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Draft Minutes of the meeting of the Central Parliamentary Board held at the residence of the President Mr. M.R. Masani in New Delhi on April 11, 1970.

Present

Mr. M.R. Masani - in the Chair
Mr. Dabhyabhai V. Patel
Maharawal Laxmansingh of Dungarpur
Dr. R.C. Cooper

Mr. N. Dandekar - by special invitation

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1. Confirmation of minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Central Parliamentary Board held in New Delhi on 19th March, 1970, were confirmed.

2. Business arising from the minutes of the last meeting

Orissa Preventive Detention Act

The President reported that, as decided at the last meeting of the Board, he had discussed the draft of an alternative Bill prepared with expert assistance with the Orissa Chief Minister, Mr. R.N. Singh Deo. A copy of the Bill was also handed over to the Jana Congress Deputy Chief Minister, Mr. Pabitra Mohan Pradhan. Mr. Masani reported that the Bill was now being studied by the State Officials.

Buldana Parliamentary by-election

The Board noted that Mr. V.N. Patil had withdrawn his candidature as instructed to enable the Organisation Congress to ensure a straight contest with the Ruling Congress candidate in a seat that had been vacated by the death of a sitting member of the Opposition Congress. In this connection the Board approved of the action taken by the President and the General Secretary in asking Mr. Patil to withdraw.

Mathura Parliamentary by-election

The by-election has been caused by the death of Mr. Giriraj Saran Singh, an associate member of the Party in the Lok Sabha. The Board agreed to sponsor the candidature of Raja Man Singh of Bharatpur (Mr. Giriraj Saran Singh's brother) as an Independent sponsored by the Swatantra Party. The President informed the Board that Raja Man Singh had given an undertaking by his letter of 5th April that, in the event of his being elected, he would join the Party's Group in the Lok Sabha as an associate member. This was recorded. In this context the President pointed out that, on the same principle that had led us to withdraw our candidature from the Buldana by-election, the Organisation Congress had informally agreed not to put up a candidate in the Mathura by-election.

The Board called upon the U.P. Unit of the Party to give their fullest cooperation and assistance to Raja Man Singh in his campaign. Maharawal Laxmansingh of Dungarpur also assured the Board that his Unit would cooperate in the campaign.

Pronouncements by the Party's Members of Parliament which are contrary to Party policies

The Board was informed that Mr. Lobo Prabhu had written a letter protesting against the remarks of the Central Parliamentary Board (at its meeting on February 17) on a complaint from Mr. Somani that he (Mr. Lobo Prabhu) had

The Board wished to know whether this was the result of official instructions given by the leaders of the Party to some of our MLAs to give their first preference votes to Mr. Devdutt Kikubhai Patel in defiance of the Central Parliamentary Board's instructions or whether some members of the Party individually did not carry out the Party's decision. The Board decided to consider the matter further after receiving a report from the President of the Gujarat Swatantra Party and the Leader of the Party in the Assembly.

The Board further noted that our Party had, in cooperation with other parties, put up Mr. Devdutt Kikubhai Patel as an independent candidate for election and that he had got elected with our support. The Board had before it Mr. Jaideepsinh of Baria's letter of 1st April to Mr. Dahyabhai Patel, Leader of the Rajya Sabha, and his letter of 2nd April to the General Secretary Dr. R.C. Cooper. The Board regretted that the Swatantra Unit in Gujarat had, without the approval of the Board or even of the President and General Secretary, come to an agreement with other Opposition groups that the independent candidate we were supporting should not sit with our Party's Group in the Rajya Sabha even as an Associate Member and that he should not even be requested to do so.

The Board had before it Mr. H.M. Patel's letter of 30th March to the General Secretary mentioning that the State Executive had unanimously recommended to the National Executive to take disciplinary action against Mr. Dwarkadas Barai who had stood for election to the Rajya Sabha against the official candidate of the Party in spite of being asked not to do so. The Board was of the view that action should be initiated by the Executive Committee of the Gujarat Party and the result should be reported to the Central Parliamentary Board as to the action which it was desired should be taken.

Andhra

The Board noted that the Party's candidate had been defeated. The Board was happy however that, as a result of our members second preference being given to Mr. Prasad, he had been elected to the Rajya Sabha as an independent.

