

Dygr MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CENTRAL PARLIAMENTARY
BOARD OF THE SWATANTRA PARTY HELD AT THE RESIDENCE
OF MR. M. R. MASANI, 2 TUGHLAK ROAD, NEW DELHI ON
SATURDAY, 22ND AUGUST 1970 AT 9 A.M.

Present :

Shri M. R. Masani (in the Chair)
Prof. N. G. Ranga
Shri H. M. Patel
~~Shri~~ Dabhyabhai V. Patel,
Dr. R. C. Cooper

1. Condolence Resolution for late Sardar Basant Singh

The President referred to the sudden and untimely death of late Sardar Basant Singh. The following Resolution was passed by the Members standing :

Sardar Basant Singh's tragic death at the hands of assassins was an avoidable tragedy had only the Union Government taken stern action against Naxalites and other anti-social elements.

Sardar Basant Singh, who has died a martyrs death, was a founder member of the Party and General Secretary of the Party's Punjab Unit. He was a member of the General Council and National Executive of the Party.

In his death the Party has lost a valued colleague, Punjab a balanced politician and the country a patriotic citizen.

The Board hopes that the Punjab Government will leave no stone unturned in bringing his assassins to book.

The Board conveys its deepest sympathies to his family and shares their grief and loss.

It was resolved that copies of the Resolution be forwarded to the family of Sardar Basant Singh and the President of the Swatantra Party, Punjab.

2. Confirmation of Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting of the Central Parliamentary Board held in Madras on July 20, 1970, were confirmed.

3. Kerala General Elections :

The Board considered a detailed note prepared by the National Headquarters regarding the forthcoming General Elections in Kerala.

The Board waited till 12 noon to receive and hear the representatives of the Kerala Unit of the Swatantra Party, who had promised to proceed to Delhi for consultations. Since, owing to dislocation in the schedule of the Indian Air Lines Corporation, the representatives could not attend the Meeting. The Board deferred this item for consideration till 4 pm that day.

4. Situation in Orissa :

Mr. Masani reported that Mr. Singh Deo, Chief Minister of Orissa, had been to Delhi and had consulted him in connection with the current crisis in Orissa and the attitude of our coalition

partners, the Jana Congress. He also apprised the Board of the various developments which had taken place in Orissa since the previous meeting of the Board. He stated that according to the Resolution passed by the Jana Congress, they wanted the Government to be dissolved and to have a mid election, but they were presumably not prepared to go to the polls jointly with the Swatantra Party. On the other hand the Swatantra Party's unit in Orissa saw no reason for a dissolution. They felt that the present government would be able to continue till 1972 with or without support from the Jana Congress. Mr. Masani mentioned that with effect from 22nd a three day meeting of the State Executive and Council was being held in Orissa to discuss the entire situation. He had responded to Mr. R.N. Singh Deo's request to participate in the discussion. The members present briefed Mr. Masani about their views and left the final decision to the President in consultation with the President of the Orissa Unit of the Party. It was further decided that, unless there was major disagreement between the two, the matter need not be brought back to the Central Parliamentary Board for a decision.

5. Situation in Gujarat

Mr. H.M. Patel reported that one of the defecting legislators had come back to the fold of the Swatantra Party. As a result of this the strength of the Swatantra Party and the defectors in Gujarat was equal at 25 each. Two of the Swatantra Party M.L.A.s has not joined the Rebel Group, but had left, one to join the Syndicate and the other had decided to sit as an independent member.

6. Gurdaspur by-election

The Board then took up the question of nomination of a candidate for the by-election in Gurdaspur Constituency for the Punjab State Legislature. The Punjab Unit of the Swatantra Party was represented by the following three representatives :

1. Bhai Gobinder Singh Sidhu, President, Punjab Swatantra Party.
2. Raghubir Singh, Vice President, Punjab Swatantra Party.
3. Harbans Singh Bhalla, Secretary, Dist. Swatantra Party, Gurdaspur.

