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MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PARLIAMENTARY BOARD OF
THE SWATANTRA PARTY HELD AT MADRAS ON SATURDAY, MAY 17,
1964 AT 4 P.M.

Present:

Prof. N. G. Ranga (in the chair)
Mr. C. Rajagopalachari
Mr. Dahyabhai Patel
Mr. Kamakhya Narain Singh
Mr. Bhailalbhai Patel
Mr. M. R. Masani

Special Invitees:

Prof. M. Ruthnaswamy
Maharani Gayatri Devi

The minutes of the last meeting held on August 3, 1963 were confirmed.

It was decided that the Board should first hear the members of Parliament who wished to express their views in regard to matters coming up before the coming Session of Parliament, such as the Kashmir situation.

Shri P. K. Deo and Mr. Mariswamy were invited to join the meeting. Both of them expressed their views on the situation in Kashmir and the attitude that the Party should adopt in that context. After this, Mr. P. K. Deo and Mr. Mariswamy withdrew and the Board proceeded to take up the other items on the agenda.

The reintroduction of the 17th amendment as the 19th amendment was then discussed. It was decided that the Party should fight tooth and nail at every stage when the 19th amendment was introduced in Parliament on May 27. It was decided that the Leader of the Party should make a statement in the Lok Sabha giving reasons for opposing the reintroduction of the Bill which had failed to secure the acceptance of Parliament only a few weeks earlier. Prof. Ranga should ask for an assurance that members of the ruling party would be allowed a free vote on this important Amendment to the Constitution. In the event of such an assurance not forthcoming, all members of the Party in the House should walk out as a protest against this after the vote on the introduction. But all members of the Party should be in the House to vote against this introduction. Members of the Party should also divide the House during the consideration stage and the third reading of the Bill. There should be no walk out at any of those two stages.

In this connection a letter from Mr. Dandekar, Chairman and President of the Bombay Unit of the Party addressed to Prof. N. G. Ranga, Party President, drawing attention to the poor voting strength of the Swatantra Party during the 17th amendment debate in the Lok Sabha, was placed before the meeting. The Board decided that all members of Parliament should be asked to be present to participate in the voting on the 19th Amendment irrespective of their knowing that their opposition will be of no avail. It is necessary to put on record the strength of our opposition by voting in our full strength.

In this connection the Parliamentary Board called upon all the units of the Party to mobilise public opinion against this Amendment to the Constitution by holding meetings and demonstrations particularly on Sunday, May 24.

The General Secretary reported on the correspondence he had initiated with other political parties, viz. the Jan Sangh, the Praja Socialist Party and the Socialist Party, arising out of the resolution of the National Convention in Bangalore on "Inter-Oppositional Cooperation" and the disappointing response from all these three quarters.

The work of the Members of Parliament in both Houses during the Budget Session was then reviewed and Rajaji expressed the view that the Party had done excellently during the current Session and members of Parliament deserved to be congratulated on their work.

The developments within the Communist Party were then discussed and it was agreed that no move need be made by the Swatantra Party Leader at this stage.

A statement showing the arrears of subscription totaling Rs. 7,280/- payable by Members of Parliament in both Houses was placed before the meeting. It was decided that the Board's distress at this situation should be conveyed to the Members of Parliament concerned with an expression of hope that the arrears would be wiped out forthwith.

In this connection Shri Dabhyabhai Patel expressed the feeling of some members of the Rajya Sabha that the Parliamentary office was not giving enough attention to the work of the Rajya Sabha. It was decided that this should be looked into and on the payment of the arrears the strengthening of the staff to ensure proper service to members in both Houses should be considered.

It was further decided that the attention of all State Units should be drawn to the decision taken by the Executive Committee of the Parliamentary Group that, in cases of persistent default in payment of subscription, the names of such members would not be sent by the Whip of the Party to the Speaker for participation in discussions and such members would not be recommended for election to any committees in the legislature.

This drastic sanction has to be applied unfortunately in order to ensure the proper working of the Party Office.

The question of Members of Parliament appearing on platforms of other political parties was raised as a result of a letter received from the Delhi unit of the Party. It was decided that, in the prevailing conditions, the Parliamentary Board should advise the members of the Party in the legislatures against going on the platform of other political parties for the time being. This position should be conveyed to Members of Parliament when they meet in Delhi shortly.

The Board took up for discussion the situation arising from the release of Sheikh Abdullah and subsequent developments. Several Members expressed their respective points of view.

The meeting then adjourned till 9.30 a.m. on the following day.

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MINUTES OF THE ADJOURNED MEETING OF THE PARLIAMENTARY
BOARD ON SUNDAY 17th MAY, 1964 AT 9.30 A.M.

Present:

Prof. N. G. Ranga (in the chair)
Mr. C. Rajagopalachari
Mr. Bheilalabhai Patel
Mr. Kamakhya Narain Singh
Mr. Dabhyabhai Patel
Mr. M. R. Masani

Special Invitees:

Prof. M. Ruthnaswamy
Maharani Gayatri Devi

Discussion was resumed on the Kashmir situation and the Party's stand in regard to it. A draft resolution was prepared and presented by Rajaji for detailed consideration and after some modifications and amendments it was unanimously adopted (copy attached). It was decided that this resolution should be released to the press with a view to educating the general public. This matter would be reviewed and discussed at the next meeting of the Central Organising Committee and the General Council. This

resolution would also act as guidance to Members of Parliament in case this subject comes up for discussion during the session of Parliament commencing on 27th May. In that event, the Leaders of the Party in both Houses - Prof. N. G. Ranga and Mr. Dahyabhai Patel - should speak on behalf of the Party. In case there was time, the Deputy Leaders of the Party in both Houses may also speak. There should be no other speakers on this issue.

The Board adopted a resolution on refugees (copy attached).

The Board then reviewed the results of the recent by-elections to the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies, viz., Mahuwa, Amreli, Cooch Behar and Bhilwara.

The results of the elections to the Rajya Sabha and State Councils were then reviewed. Satisfaction was expressed at the Party's position in the Rajya Sabha being strengthened and its becoming the main opposition party in the Rajya Sabha.

The General Secretary drew attention to the fact that in the case of the majority of by-elections and Rajya Sabha elections, the recommendations of the State Units in regard to candidatures were not forwarded in time to the Centre to enable the Parliamentary Board to consider the proposals and to take a decision. In some cases, the proper procedure of obtaining the approval of the State Executive Committee or Parliamentary Board had also not been followed.

It was reported that certain appeals had been made to the Centre in regard to the nominations and conduct of these elections in Orissa and Bihar. It was decided that these should be taken up for consideration at the next meeting of the Board in the light of the reports that would then be submitted to it as a result of the correspondence now proceeding with the parties concerned.