

3789

SWATANTRA PARTY

Proceedings of the first meeting of the Central
Parliamentary Board in New Delhi on Sunday, March
14, 1965, at 10.00 a.m.

Present:

Prof. N.G. Ranga (in the Chair)
Prof. M. Ruthnaswamy
Mr. R.N. Singh Deo
Mr. Lakshman Singh
Mr. G. Latchanna
Mr. B.P. Singh
Mr. Jaideepsingh
Mr. M.R. Masani

Mr. Dahyabhai V. Patel (by invitation)

old The minutes of the last meeting of the Parliamentary Board
on September 30 were confirmed.

It was mentioned that Rajaji could not attend the meeting as
he had just completed a strenuous tour of Kerala and had agreed
to go to Orissa for the Convention of the State Party towards the
end of this month.

The General Secretary reported on the results of the Kerala
elections. The three man committee which had been appointed to
nominate candidates had been badly misled by one or two overenthu-
siastic office bearers of the State unit in Kerala and the result had
proved the need for much greater caution in accepting such claims
in future.

The Parliamentary Board reviewed the situation in Kerala as
a result of the elections and was of the view that every effort should
be made to ensure the functioning of democratic processes and President's
Rule, which was the last resort in the case of a breakdown of
Parliamentary government, should be avoided as far as possible.
It was necessary that non-Communist Opposition parties should be
given a chance to form a government and to test its stability by
facing the new Assembly.

In this context, the Board felt that Mr. P.D. Thomman, the Party's
candidate, who had been elected with a thumping majority from the
Poonjar constituency, should be advised to give his support to the
Kerala Congress and other democratic Opposition parties who might
attempt to form a coalition government. Conversely, Mr. Thomman
should vote against any government that might possibly be formed by
the Communists or the Congress Party. Mr. Thomman should, however,
not join the Kerala Congress bloc in the Assembly but should inform
the Speaker that he would function as the Swatantra Party's
representative.

In the event of Mr. P. D. Thomman being invited to be the Speaker
of the Kerala Assembly, there would be no objection to his accepting
the invitation. On the other hand, if Mr. Thomman was invited to
join the Cabinet that was proposed to be brought into existence, he
should be advised that it would be desirable in the Party's interests

and his own and that he should ask to be exused from undertaking Cabinet responsibility.

The General Secretary then reported on the results of the Panchayati elections in Rajasthan. He mentioned that he had asked for a report from the Rajasthan unit of the Party which had not yet been received. He placed before the Board certain decisions taken by the Executive Committee of the Rajasthan State unit on March 6 including one requesting the Centre to appoint a Committee to inquire into the Party's failure in the elections. After some discussion, it was decided that it was not necessary to appoint a Committee to inquire into the matter but that the General Secretary should go into the matter and submit a report to the next meeting of the Parliamentary Board. The General Secretary mentioned that he would, in response to an invitation from members of the Rajasthan unit, endeavour to pay a visit to Rajasthan in order to meet the State Executive and other Workers of the Party there.

Arising out of these reports, the Parliamentary Board discussed the impending civil elections in Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Andhra and other States. While reaffirming the earlier decision of the Parliamentary Board of the Party that State units should be free to decide on whether or not to contest civil and Jilla Parishad elections in the name of the Party, the Board expressed the view that the pattern furnished by the Party's attitude in the Bangalore and Ahmedabad municipal elections, namely, that of participating in the formation of a Civic Front (excluding communist) and of fighting the elections on a civic programme was a happy model for other State units of the Party to follow.

The General Secretary then reported on certain discussions which he had with spokesmen of the Republican Party and of the Backward Classes. The Board welcomed these discussions and asked the General Secretary to report to it further progress with these talks.

The fact that elections to the State Assembly in Orissa were due to take place early in 1966 was then mentioned to the Board and the General Secretary said steps were being taken to provide timely assistance to the Orissa unit in preparing for these elections and that the necessary adjustments in procedure would be made.

In this connection, the General Secretary asked anyone who could enlighten the Party about the availability of second hand jeeps with a view to their purchase by the Party immediately to inform the Central Office.

The Board then considered a Note placed before it relating to the procedure to be followed in connection with the selection of Parliamentary constituencies and nomination of prospective candidates arising out of the decisions of the General Council of the Party. After discussion, the Note was adopted with slight verbal alterations (copy attached).

Arising out of this Note, the Parliamentary Board decided to appoint a Sub-committee consisting of the President, Rajaji, Mr. R.N. Singh Deo and the General Secretary to consider recommendations in regard to prospective candidates for the first General Elections and candidates in by-elections between meetings of the Parliamentary Board in order to obviate delay. When the Sub-committee was unanimous

in regard to the nomination of a candidate, its decision along with the reasons and attendant circumstances should be reported to all members of the Parliamentary Board and their approval obtained by circular. All matters in regard to which there was no such unanimity should be held over for decision by the next meeting of the full Board. As decided by the resolution of the National Executive appointing the Board, leaders of the groups in the two Houses of Parliament and State Legislature Groups who were not members of the sub-Committee may be invited to be present for consultation when matters concerning their House or the nomination of candidates to it were to be discussed.

The first meeting of the Sub-Committee would take place in Dhenkanal on March 28.

A Note on the procedure to be followed in regard to by-elections to Parliament and State Legislatures was considered and adopted (copy attached).

Arising out of the Note, Mr. Latchanna, the President of the Andhra unit, reported that there would shortly be a by-election in Venkuru Assembly constituency. He reported that the Andhra State unit desire that Mr. Y. Venkata Rao, who was the Party's candidate in the last elections and had come second, should be nominated for this by election as the Swatantra Party candidate. Professor Ranga supported this recommendation. The Board decided to authorise the nomination of Mr. Venkat Rao as the Party's candidate, provided he agreed in writing to be the Party's candidate. In case, however, he wished to stand as an independent, he could do so after tendering his resignation from membership of the Party.

In an impending by election to Parliament from the Mehbaboobad constituency, Mr. Latchanna reported that the Andhra unit desired to support the candidature of Mr. Damodara Reddy as an independent. He further reported that Mr. Reddy had given a written assurance that he would join the Swatantra Party in Parliament, if elected. On the basis of this assurance, the Board decided that the Swatantra Party should support Mr. Damodara Reddy as an independent candidate.

Maharawal Lakshman Singh mentioned that two by-elections to the State Assembly were also likely to take place in Rajasthan and he was requested to arrange for the recommendation of the State Parliamentary Board to be forwarded to the Central Office as early as possible for the consideration of the Parliamentary Board or its Sub-Committee.

The Board then took up consideration of certain recommendations in regard to prospective Parliamentary candidates received from various States and the following candidates were nominated as prospective candidates in the constituencies shown against their respective names:

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| 1. Professor N.G. Ranga | Chittor |
| 2. Mr. C.L. Narasimha Reddy | Rajampet |
| 3. Mr. Harihara Das | Bhanjnagar |
| 4. Maharani Gayatri Devi | Jaipur |
| 5. Mr. M. R. Masani | Rajkot |

The meeting then terminated.