

Swatantra Party

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19th March 1962

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PARLIAMENTARY
SUB-COMMITTEE ON 14th MARCH, 1962, AT SIR
H. P. MODY'S RESIDENCE IN BOMBAY AT 9.30 A.M.

Present: Prof. N.G. Ranga (in the Chair)
Mr. C. Rajagopalachari
Mr. K.M. Munshi
Shri Kamakhya Narain Singh of Ramgarh
Mr. M.R. Masani
Sir H.P. Mody
Mr. Bhailalbhai Patel } By special invitation

The minutes of the last meeting held at Madras on January 4 and 5 were read and confirmed.

RAJYA SABHA NOMINATIONS

The recommendations in regard to nominations to the Rajya Sabha received from certain States were considered and the necessary directions were given.

HIMACHAL PRADESH

The withdrawal of the General Secretary from the Chamba Lok Sabha contest on the advice of the President, Rajaji and Mr. Munshi was approved and confirmed. In view of this development, it was felt that support for the Lok Sabha should be made available by the Party's Territorial Council candidates to the Jan Sangh Parliamentary candidate and that a public statement to this effect should be made by the President of the Himachal unit. The question of whether this should be unilateral or after negotiations with the Jan Sangh was left to the President of the Himachal unit. In any case, no canvassing should be done for Mr. Masani. Mr. Masani might issue a statement some time later in the campaign reiterating his retirement and asking the voters not to waste their votes by casting them for him. If, however, any attempt was made by anyone to canvass votes for Mr. Masani, with whatever motive, it should be repudiated by the Central Office.

On the recommendation of the General Secretary, it was agreed that the Mandi Parliamentary constituency, which was half endorsed, should be fully endorsed.

The recommendation made by the President of the Himachal unit that Mr. Stokes should be given the support of Party's members in the Territorial Council for election to the Rajya Sabha was approved.

Raja Anand Chand of Bilaspur was invited to join the meeting at this stage. He produced the recommendations of the Himachal Pradesh unit in regard to nomination of candidates for the Territorial Council and asked for permission for himself and Kumari Ambika to stand for election if it was found expedient. The list of candidates contained in his letter of March 14th, 1962 to the General Secretary was approved (and the State President was authorised to modify and make changes if they were found necessary).

The decisions taken earlier that morning in regard to the Chamba Parliamentary Constituency were explained to Raja Anand Chand, who agreed to cooperate in giving effect to them.

Raja Anand Chand enquired whether a few jeeps could be made available for the Party's candidates in the forthcoming elections in Himachal Pradesh, and it was agreed that the Central Office should endeavour to secure half a dozen jeeps for this purpose from other States. If there was any difficulty, Shri Kamakhya Narain Singh of Ramgarh offered to supply the required number of vehicles provided the Himachal Pradesh unit agreed to bear the cost of transporting the jeeps from Bihar to Himachal Pradesh and back.

In response to an enquiry from Raja Anand Chand as to whether any financial support could be made available to the Party's Territorial Council candidates in Chamba - Jogindernagar, the General Secretary stated that Rs.5000/- had already been paid to Chamba district unit, Rs.2500/- to the Jogindernagar unit and Rs.750/- to Mr. A.P.Jain, the Raja Sahab's nominee in charge of work in Jogindernagar, and that what was left of these amounts could now be diverted to helping the Territorial Council campaign.

PARLIAMENTARY ACTIVITIES :

The necessity of organising and guiding the work of the Party in the Lok Sabha and various State Assemblies was considered and it was decided to recommend to the Central Organising Committee that a Parliamentary Board should be set up consisting of the following members and the Leaders of the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha groups as and when elected with powers to co-opt :

Prof. N. G. Ranga
Mr. C. Rajagopalachari
Mr. K. M. Munshi
Raja Kamakhya Narain Singh
Mr. S. K. D. Paliwal
Maharawal Laxman Singh of Dungarpur
Sir H. P. Mody
Mr. Bhailalbhai Patel
Maharaja R. N. Singh Deo of Patna
Raja Raghavendra Pratap Singh of Mankapur
Mr. M. R. Masani

The functions of the Parliamentary Board would be to supervise, guide and coordinate the activities of the Legislature parties and generally to see that the Party's best interests were served.

It was decided further that a Swatantra Research Bureau should be set up in New Delhi to do research and service the Swatantra Party and associated groups in Parliament and State Legislatures and generally to help the propaganda of the Party. The Bureau will work under the supervision of the following members with powers to coopt :

Prof. N. G. Ranga
Mr. C. Rajagopalachari
Mr. K. M. Munshi
Prof. M. Ruthnaswamy
Mr. J. M. Lobo Prabhu
Mr. N. Dandekar
Mr. M. R. Masani

Messrs Munshi, Mody and Masani were requested to work out a budget and arrange for the necessary finance and Staff for the Bureau.

The activities of the Bureau will be carried on under the general guidance of the Parliamentary Board appointed by the Central Organising Committee.

It was decided that a Convention of Swatantra Party candidates set up during the last elections for the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies, whether successful or not, should be held on Saturday and Sunday, April 7 and 8. Rajaji is to preside. The venue should be Nagpur but, if this was not found feasible, the Convention should be held in Bombay.

