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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 19th March 1970.

Present :

Mr. M. R. Masani, in the Chair
Professor N. G. Ranga
Mr. R. N. Singh Deo
Mr. Dahyabhai V. Patel
Mr. G. Latchanna,
Dr. R. C. Cooper

I Confirmation of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Central Parliamentary Board held in Bombay on February 17, 1970 were confirmed.

II Business Arising from Minutes of Last Meeting

Orissa Preventive Detention Act

Mr. M. R. Masani reported on action taken to prepare an alternative Bill for Orissa. He said that, with the assistance of an eminent lawyer, Dr. L. N. Singhvi, he had got a draft of an alternative bill prepared with expert assistance. It was decided that the draft be discussed with the Orissa Chief Minister, Mr. Singh Deo, and that it should be further examined by officials of the Orissa Government. At an appropriate time, it may be considered for introduction as a Bill to replace the existing Orissa Preventive Detention Act.

III Biennial Elections to the Rajya Sabha

The President reported on developments in Andhra including his visit to Hyderabad on 14th March. The General Secretary read out a telegram received from Mr. Latchanna regarding the Andhra Legislative Party's proposal for the Rajya Sabha candidate.

After discussion it was decided to approve the recommendation of the State Legislature Party nominating Mr. Srikrishnamurthy as the Party's candidate for the Rajya Sabha in place of Mr. H. R. Sayoji Rao who had been nominated by the Board at its last meeting on February 17 but who had since withdrawn from the contest. A pledge to accept the discipline of the Party received from Mr. Srikrishnamurthy was recorded.

In so far as the second preference votes of the Party's members was concerned, the Board approved of the agreement reached between our Party and the Opposition Congress Party to the following effect :

- (a) that the candidate of each Party will not approach any member of the other Party for his first preference vote;
- (b) that the members of each Party would give all their second preference votes to the nominees of the other Party.

The Central Parliamentary Board hoped that this agreement will be scrupulously observed by both sides and called upon all members of the Party in the Andhra Assembly to cast their second preference votes for Mr. K.L. N. Prasad, the nominee of the Congress Opposition Party.

Gujarat

The President and the General Secretary reported on developments since the last meeting of the Central Parliamentary Board held in Bombay on February 17. The Board regretted that, in spite of specific requests from the General Secretary, no recommendation had yet been received by the Board regarding the second preference votes in the Rajya Sabha election. It was reported by Mr. Dahyabhai Patel that the Opposition Parties in the Gujarat Assembly had agreed on the candidature of Mr. Devdutt Kikubhai Patel, M.A., a Lecturer in history, who is an independent Adivasi candidate. It was decided that the matter be left to the Gujarat Legislature Party to decide in view of their failure to submit a recommendation to the Board for its consideration.

Tamil Nadu

The Board ratified the decision arrived at by Circular (CPB Circular No. 53 of March 5, 1970), approving the candidature of Mr. Mariswamy for the Rajya Sabha.

Regarding the exercise of second preference votes arising out of para 2 of a letter from the General Secretary of the Tamil Nadu unit dated March 14, the Board decided that the General Secretary at the National Headquarters should give suitable instructions clarifying the position regarding the effect of casting second preference votes. The Board similarly ratified the approval given by Circular to the candidatures of Mr. Chitra Narayanaswamy from the Graduates' Constituency and Mr. Sunder Rajan from the Assembly Constituency in the elections to the Legislative Council.

The Board also approved a telegram sent by the President to Mr. Mariswamy requesting him not to agree to any suggestions to withdraw from the contest.

Mysore

The Board considered letters dated March 14 and March 17 from Mr. V. T. Sreenivasan, General Secretary of the Mysore State Swatantra Party, to the General Secretary and the President respectively. The President mentioned that he would try to visit Bangalore before March 25 to meet the legislators there in response to the request of the State Unit.

The Board approved the proposal to give the Party's first preference votes to the nominee of the Organisation Congress for the Rajya Sabha election provided we get support from them for the candidature of Mr. Mahantaswamy for the election to the Upper House.

Orissa

The Board ratified the decision taken regarding nomination of Mr. B. K. Deo for the Rajya Sabha from Orissa as per CPB Circular No. 53 of March 5, 1970.

Assam

The Board approved the State Legislature Group's proposal for casting the first preference votes in favour of Mr. Bipin Pal Das, the United Legislative Group candidate.

Bihar

The Board approved the proposal of the State Legislature Group, for casting the first preference votes in favour of Mr. Jai Narayan, an independent candidate, the second preference in favour of the candidate of the Organisation Congress, and third preference vote in favour of the Jana Sangh candidate.

