

3893

SWATANTRA PARTY

Procedure re. selection of Parliamentary constituencies
and nomination of prospective candidates

.....

Arising out of the resolution of the General Council endorsing certain proposals placed before it in regard to a national campaign by the Swatantra Party in connection with the General Election of 1967, it has become necessary for the Central Parliamentary Board which has been entrusted with the task of supervising and controlling the day-to-day development of this campaign to lay down certain procedures to be followed in regard to :

- (A) The decisions in regard to which Parliamentary Constituencies to contest and the selection of prospective Parliamentary candidates;
 - (B) The decisions in regard to which State Assemblies to contest and the selection of prospective candidates for such State Assemblies;
 - (C) The recruitment and training of a full-time Organiser at the level of the Parliamentary Constituency, and
 - (D) The decision on whether or not to participate in by-elections between now and 1967 to the Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha and State Assemblies.
- (A) The first thing is for the State Parliamentary Boards or Committees to consider the relative priorities of various Parliamentary constituencies. It is important that the Constituencies which are likely to be the most responsive and rewarding should be the ones for which suitable candidates should first be found and nominated. Constituencies which are likely to be the most responsive to our cause and favourable to our Party because of our local contacts, services rendered by our workers and social and economic factors and can, therefore, be considered to be rewarding to us, if only we concentrate our efforts, have to be spotted first.

Each State Parliamentary Board should, therefore, be requested to submit a list of Parliamentary Constituencies in their State which they consider to be suitable for nursing in an order of priority.

The next thing is for State Parliamentary Boards to start recommending the names of suitable candidates for the Constituencies which, in their opinion, should enjoy high priority. It is a matter for regret that so far it has been found possible to nominate only 16 prospective Parliamentary candidates throughout the country. This process must now be accelerated. Here, there are two considerations to be borne in mind. First the good character, personality and political record of the candidate; and, secondly, his suitability for and acceptability to the constituency.

While the Central Parliamentary Board need not at this stage lay down a rigid procedure to be followed at Constituency and State levels, it certainly needs to be emphasised that greatest care in the choice of a candidate and the fullest consultation in regard to his acceptability within a constituency should be secured. It is for the State Parliamentary Board to work out this procedure in detail in the light of its own circumstances. When recommending the name

of a person as a prospective Parliamentary candidate for a constituency, the recommendation should state what steps were taken in regard to scrutinising the candidate's credentials and ensuring that the candidate is generally acceptable to the Party's Workers and to the Constituency in general.

The National Headquarters of the Party may in some cases be able to help State Units by recommending the names of suitable persons, from within the State or outside, who would be valuable to the Party in Parliament as possible Parliamentary candidates, either from a particular constituency or generally from the State. In that case, the State Parliamentary Board should send its detailed and well-considered comments or recommendation in regard to such names while forwarding its own recommendation to the Central Parliamentary Board.

After the inquiries and consultations are completed, there should be a formal decision by the State Parliamentary Board at a duly convened meeting to recommend the name of the prospective Parliamentary candidate to the Central Office.

The Central Office will naturally make necessary inquiries and submit its own report to the Central Parliamentary Board in regard to recommendations received from the State. It is desirable that these inquiries should be completed within a month or two of the receipt of the recommendations and that every step is taken to ensure dispatch. The Central Office will place before the Central Parliamentary Board the recommendations received from the State units with a report of its own investigations so that a considered decision may be taken.

The question arises whether the Central Parliamentary Board would like to delegate its powers to nominate prospective Parliamentary candidates to a small Sub-committee which, in order to obviate delay, can meet and take decisions between meetings of the Central Parliamentary Board. If so, such a Sub-Committee should only take positive decisions and nominate candidates where its members are unanimous and all other matters should be held over for a decision by the full Board.

(B) Similar considerations and procedures would be applicable to prospective candidates for State Assemblies, except that here much greater attention and consultation will have to take place at Assembly Constituency, Parliamentary Constituency and State level. Conversely, the role of the Central Parliamentary Board will be to some extent a less active one than in the case of Parliamentary candidates and greater responsibility will fall on State Parliamentary Boards. Naturally, the prospective Parliamentary candidate where he is already nominated should be consulted in regard to the nomination of State Assembly candidates within his constituency and, in the report that is made to the Central Parliamentary Board, it should be clearly stated whether or not a recommendation has the concurrence of the prospective Parliamentary candidate.

(C) ORGANISERS : The recruitment of Field Organisers at Parliamentary Constituency level should be pursued simultaneously with the search for good candidates. In the choice of a field worker, the views of the prospective Parliamentary candidate, if there is one already nominated, should also be borne in mind. The quality of the Field Organiser will be next only in importance to that of the candidate himself. The training of such Organisers is a matter that should receive attention and the Central Office should be asked to place itself in a position where training courses may be held, from time to time, following the lines of a course already successfully organised in Bombay in the month of August, 1964.

Swatantra Party

Procedure regarding By-Elections to the Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha and State Assemblies and Councils between now and the General Elections, 1967.

It is a matter for regret that, notwithstanding repeated requests, State Executive Committees and Parliamentary Boards have failed to consider in time the position they wish to adopt in the face of impending by-elections to Parliament or State Assemblies. As a result, the Central Parliamentary Board is almost invariably ignored and quite often recommendations are received in the Central Office within two or three days of the last date for nomination and after someone has already been advised to put in his nomination paper. The results of this laxity have been disastrous. Time after time, mistakes that could have been avoided have been committed resulting in the rout of the Party's candidate and even the forfeiture of his security deposit.

What is more harmful than the defeat itself is the deleterious effect it has on the Party's prestige throughout the country where a local reverse is magnified into a national trend.

The two most recent examples of this are the by-election in Mysore State where our Party's candidate polled 2,702 votes as opposed to 73,193 votes secured by the winning candidate and 36,765 votes by an Independent candidate and forfeited his deposit; and a defeat of the Party's candidate by 92 votes to 39 in an election to the Rajya Sabha from Rajasthan.

The Central Parliamentary Board obviously cannot be expected to tolerate the continuance of this course of behaviour for which there is no excuse whatsoever. In all cases when a member of a Legislature dies or retires and a vacancy is created, there are several weeks and months before the election is notified and that time should be utilised to consider the Party's position and make suitable recommendations.

State Units will now have to be informed that unless they are able to send their recommendations well in advance to enable the Central Parliamentary Board to meet and consider their recommendation, they will no longer consider themselves free to nominate any candidate at all.