During the Convention, an informal meeting of the Presidents and Secretaries of State Parties should be called to discuss the programme of enrolment of members and the holding of elections to the Party organisation.

It was agreed that the Central Office should bear the expenses of the hall, etc. while the delegates themselves would bear the cost of their travel and their board and lodging while in Nagpur or Bombay.

Shri Kamakhya Narain Singh of Ramgarh, the President of the Bihar unit, offered to send six to ten volunteers from Bihar to help with the organising and running of the Convention in Nagpur.

On the eve of the first session of the new Parliament, which may be some time in April or May, it was agreed that the Party's members in the Lok Sabha should meet along with the members of the Parliamentary Board to elect their office-bearers and to lay down the lines of their activities. It was agreed that the Party's members in the Lok Sabha should be advised to elect Mr. M. S. Aney unanimously as Leader in view of his eminence and seniority. It was decided that some arrangement should be made for a levy on members of Parliament and Assemblies for the running of their group and for organising and servicing of their group.

The Committee further decided that State parties should be advised to arrange for an early Conference to be convened in each Parliamentary and/or Assembly constituency of candidates successful and unsuccessful and of active workers who participated in the elected campaign. Such a Conference would take stock of the situation in the constituency and report to the State Committee or the ways and means to be adopted for placing the Party organisation on a proper basis at the constituency level. A local committee might also be set up at such a conference to act as a channel of communication of grievances from within the constituency to be passed on to the relevant member of Parliament or Assembly in order to ensure that their grievances are ventilated. The State Parties should be asked to take such other steps as may be feasible so that advantage may be taken of the atmosphere created by the elections.

The General Secretary reported on Master Tara Singh's letter which had been received by him and the action taken by him on the advice of Jathedar Udharn Singh Nagoke and Sardar Basant Singh of the Punjab unit. It was reported that, as a result of this arrangement, two members of Parliament, Messrs Buta Singh and Dhanna Singh Gulshan had already joined the Swatantra Party in Parliament and that another member Sardar Kapur Singh, might also follow suit. The Sub-committee approved the action of the General Secretary and of the financial help rendered.

TREASURER'S REPORT :

The Sub-committee then considered the statement of accounts submitted by the Treasurer. It was reported that, as a result of

collection of funds at the last moment, it had been found possible to raise the contribution to endorsed constituencies of the Party to the Lok Sabha from Rs.25,000 to Rs.30,000 each.

This happy development resulted in a modification being found possible in the decision of the Sub-committee in regard to the repayment of the Bihar jeep credit embodied in the minutes of the last meeting in Madras. As a result of this, it would now be possible for the Party, if it so desired, to pay a larger amount towards the repayment of the credit, namely, Rs.2,80,000 in place of Rs.2,30,000 including payments already made. After discussion, the following modifications were made in the decisions of the Madras meeting :

- a) The Party would be prepared to pay to the Bank by way of further repayment of the Raja of Ramgarh's loan Rs.1,40,000 provided the Raja himself paid off the balance of Rs.1,20,000 and the interest that had accrued on it. If such repayment was not made by the Raja, then the Party would continue to pay the monthly instalments of Rs.20,000 on his behalf. The Raja Sahab, however, agreed that he would pay off his share of the balance due to the Bank in a short time and inform the Party of the same.
- b) In so far as the 15 jeeps which were earmarked for returning to the Centre was concerned, it was agreed that these jeeps, along with the additional number that had now accrued to the Party in view of the revised settlement, need not be returned to the Centre but should be retained by the Bihar State Party, for the Party's use on behalf of the Centre. The jeeps should be registered in the name of the Bihar State Party, who would be the trustees for the jeeps on behalf of the Centre. The Raja of Ramgarh agreed to return the jeep loaned to the Bihar Party by the Centre which itself had been loaned to the Centre by a private friend on the understanding that the jeep would be returned to the owner immediately after the elections.

A similar decision was arrived at in regard to jeeps in other States belonging to the Centre and which were due to be returned to the Centre by the State Parties. These jeeps may be retained by the State Parties on behalf of the Centre for their use and should be registered in the name of the State Parties. This transfer from the Centre to the State would however only be made when the jeeps loaned by the Centre to the State Parties which had been themselves loaned to the Centre from private parties were returned. The State units should be requested immediately to return these jeeps to the Central Office in order to enable the other part of the arrangement to be carried out.

It was further decided that the Party's jeeps and loudspeakers with the District units of the Party in Darbhanga, Purnea and Saharsa should be returned to the Bihar State unit and the District Presidents should be instructed accordingly.

At the instance of the Raja of Ramgarh, it was agreed that an inquiry should be made into the handling of the Party's finances in the districts of Darbhanga, Saharsa and Purnea. Shri K.M.Munshi and the Raja of Ramgarh were appointed to carry out the inquiry and to report to a future meeting of the Sub-committee.

In response to an inquiry received from Sardar Shitole, the President of the Madhya Pradesh unit, it was decided that members of the Party elected to the State Assembly should function as a separate group in the name of the Party and not be merged in a larger group of Independents. Mr. R. Agnibhoj, who had got elected to the State Assembly, should also be informed accordingly.