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Swatantra Party Parliamentary Office

53 North Avenue,
New Delhi.

July 3, 1967.

Minutes of the Meeting

A meeting of the General Body of the Party in Parliament was held at 6.00 P.M. on Friday, 30th June, 1967 in Room No.53 1st Floor, Parliament House. The following were present:

1. Prof. N.G. Ranga (in the Chair)
2. Maharaja P.K. Deo
3. Shri Meghrajji
4. Shri D.N. Patodia
5. Shri Piloo Mody
6. Shri R.J. Amin
7. Prof. R.K. Amin
8. Shri Anirudha Dipa
9. Shri N.K. Somani
10. Shri Lok Nath Misra
11. Shri Dahyabhai Parmar
12. Shri Girraj Saran Singh
13. Raja Venkatappa Naik

The Leader expressed his regrets that some of our Members would not be in a position to speak during the current session as a number of Demands were likely to be guillotined. He complemented our new Members over their excellent performance in the House.

Dr. Ram Subhag Singh's reply regarding the Opposition proposal to convert consultative committees into parliamentary committees was read out to the Members. The Members were also appraised of the discussion which the Leaders subsequently had in this regard. The leaders were of the view that statutory committees should be constituted on four important Ministries, i.e. Defence, Commerce, Industry, and Works & Housing and informal consultative committees in respect of other Ministries. He also read out the Private Notes, recorded by himself about other points discussed at the meeting of the Leaders of Opposition Parties.

The Members were of the view that there should be proportionate representative on these committees. If the minimum demands as envisaged by the leaders were not acceptable to the Minister for Parliamentary Affairs, our Members should boycott these committees.

It was made clear that the railway zonal committees do not come within the purview of the consultative committees and hence members were free to join these committees.

Dr. Ram Subhag Singh's letter regarding expenses incurred towards the two parties given to the Speaker, Dr. N. Sanjiva Reddy and Dr. Zakir Hussain was read out to the Members. The Members were of view that unless there was an earlier commitment in this regard on behalf of the party, we were not obliged to pay for such expenses.

Some of the Members present took exception to undue weightage in the Committees given to some of the Members while others were being ignored completely. The Leader said that there are two sets of Committees; Service Committees and the Parliamentary Committees. Those serving on the Service Committees should not be

debarred from being nominated to the Parliamentary Committees. Otherwise, as far as possible, Members should not be nominated to more than one Committee.

The following are the Service Committees:

1. Business Advisory Committee
2. Privileges Committee
3. Absence of M.Ps.
4. Assurances Committee
5. Petitions Committee
6. Private Members Bills & Resolutions
7. Subordinate Legislation
8. Library Committee
9. Rules Committee.

Some of the Members took exception over the absence of the Members of the Executive from the meetings of the general body. They were critical of the Secretaries abstaining from such meetings.

Some Members were not satisfied with the seating arrangement. The leader however informed that nothing could be done in this regard now. In any case, the Members were free to come to empty seats allotted to our Party on front benches while speaking in the House. The Members were not prevented from speaking from front benches. If and when other important seats on our benches were vacant, our Members could occupy those seats, provided they are ready to vacate as soon as the concerned Members come to the Bench. The earlier circular issued in this connection could be considered as amended to this extent.

Mr. Somani, Mr. Patodia, Mr. Mody and Maharaja P.K. Deo were of the view that our Speakers on various subjects should be properly briefed by the senior leaders of the Party. Mr. Somani and Mr. Mody were of the view that this could be done by the senior leaders making themselves frequently available to the junior Members and discussing various points with them. The leader said that he was always available either in the Swatantra Party Room or in the Common Lounge for this purpose. He would also advise the other office-bearers and Shri Dandekar and Shri P.K. Deo to spare some time to advise Members when desired. Shri C.C. Desai took care to send his notes on the Non-Official Bills coming up before the House and Members are requested to utilise them. In any case, the Members concerned must take the initiative of discussing subjects of their interest with the Leader and other senior members. A sub-Committee consisting of Mr. Mody, Mr. Patodia and Prof. R.K. Amin was constituted to give instructions daily to our Executive Secretary as to the various subjects coming up; the source from which material thereon should be collected and briefs prepared for our Members. (Material for this purpose could be collected from the Reference Branch of the Parliament House Library, the Diwan Chand Institute of National Affairs and from our own sources, such as clippings, articles, debates, etc.)

Mr. Patodia was in favour of strengthening our Party Secretariat so that more assistance could be extended to our Members. This was imperative in view of the fact out of 45 Members, 40 were new Members.

Mr. Mody expressed doubts about our Party boycotting the Select Committee proposed to be constituted to examine Shri Nath Pat's Bill regarding Fundamental Rights. He was of the view that by joining the Committee we would be in a position to influence other Members and bring them in line with our thinking and also enable us to table a note of dissent. The Leader said that a similar view on the

subject has been expressed by Mr. C.C. Desai. The Leader was however of the opinion that our best protest could be lodged by boycotting the Select Committee. Joining the Committee would amount to accepting the principles of the Bill. Rajajee was also of the same opinion when the Leader had discussed the subject with him in Madras on the 16th inst. It was decided that our earlier decision to boycott the Select Committee should stand.

Prof. N.G. Ranga
Leader