Mysore

Though the Board had at its meeting on March 19 approved the proposal made by the Mysore State Unit that the Party's MLAs should give their first preference votes to the nominee of the Organisation Congress in return for their support to the Party's candidate, Mr. H. Mahantaswamy, for the Legislative Council, the Board regretted that the State Units own proposals had not been carried out. On the other hand, our MLAs appeared to have entered into an arrangement with the SVD whereby our MLAs gave their votes to a PSP candidate (backed by the SVD) in return for SVD support for our candidate, Mr. H. Mahantaswamy. Though our MLAs are reported to have carried out their part of the undertaking, from the defeat of Mr. Mahantaswamy it was evident that the SVD had failed to carry out its obligations. The Board also noted with regret the fact that, though there were 8 MLAs of the Party in the State Assembly, Mr. Mahantaswamy received only 7 votes.

In regard to Mr. Rattan Kumar Kattumar, MLA, who stood as a candidate despite being asked to withdraw by the Mysore State Unit and the Leader of the Party in the State Assembly, the Board strongly disapproved Mr. Kattumar's conduct.

Madras

The Board noted with satisfaction that the DMK and the Organisation Congress had by their support facilitated the success of our candidate Mr. S.S. Mariswamy.

U.P.

Noting the fact that an independent candidate, Sardar Inder Singh, who was the father of the late Sardar Ram Singh (former President of the U.P. Unit) had been elected, the Board hoped that Sardar Inder Singh would join the Party's Group in the Rajya Sabha as an Associate Member.

Rajasthan

The Board recorded with satisfaction the fact that our MLAs in the Rajasthan Assembly had carried out their commitment to vote for the Jan Sangh candidate (in return for Jan Sangh support to our candidate in 1968). The Leader of the Party in the State Assembly, Maharawal Laxmansingh of Dungarpur, informed the Board that the mutual arrangements between the two Parties had now come to an end and there were no further commitments on either side.

Review of the functioning of the Party's Group in Parliament and State Assemblies

The President and Mr. Dahyabhai Patel reported that attendance of our MPs in both Houses of Parliament continued to be poor. The Board regretted that, despite earlier requests, the attendance continued to be unsatisfactory and once again requested the Leaders in both Houses of Parliament to be firm with members and ensure that they are more regular in their attendance.

State Assemblies

Andhra

The Board noted from press reports efforts being made for the formation of a non-Communist Opposition Front consisting of Swatantra, Congress (O), Jan Sangh, Jana Congress and the Telangana United Front among others. This was in line with the National policy of the Party as stated at the National Executive meeting in Bombay on February 17. The Board asked the General Secretary to call for a report in regard to further developments in this regard from Mr. G. Latchanna, the Party's Leader in the State Assembly.

Forthcoming by-elections

(i) Nasirabad Assembly Constituency (Rajasthan)

The approval given by the General Secretary to the candidature of Mr. Bhanwarlal Airan, recommended by the President of the State Unit as the Party's candidate in the by-election to the State Assembly from Nasirabad, was ratified.

(ii) Tonk Assembly Constituency (Rajasthan)

The Central Parliamentary Board approved the recommendation conveyed by the Leader of the Party in the State Assembly that the Party should sponsor the independent candidature of Mr. Rafiullah Beg. It noted in this connection that Mr. Beg's candidature had also the support of the Congress (O) and the Jan Sangh.

(iii) Sarsa Assembly Constituency (Gujarat)

The recommendation made by the State President after informal consultations with members of the State Parliamentary Board that Mr. Govindbhai Jaisinghbhai Patel be nominated as the Party's candidate in the Sarsa by-election was approved.

Mysore

The Board noted that Mr. Nanje Gowda, MLA, who was one of the Joint Secretaries of the State Party, had resigned from the Party.

The President mentioned that he would be visiting Mysore some time later to meet the members of the Party in the State Legislature and also the State Executive.

Tamil Nadu

The Board noted that six members of the Forward Bloc, who had hitherto been a part of the Party's Group in the State Assembly, had severed their connection with the Party and were now sitting separately.

Propriety of Party M.Ps and MLAs attending conferences of other political parties

Despite a decision of the Central Parliamentary Board at its meeting on February 16 requesting the Party's M.Ps not to issue statements or sign memoranda jointly with other political parties without the prior permission and approval of the appropriate Party authorities, Mr. Ramchandra J. Amin, a Swatantra M.P. from Gujarat, had signed a memorandum to the Prime Minister in regard to the nomination of a person to the Rajya Sabha, along with other MLAs who belonged to the Ruling Congress, Jan Sangh, CPI, SSP, BKD and some other parties. The Board asked the General Secretary to write to Mr. Ramachandra J. Amin drawing his attention to the earlier decision and requesting him not to act against it in future.

The Meeting then terminated.