

19th April 1963.

EXPRESS DELIVERY

4760

My dear Ranga,

I have just received your telegram of the 18th and am glad that you are planning to reach Madras on the 23rd in time for our Parliamentary Board meeting. Your presence is absolutely essential for arriving at a decision in regard to the Rajkot byelection. Dahyabhai has also promised to attend. Will you kindly talk to him and make sure that he will be there in time. We will end the meeting by noon on the 24th.

The question of confirming anything regarding Bihar at the Parliamentary Board meeting does not arise, since the Parliamentary Board has no concern with organisational matters. In any case there is nothing to discuss because the decision of the Organisation Sub-Committee which we took at Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan on February 10 has ^{already} been implemented. There was delay on Bakshi's part in forwarding the minutes to me but the moment ~~that~~ we received them I took action telegraphically yesterday and have asked Bakshi, Sardar Harihar Singh, his successor, and the Raja of Ramgarh to instal the new Committee and to do the needful in the matter. So the chapter is now closed and there is no point in re-opening it.

As you would see from the Agenda of our meeting in Madras, one of the items on it is the Official Languages Bill. I see however from this morning's papers that the Bill may come up in the Lok Sabha on Tuesday the 23rd, the very day we are meeting and that anything we decide at Madras may be too late to implement.

In view of this, I thought I would drop a line suggesting that you make it clear to our Members that, consistently with our statement of Policy, the issue of language is one on which the Party has taken no decision and that individual members of the Party are therefore free to give expression to their points of view in a constitutional and Parliamentary manner. I see that in any event they have been doing so during the last few days on both sides. It is desirable however that ^{when} members of our Party speak on both sides on the floor of the Lok Sabha, each of them should take the opportunity to explain the Party's policy in regard to giving freedom of expression on an issue of this nature, welcome that policy and make it clear that what they say is their individual point of view. If Rajaji's views are dragged in by our opponents, our Members should make it clear that they are also ^{their} personal views, so that our Party cannot be accused of any inconsistency.

In reply to a letter received from Jain asking for guidance, I am sending an extract from this letter in so far as it relates to the language issue.

Yours sincerely,

(M.R. Masani)

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