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Draft Minutes of the meeting of the meeting of the Central Parliamentary Board of the Swatantra Party held at the residence of the Hon. Treasurer Mr. H.P. Nanda, 12 Jor Bagh, New Delhi on Saturday 7, November, 1970.

Present :

Mr. M.R. Masani - in the Chair

Mr. R.N. Singh Deo
Mr. Dohyabhai Patel
Mr. H.M. Patel
Dr. R.C. Cooper

Mr. N. Dandekar (by special invitation)
Mr. H.P. Nanda (by special invitation)

1. Condolence

The President informed the Board that Mr. H.M. Patel's wife had passed away late last month. The Board conveyed its condolences to Mr. H.M. Patel in his bereavement.

2. The Minutes of the meeting of the Central Parliamentary Board held in New Delhi on 2nd September 1970 were confirmed.

3. Kerala General Elections

Reviewing the Party's performance in the Kerala elections held in October, the Board expressed its disappointment over the fact that neither of the two candidates set up by the Party was successful. It noted that while the candidate from Irikkur lost his deposit, the Party's candidate from the Rammi Assembly Constituency had fared much better. A report from the State Unit giving reasons for the Party's failure to annex a seat was conveyed to the Board. The report inter alia observed that, while conflicts between two rival sects of Christians which erupted on the eve of polling was responsible for the Party's defeat in Rammi, the contest in Irikkur was thrust on the Party by the Congress(O) and the Swatantra State Unit in the interest of democratic unity agreed to contest the seat while conceding other seats which, according to the State Unit, were favourable to us.

4. Dakala By-election

The President reported on the correspondence he had had with the Congress(O), and our own State Unit in regard to this by-election to the State Assembly caused by the assassination of Sardar Basant Singh. He reported that the Maharajah and Maharani of Patiala desired to put up their son as an Independent candidate and had sought our support. The late Sardar Basant Singh's wife had declined our nomination but had accepted nomination as the candidate of the Akali Dal (Bateh Singh Group). In the light of the above, the Board considered whether the Party should (a) support the Yuvraj as an Independent; (b) remain neutral in view of the wife of the late General Secretary of the Punjab Unit of the Party being a candidate, albeit of the Akali Dal, or (c) put up our own candidate. At this stage the President and General Secretary of the State Unit were invited to join the discussions.

The State General Secretary said that he had been approached by Sardar Sohan Singh Khambhoj, who had contested the last General Elections to Parliament as the Party's candidate from Patiala. Sardar Bhupinder Singh Mann conveyed the view of the State Unit that, in the light of these circumstances and the desirability of avoiding the defeat of all Opposition candidates, the best solution would be for the Party to desist from nominating a candidate and to support the independent candidature of the Yuvraj of Patiala.

In this connection, Sardar Bhupinder Singh Mann expressed unhappiness over the fact that, though the Congress(O) had been requested not to announce their position in the by-election, their State President Shri Mohan Lal had publicly announced support for the Yuvraj of Patiala.

In the light of the discussion and the views expressed by the office bearers of the Punjab State Unit, the President, Mr. Masani, was authorised to consult the Congress(O) and the Jana Sangh and convey the Party's support to the candidature of the Yuvraj of Patiala as an independent candidate, provided he did not adopt symbol of any other party, even though the Swatantra Party had a strong candidate in the person of Mr. Sohan Singh Khamboj.

In regard to Mr. Sohan Singh Khamboj's desire for the Party's nomination, the Board was reassured by the State General Secretary that the former would abide by the Party's decision. Appreciating this, the Board asked the State General Secretary to inform Sardar Sohan Singh Khamboj that it would consider his candidature to Parliament or Assembly at the next elections.

5(a) Uttar Pradesh Developments

The President reported on the correspondence he had had with the S.V.D. Chief Minister, Mr. T.N. Singh, the State President and the Party's M.L.A.s. The issues before the Board were whether (a) to join the Ministry, and if so how, or (b) to give the Government support from outside. The State President and General Secretary and the following M.L.A.s of the Party were then invited singly to meet the Board and give their views :

The State President Sardar Harbhajan Singh felt that we should not join the Ministry but extend support from outside. He assured the Board that if this decision was taken, he was confident of ensuring that the four M.L.A.s of the Party would loyally abide by the decision. Otherwise, selecting one or the other might create problems.

