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July 29, 1964.

My dear Rajaji,

I have received from Mr. Dahyabhai Patel copy of a letter dated July 26 to you and July 27 to Prof. Ranga.

The point of these letters is that he wishes a meeting of the Parliamentary Board or the Central Organising Committee to be called between now and the meeting of Parliament on September 7 to discuss the food crisis and define the Party's line. I had a talk with Dahyabhai on the telephone a couple of days ago when I was in Delhi on this matter, and when I pressed him to suggest what new action he proposed beyond the excellent resolution on 'Food Scarcity and High Prices', which was adopted by the General Council only a few weeks ago, he had no suggestion to make beyond saying that we might consider the tabling of a no-confidence motion against the Government. When I pointed out to him that 50 members were required to rise in their seats in support of such a motion, his proposal was that we may join hands with the Jan Sangh, SSP and Prakash Vir Shastri's Group in tabling such a motion on the opening day as was done in August last year after the Amroha and Rajkot by-elections. I told Dahyabhai that I would discuss this matter with you and Prof. Ranga in correspondence but that, in the meanwhile, he should ascertain the possibilities of such cooperation forthcoming before we went and called a meeting of the nature he desired. I pointed out to him that our food policy was diametrically opposed to that of the SSP and other discontented elements in the country and that a no-confidence motion might only lead to a head-on collision between us and our co-sponsors thus strengthening the Congress Government's socialist tendencies.

Apart from Dahyabhai's initiative, I too have been feeling the need for a discussion with you, if not with other senior members of our Party before the session of Parliament. Quite apart from the burning issue of food and prices, other issues are likely to come up during this session, such as relations with Pakistan and Kashmir, the ceasefire in Nagaland, which is a good thing but which is inviting a considerable amount of sniping from the chauvinists and the proposed Bill making it a penal offence to advocate secession, which the Home Minister proposes to introduce. I feel that the Parliamentary Group will need guidance from the Party leadership as represented in the Parliamentary Board, if we are to make sure that it does not tend to

go off the rails in some of these issues. I would, therefore, agree with Dahyabhai in suggesting a meeting of the Parliamentary Board.

Assuming that a meeting of the Parliamentary Board is to be called, the date and venue become relevant. Prof. Ranga is going to be in Delhi on September 6 and I would have suggested a meeting on that day but unfortunately I have gone and made commitments in Calcutta. We may consider meeting in Delhi on that day but only if you feel like it, we shall ask you to undertake this journey. A meeting of the Parliamentary Board in your absence is frankly, pointless. As for my engagement in Calcutta, I can easily cancel that and return to Delhi on the morning of the 6th. Do please let me know if you can reach Delhi on the evening of the 5th from Madras. In that event, I would suggest you staying on in Delhi for a couple of days after the 6th to talk to our members and meet a few other people in Delhi. The Swatantra Club will, no doubt, jump forward to have you deliver a public address at Sapru Hall.

The only alternative would be to meet in Madras somewhat earlier, in which case, I would suggest Tuesday, September 2 as a convenient date as, I am afraid, I am otherwise booked up elsewhere both before and after that date till the 6th. Would you prefer us to meet in Madras on the 2nd? I will await your reply before moving further in the matter.

Yours sincerely,

(M. R. Masani)

Mr. C. Rajagopalachari,
60 Basulullah Road,
T'Nagar,
Madras 17.

c.c. to Prof. Ranga.

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