cooperation and coordination between non - Communist Opposition Parties.

9. In so far as the position in the States was concerned, the Board noted the position in Rajasthan as reported by the General Secretary. The Board approved of the two telegrams dated 23rd and 24th February sent by the General Secretary to the President of the Rajasthan State Unit. The Central Parliamentary Board was opposed to the formation of a coalition government based on a slender margin and founded on a weak base, specially with the Central Government in Congress hands. The Board felt that it will be preferable for the Party to remain in Opposition in such circumstances. Mr. Dandekar was requested to visit Jaipur on the morning of 3rd March in order to carry this directive to the Rajasthan Unit and to give necessary guidance in the light of the developing situation.

10. The Party took note of the position in Gujarat and decided to await recommendations from the State Parliamentary Board in regard to by-elections to Parliament and State Assemblies. These recommendations should reach the Central Office in good time to be considered by the National Executive when it meets in Delhi on 15th March.

11. Mr. R.N. Singh Deo reported on the position in Orissa. Mr. Singh Deo mentioned inter alia that the PSP, the SSP and the CPI had issued statements during the Election campaign extending support to a Swatantra-led Government based on the common programme adopted by the Swatantra Party and the Jana Congress. Appropriate guidance was given to Mr. Singh Deo in regard to -

a. The Speakership and Deputy Speakership of the Assembly,

- b. the Presidentship of the Joint Party,
- c. the Chairmanship of an Advisory Committee,
- d. the Composition of the Cabinet.

Mr. Masani would be present in Bhubaneswar on the 5th and 6th to give further guidance and advice.

12. In so far as UP, Bihar and Bengal were concerned, it was decided that the members of the Party in the State Assemblies in the three States should be advised not to join any coalition government but to retain their independence of action as a separate group in the State Assembly. In response to inquiries, it should be made clear that the Swatantra Group would not support the formation of a Congress Government in these States. On the other hand, the Group would not join in any attempt to dislodge a non-Congress Coalition government for the present.

13. It was decided that the State Units should call meetings of the newly-elected MLAs so that they may elect their leaders and other Office Bearers as early as possible. The Board saw no necessity to send observers to be present at such elections.

The meeting then adjourned.

The adjourned meeting of the Central Parliamentary Board met again on March 2, 1967, at 10 a.m.

Present:

- 1. Prof. N. G. Ranga (in the Chair)
- 2. Mr. C. Rajagopalachari
- 3. Prof. M. Ruthnaswamy
- 4. Mr. R. N. Singh Deo
- 5. Mr. B. P. Singh
- 6. Mr. G. Latchanna
- 7. Mr. Jaideepsinh of Baria
- 8. Mr. Dahyabhai V. Patel, and
- 9. Mr. M. R. Masani

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- 11. Mr. Bhailalbhai D. Patel
- 12. Mr. Vadillal Lallubhai
- 13. Mr. H. M. Patel

14. The Board considered the position in regard to the President and Vice-President of the Union. It felt that in the existing situation, it would be improper for these offices

to be filled on the basis of a numerical Party majority. It expressed the view that the choice should be made on the basis of a general consensus in which both the ruling party and the Opposition parties should participate. The Board felt that Mr. Jayaprakash Narayan or some other non-Party personality with a background like his would be the proper choice for the office of President of the Republic.

15. The Board felt that the selection of the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker should also be made on the basis of a consensus.

16. It was felt that the Party should not intervene in the impending elections in Goa and that Mrs. Mona Albuquerque, a member of the Party who had been nominated as an Independent candidate for the Lok Sabha should retire from the contest.

17. In response to an inquiry as to whether the Party should also abstain from the elections in Daman and Diu, the Board expressed the view that no Party candidate should be nominated by the Gujarat Unit but that they may extend support to Independent candidates provided that the latter took the stand that the issue of merger should not be reopened.

18. The Board decided that the State Unit should be requested to send recommendations for filling the vacancies that may occur in the Rajya Sabha, necessitating by-elections by various State Assemblies.

19. In view of the fact that Prof. Ranga will shortly be standing for re-election to Parliament, it was decided that the Parliamentary Group should, at its first meeting in Delhi, elect the Leader, Secretaries, Whips and members of the Executive Committee, but that the position of Deputy Leader should not be filled at this state.

The meeting then terminated.

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