Mr. Ahmedullah Khan felt we should join the Ministry and nominate Mr. B.P. Singh. He said he would loyally abide by whatever decision the Board took.

Mr. Ramcharan said the Party should join the Ministry and recommended that the Raja of Bhadawar be nominated. As the Raja of Bhadawar was not an M.L.A., he said one of the four M.L.A.s would make way for him to get elected in a by-election. If the Raja of Bhadawar was not available, he would suggest the name of the State President, Sardar Harbhajan Singh.

Mr. Munshilal who is the leader of the Party's Group in the State Assembly, also wanted the Party to agree to join the Ministry even if only a junior Ministership was offered. He said he would loyally abide by whatever decision was taken by the Board even if it was one of not joining the Ministry but of giving it support from outside.

Mr. B.P. Singh said that, in view of the provision for lowering land ceilings in the S.V.D. programme, he was against our joining the Government, but, in view of larger national interest, we should extend support to the Ministry from outside, judging each issue on the merits.

Mr. Mohammed Farooq Khan, the State General Secretary felt we should join the Ministry and suggested either the Raja of Bhadawar or Sardar Harbhajan Singh, as our nominee.

After considerable discussion the Board decided to refer to the National Executive meeting the following day the question of whether the Party's group in the State Assembly should accept the Chief Minister's invitation to join the Ministry or remain outside and give support.

5(b) Mysore

The resolution adopted by the Mysore State Convention (which met in Bangalore on October 18) with the wholehearted concurrence of the Party's M.L.A. from

the State Assembly to withdraw from the S.V.D. was welcomed by the Board. In this connection the Board called upon the Leader of the Party in the Mysore Assembly, Mr. Jwalamiah, to write to the Speaker of the Assembly to allot separate seats to the Party's M.L.A.s in the State Assembly.

5(c) Gujarat

Developments in Gujarat since the last meeting of the Board were discussed in the context of the admission into the Congress(0) in Gujarat of M.L.A.s who had defected from the Party and to the Congress(0) Parliamentary Party of the two M.P.s who had been expelled from the Swatantra Party for gross indiscipline and disloyalty to the Party. After discussion a resolution in the form attached (Annexure A) was adopted unanimously.

6. Disciplinary action against Mr. Nugehalli Shivappa, M.P.

Mr. Nugehalli Shivappa, who was elected to the Lok Sabha as a candidate of the Swatantra Party from the Hassan Parliamentary Constituency in Mysore, defied the Party's policy and whip in supporting the Constitution (24th) Amendment Bill, 1970, regarding Privy Purses. For this act of indiscipline, he was suspended from Membership of the Swatantra Group in Parliament.

Mr. Shivappa was served by the General Secretary of the Party with a notice (vide registered letter dated September 9) asking him to show cause why disciplinary action including expulsion from the Party should not be taken against him. He was asked to tender his explanation on or before September 26. The Board was informed by the General Secretary that no reply had been received from Mr. Shivappa. The Central Parliamentary Board recommended to the National Executive that Mr. Shivappa be expelled for gross indiscipline and disloyalty to the Party.

