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SWATANTRA PARTY

NOTE ON PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION FOR CENTRAL PARLIAMENTARY BOARD AND NATIONAL EXECUTIVE

By Mr. M. R. Masani, M.P.

As Dr. C.D. Deshmukh's Authorised Representative at the time of counting of votes in the Presidential Election and as one who has kept in touch with various political elements throughout the election campaign, I think I owe a report to the Party about the voting, particularly by our own M.Ps and M.L.As.

In so far as Parliament is concerned, only 101 M.Ps gave their First Preference votes to Dr. Deshmukh. The parties supporting Dr. Deshmukh in both the Houses are as follows:

Swatantra	- 55
Jan Sangh	- 42
B.K.D.	- 20 (approx)

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It is thus clear that some members of the three parties voted for Giri even on the First Preference. It is impossible to say who these were and in what proportion the three parties contributed to these defections.

Turning to the States, the position in regard to those States where we have sizeable groups is as follows:-

ANDHRA

Our strength in the Andhra Pradesh Assembly is believed to be 24. There are also 3 Jan Sangh members making the total of 27. Of these, only 18 voted for Dr. Deshmukh. This is bad enough; but what is worse is that out of the 18 who voted for Deshmukh, only 11 Second Preference votes were for Mr. Reddy, while 6 went to Mr Giri and one washed his Second Preference Vote.

GUJARAT

Gujarat has undoubtedly the worst record among our Legislative Party groups. With a membership of 55 and one Jan Sangh member, making a total of 56, only 51 gave their First Preferences to Dr. Deshmukh. This means either 4 Swatantra M.L.As and one Jan Sangh M.L.A voted for Giri, or all the five were Swatantra M.L.As who voted for Giri outright. The position of Second Preferences is even more deplorable. Out of 51 who voted for Deshmukh, only 37 gave their Second Preference to Mr Reddy; and no less than 9 voted for Giri and 5 deliberately refrained from exercising their Second Preference votes. In the result 14 votes went to Giri and 5 refrained from exercising Second Preference votes. Thus, at least 18 votes went astray out of our Party of 55.

ORISSA

Out of 48 members, 46 voted for Dr. Deshmukh. But of these, only 39 voted for Mr. Reddy on the Second Preference and 7 voted for Giri.

RAJASTHAN

With a strength of 30 Swatantra M.L.As, and with Jan Sangh and B.K.D. taken together, we had a total strength of 61, who should have voted for Dr. Deshmukh. But only 41 did so. There can be no question but that a large number of defections were from the B.K.D. It is also equally clear that there were some defections from the Jan Sangh and Swatantra. Of the 41 who voted for Dr. Deshmukh, only 34 voted for Reddy on Second Preference and 7 voted for Giri.

TAMIL NADU

With the strength of 22, all the 22 voted for Dr. Deshmukh. So far, so good. But of the 22, only 16 voted for Reddy on Second Preference and 4 voted for Giri, while 2 refrained from voting.

GENERAL

It is clear from this that, in all the States wherever we have sizeable groups, discipline was weak. A section of our members ignored the directive of the CPB and were influenced by other considerations.

Compared to the defections in the Congress Party and in the B.K.D., the Swatantra Party's record is relatively less unsavoury, but it is now clear that a great deal is to be desired and could have been achieved.

The election results show that, even if all those who had voted for Dr. Deshmukh on First Preference had cast their Second Preference votes for Mr. Reddy, he would have been elected by a comfortable margin. Unfortunately, Dr. Deshmukh's voters cross voted for Giri on the Second Preference to the extent of 18,437 votes which gave Giri a margin of majority of about 14,000 votes. For this debacle our Party along with the other two Parties, must share the blame.

NEW DELHI
27 August 1969