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from 57 Lodi Estate,
New Delhi 11.

Express Delivery

February 21, 1964

Confidential

My dear Rajaji,

Ranga and I had thought that we would insulate you from the petty harassments to which we are subjected at this end but I see from Kalahandi's letter to you of 13th February, which Ranga has kindly shown to me in confidence, that he has already bothered you once again with his complaints. The fact is that, ever since Ranga got re-elected to Parliament, he has been a thorn in the leader's side. On the other hand, it is true that he has behaved well in relinquishing his Acting Leadership and Deputy Leadership. So far as the seat is concerned, I was all for giving it to him but he himself let Yashpal Singh keep it in order to avoid a crisis with that gentleman.

In opening the debates, the problem we have to face is how far we can placate Kalahandi without doing great harm to the Party's interests. There is no objection to Kalahandi speaking repeatedly. In fact he was allowed to speak on behalf of the Party and be its sole spokesman in the debate on East Bengal riots and Pakistan. He was asked to wind up the debate on the President's Address on behalf of the Party which he refused to do at the last moment after agreeing to it earlier. He was asked to open the debate on the Railway Budget which he has again declined to do. He has been told that he can speak on the Finance Bill but he insists on being the first speaker. The difficulty is that he makes no impact whatsoever either on the House or on the press and our Party's point of view goes by default. Can we afford to let this happen on subjects like the President's Address, the Budget or the Finance Bill, on which people expect us to put our best foot forward? It is Ranga's misfortune and mine that we do not have people like Dandekar to whom we can yield pride of place because he would be effective, but this trouble would persist even if Dandekar and other better qualified speakers were there. Neither Ranga nor I are keen on speaking unless the need is there. I for one have not opened my mouth this session nor do I propose to do so till the debate on the Budget. I am quite prepared to go to Bombay and be there while the Budget debate is on to placate Kalahandi but what will the country and our business friends and others think of it.

We shall do our best but I think you should know the background and not be worried with 'piteous appeals' of the nature you have received. Ranga and I think it is we who deserve the pity! I do not know if you have replied to Kalahandi but, if you are going to write to him, do you think you can make him appreciate the necessity of arranging our speakers with a view to the Party's interest and not treat the matter to be treated as a kind of favour to be distributed like the loaves and fishes of office? I propose to have a long chat with him one of these days to try and make him see things in the proper perspective but, judging by Ranga's experience, I am not optimistic. Perhaps he will respond better to your advice and guidance.

Yours sincerely,

Mr. C. Rajagopalachari,

Madras.

*I have shown this letter to Ranga but I cannot say
we are not mentioning all this to Kalahandi.*

(M. S. MASANI)