7. Business coming up before the Winter Session of Parliament

- (a) No-Confidence Motion: On the ground that No-Confidence Motions had become empty rituals at the start of every session of Parliament and were actually counter-productive, the Central Parliamentary Board advised the Party's Group in Parliament not to rise in support of such a motion. However, at the time of voting, the Party's M.P.s may vote in support of the Motion.
- (b) Preventive Detention Act for West Bengal: In the light of the deplorable law and order situation in Bengal and the need to curb the violent activities of Naxalites and other anti-social elements, the Central Parliamentary Board called upon the Party's Group to support as a special case the Government's move for a Preventive Detention Act in Bengal. The Board reiterated the Party's call for banning the Communist Parties as the really effective way to restore law and order in Bengal. The Board felt that it would have been better if Government had brought in a specific measure to curb Naxalite activity. At the same time, the Board made it clear that the Party would not support the enactment of a Preventive Detention Act for the whole country.
- (c) Impeachment of President: The Party's Group in Parliament was advised not to support any move to impeach the President.
- (d) Powers of Governors: The attitude the Party's Group should take in regard to Bills tabled by Dr. Ram Subhag Singh and the D.M.K. was then considered. The Board was not in favour of any amendments to the Constitution in this regard. While holding the view that prescribing statutory limits delineating the powers of Governors was not desirable, the Board was of the opinion that what was needed was the establishment of codes or conventions or Instruments of Instructions on the role of the Governor on the lines recommended by the Administrative Reforms Commission, the Governors' Conference and the Conference of Presiding Officers, that the Assembly alone should decide whether a Chief Minister enjoyed the confidence of the House concerned.

- (e) Amendments to Payment of Bonus Act: The Board had before it a note prepared by Mr. Dandekar and decided to ask the Group to oppose the Bill.
- (f) Chanda Committee Report: The Board discussed the rejection by the Government of the Chanda Committee Report recommending conversion of A.I.R. and Television into autonomous Corporations. After discussion it adopted unanimously a resolution in the form attached (Annexure B).

8. Consideration of recommendations re: Prospective candidates received from State/Regional Parliamentary Boards:

The Board then took up for consideration recommendations received in respect of prospective Parliamentary candidates from State/Regional Parliamentary Boards.

The following were renominated:

Andhra

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| Srikakulam | - Prof. N.G. Ranga |
| Kurnool | - Mr. Y.G. Goud |
| Parvathipuram | - Mr. V. Narasimha Rao |

Mysore

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| Chitradurga | - Mr. J. Mohammed Inan |
| Udipi | - Mr. J.M. Lobo Prabhu |
| Raichur | - Raja Venkatappa Naik |

Maharashtra

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| Chanda | - Mr. K.M. Koushik |
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The following recommendation in respect of a prospective Parliamentary candidate (not a sitting M.P.) made by the State Parliamentary Board of Himachal Pradesh Unit of the Party was approved :

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| Chamba | - Mr. Budhi Prakash |
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The State units of Orissa, Gujarat and Madras had asked for some more time to study the situation in the various Parliamentary constituencies. Mr. H.M. Patel assured the Board that he would forward the first list of candidates from Gujarat for the Board's consideration by the end of this month.

The Board decided that all State Parliamentary Boards should meet and send their recommendations in regard to as many Parliamentary and Assembly candidates as may be possible so that the Board could meet again in the middle of December to nominate further candidates.

9. Mr. Devdutt Patel's entry into the Jan Sangh

Mr. Dabhyabhai Patel, the Leader of the Party's Group in the Rajya Sabha, drew attention to the fact that Mr. Devdutt Patel, who had been elected to the Rajya Sabha as an Independent, largely with Swatantra support, had joined the Jan Sangh despite the fact that both he and the various Opposition parties in the Gujarat Assembly including ourselves had agreed that Mr. Devdutt Patel would remain an Independent in the Rajya Sabha.

The Board deplored the fact that both Mr. Devdutt Patel and the Jan Sangh had broken faith with this arrangement. The Board recalled that, but for sizeable Swatantra support, Mr. Devdutt Patel could not have been elected to the Rajya Sabha.

In the light of this experience the members of the Board felt that Party Units should be more careful and the Central Parliamentary Board be consulted and its approval obtained well in advance before entering into such arrangements.

10. Swatantra In Parliament

The General Secretary reported that the National Headquarters were finding it impossible to meet the high cost of producing Swatantra in Parliament from Delhi. He suggested that the journal be printed from the National Headquarters in Bombay to enable reduction in overheads. The Central Parliamentary Board agreed to the General Secretary's request and hoped that the frequency of publication of Swatantra In Parliament during sessions of Parliament would be maintained as far as possible.

The meeting then terminated.