The representatives of the Punjab Swatantra Party were heard. The President and General Secretary apprised the Members of the Board of the correspondence and developments which had taken place since the meeting of the Central Parliamentary Board in May 1970 in New Delhi. They also placed before the Board the statistics regarding the 1967 elections to the Gurdaspur constituency. After due consideration of the matter, the Board decided not to endorse any candidate for the forthcoming election to the Gurdaspur Constituency. Shri Raghubir Singh, Vice - President of the Swatantra Party, Punjab, suggested that the matter should be discussed at a meeting of the representatives of the Swatantra Party, the Jan Sangh and the Organisation Congress. The Board requested Shri D. V. Patel to try and arrange a meeting of the representatives of the three parties in the near future, when the representatives of the Punjab Unit of the Swatantra Party could put their point of view regarding the chances of candidates belonging to the three Parties. Only in the event of the other two parties being convinced that the Swatantra Party should put up a candidate should the Swatantra Party consider its decision. The General Secretary was directed to write a letter to the Election Commissioner to say that due to the sad demise of Sardar Basant Singh nobody in Punjab was empowered to authorise the use of the Party's symbol.

7. Letter to Mysore M.L.As

The Board considered a draft of a letter received from Shri V.T. Sreenivasan, General Secretary, Swatantra Party, Mysore State, to be

addressed to 8 M.L.A.s in the Mysore State Assembly regarding their participation in the S.V.D. The Board after discussing the matter, approved the draft subject to certain corrections suggested by the President.

8. Rajasthan Municipal Election

There being no further information available regarding the forthcoming Municipal and Panchayat Elections in Rajasthan, there was no discussion on this matter.

The meeting was then adjourned till 4 pm to await arrival of the representatives of the Kerala Swatantra Party and to take decision regarding forthcoming General Election in Kerala.

The Central Parliamentary Board again met at 4 p.m. at the residence of Mr. M. R. Masani on the same day :

Present :

Mr. M. R. Masani (in the Chair)
Shri Dahyabhai V. Patel
Shri H.M. Patel
Dr. R. C. Cooper

Since the Kerala representatives could not come to Delhi on account of dislocation of I.A.C. services, the Board decided to consider the matter and take decisions on the basis of available information, correspondence, newspaper reports and the note prepared by the National Headquarters.

After considerable discussion, the following decisions were taken :

- 1) The Swatantra Party in Kerala should be permitted to put up to four nominations before the last date as recommended by the State Unit for the Constituencies viz., Ranni, Poonjar, Thodupusha, Alleppey.
- 2) Negotiations should thereafter take place with the other Parties, viz., Jana Sangh, Organisation Congress and Kerala Congress to come to suitable understandings and avoid needless conflict.
- 3) The President and General Secretary of the Swatantra Party were authorised to guide the Kerala Unit in regard to withdrawals and any other matter.
- 4) The request of the Kerala Swatantra Unit for jeeps and finance for fighting the elections should be considered sympathetically.

Private Members Bill

The General Secretary informed the Board of a request received from Shri P.K. Deo, MP, to move a Private Members Bill in Parliament proposing an amendment to the Appointment of Judges Act to the effect that the seniormost judge of the Supreme Court should be made the Chief Justice of India. After considerable discussion the Board accepted the suggestion of Shri H.M. Patel that the amendment should be to the effect that ordinarily the seniormost judge should be elevated to the post of Chief Justice of India, but that in any event, any other Judge of the

Supreme Court may be made the Chief Justice of India, but not an outsider. Such judge must have served on the Supreme Court of India for a minimum period of at least two years. The Board decided that Shri P.K. Deo, MP, may be permitted to move the amendment on the lines suggested above. Members of the Party should be permitted to oppose the Bill, but since no whip or mandate would be issued, any member of the Swatantra Party may **abstain** from voting if he so desired.

The Board then concluded its deliberations.
