

Swatantra Party

CENTRAL OFFICE

PHONE: 251424

GRAMS: SURAJYAM



3979

SASOON BUILDING,
143, MAHATMA GANDHI ROAD,
BOMBAY 1.

12th April, 1967

When replying, please quote our Reference No. _____

CENTRAL PARLIAMENTARY BOARD SUB-COMMITTEE CIRCULAR No. 23

Dear friend,

In the last few days, events have moved fast and it has not been possible to consult you on one or two matters in regard to which normally this would have been done.

The first of these developments is in regard to the formation of a new Government in the U.P. Last week in Delhi I was suddenly confronted with the situation of having to decide on the spot whether or not a member of our Party should join the Cabinet being formed by Mr. Charan Singh who had been appointed Chief Minister. The difficulty in the way was the fact that Communists would also be in the Cabinet. Mr. Bandekar and I were both opposed to this step being taken in view of our Party's policy of double rejection and non-association with Communists.

We had however to meet pressure from more than one quarter. On the one hand, Mr. Charan Singh rang me up in Delhi and requested me to agree to Mr. Akhtar Ali Khan, the leader of our small group of 11 or 12 in the Vidhan Sabha, joining the Cabinet. He pointed out that our failure to respond might well involve a fresh crisis. He pleaded that he was asking for cooperation not with his Communist colleagues but with himself and that his views on basic issues were well known to us. On the other hand, we had Mr. B.P. Singh, our State President, Mr. Sulfiqar Ali Khan, our new member of Parliament, and Mr. Akhtar Ali Khan, who came up to Delhi with a letter signed by all our Assembly Members urging that, in view of the special situation that had been created and the strong public opinion which demanded their full cooperation, our attitude in not responding was liable to turn public opinion against the Party in the U.P. Our plea that support to the Government from outside the Cabinet would meet the needs of the case was not accepted by our U.P. colleagues, who were unanimous on the subject.

In view of all this Mr. Bandekar and I thought the lesser evil, in the absence of time to convene a full meeting of the Central Parliamentary Board, would be to let our U.P. colleagues have their way and in this we had the support of Rajaji who had been quickly consulted and who had advised that the member concerned may be allowed to join the Cabinet. The gentleman in question has given us a letter agreeing to resign from the U.P. Cabinet whenever called upon to do so by the Central Parliamentary Board of the Party.

...2/-

The second development is in regard to a by-election to the Rajya Sabha from the State of Orissa. The State Parliamentary Board has recommended the name of Mr. Thirani, who is not a member of any Party. It seems that our Party's efforts to get a Party worker's name accepted by the Jana Congress were not successful and this compromise had to be agreed upon because otherwise neither our candidate nor theirs would be successful, since there is a by-election for only one seat. Mr. P.K. Deo objected to this recommendation as he wished his brother, Mr. B.K. Deo, to be the candidate. This matter was discussed by me with Mr. Sundermani Patel, the State General Secretary, and also jointly with Mr. R.M. Singh Deo and Mr. B.K. Deo. In the end I am happy to say I was able to get them to agree to the following formula :

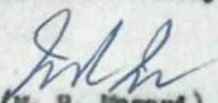
In view of the strong feeling against Mr. Thirani in a section of our Party, the Jana Congress is being asked to propose some other candidate who would agree to join the Swatantra Party in the Rajya Sabha on election. Failing this, Mr. Thirani will be the candidate supported by our Party, provided he agrees in writing prior to nomination to join the Swatantra Party in the Rajya Sabha on his election.

I trust the action taken by us on both these points will be approved by the Parliamentary Sub-Committee.

There is a third matter on which I would like to have the views of members of the Parliamentary Board Sub-Committee and that is in regard to the next meeting of the Central Parliamentary Board. Mr. Dandekar and I feel that either the Central Parliamentary Board or the full National Executive should meet a couple of days before the next Session of Parliament which commences on May 22. It may be mentioned here that the Congress Working Committee is having a one-week session away from Delhi a few days earlier, thus showing the importance they attach to working out fundamental policy and strategy.

Mr. Dandekar and I recommend that we have a two-day meeting of either the Parliamentary Board or the National Executive on the eve of the next Session of Parliament. The venue should be Delhi or Madras (to avoid the strain on Rajaji). If it is Delhi, the days we suggest are Saturday and Sunday, the 20th and 21st of May. If it is Madras, a day earlier, namely May 19 and 20, would be desirable to enable the Parliamentary Group to meet on the afternoon or evening of Sunday the 21st. Will you kindly communicate your views on this subject, mentioning the venue you prefer?

Yours sincerely,


(M. R. Masani)
General Secretary

Mr. M.R. Masani, M.P.
Bombay.