Punjab

The Board approved the State Unit's recommendation for casting the first preference vote in favour of Giani Bhupinder Singh and the second preference vote in favour of Mr. Gurucharan Singh Rauria.

Rajasthan

The Board regretted that, in spite of a specific request, no recommendation had been received from the Rajasthan State Unit regarding utilisation of the second preference votes. The Board decided that the first preference votes should go to the Jana Sangh candidate in accordance with the earlier understanding and the Unit should be left free to decide regarding the second preference vote in view of their failure to put up any recommendation to the Board. However, the freedom did not include voting for the Ruling Congress or Communist candidates.

UP

It was decided to accept the recommendation of the State Unit, namely, that the first preference votes should be cast in favour of Sardar Inder Singh and the second preference votes in favour of Mr. Mahavir Tyagi, an Opposition Congress candidate.

The Board decided that reports regarding the carrying out of the above decisions of the Board should be communicated to the National Headquarters as early as possible.

IV Situation in Orissa

The Board reviewed the recent political situation in Orissa. It had the benefit of a detailed report from Mr. R. N. Singh Deo, the Chief Minister. The Board also had before it a letter dated 7th March, 1970, addressed by Mr. Singh Deo to the President.

The Board was glad to know that stability had been restored and that there ~~was no immediate threat to the Swatantra-Jana Congress~~ coalition government. The Board approved of the Chief Minister's intention in due course to broaden the base of the Coalition Government in an appropriate manner.

V Situation in Gujarat

The Central Parliamentary Board reviewed recent developments in Gujarat and heard a report from the President and the General Secretary

about these developments. The Board also had before it a telegram from Rajaji which urged that "Gujarat leaders and our friends elsewhere should all give first place to the national issue whether Mrs. Indira Gandhi should continue to govern India." As is well known, Rajaji and the Swatantra Party have been giving the highest priority to this issue because of the threat to the security of the country and the Fundamental Rights of the citizen arising from the alignment of the present Union Government with the Communists and its dependence on Communist support.

The Board noted with considerable amusement Mr. Jagjivan Ram's cynical offer of conditional support to the Swatantra Party in Gujarat if it were to ~~assume~~ ~~power~~ in the event of the present Ministry falling, even while making efforts to overthrow the Swatantra-led Government in Orissa and while carrying on a persistent campaign of vilification against the Party. The Swatantra Party in Gujarat being the official Opposition has every right to try to replace the State Government. The Board hopes that, in the event of such a development, a Government led by the Swatantra Party would be able to emulate the example of the Orissa Government and provide the State with good, clean and efficient administration.

The machinations of the Ruling Congress in Gujarat while trying to topple our Government in Orissa should invite the contempt of all lovers of clean public life and principled politics. The Board would like to make it clear that, in the event of the Party assuming the reins of Government in Gujarat, it will do so irrespective of the attitude of the Ruling Congress to such a Government.

The Board, while approving of the views expressed by the President of the Party on this subject in his interview with the UNI on 16th March, the full text of which was placed before the Board, was glad to be informed by three Members of Parliament from Gujarat, at present in Ahmedabad, that there had been certain misleading press reports and there was no difference of opinion in the Gujarat Swatantra Party regarding the National Executive's directive.

VI Other Matters

1. West Bengal

Resolution of the Central Parliamentary Board on Bengal

The Central Parliamentary Board took note of the grave situation in Bengal where there has been a breakdown of law and order and a failure of the Constitutional machinery and the widespread violence engineered by Marxist Communists has already involved considerable loss of life and suffering for the people of Bengal. In the prevailing conditions, there appears to be no hope for the restoration of law and order.

The Board feels there has already been inordinate delay and criminal negligence in dealing with this situation and that immediate measures need to be taken to restore law and order and afford protection to the lives and liberties of the people of Bengal. Alongside of a Declaration of President's Rule under Article 356 of the Constitution, there is also need for the immediate issuing by the President of a Proclamation of Emergency under Article 352 declaring that the security of West Bengal is threatened by internal disturbance and for suspending Article 356 (1) (c) the provisions of the Constitution to the extent that is necessary in order to restore law and order and protect the lives and liberties of the people.

under/

2. Buldana Parliamentary by-election

28/3
1/4
26/4

The Board considered an application from Mr. V. N. Patil to contest the by-election for the Parliamentary seat from Buldana in Maharashtra State. The Board decided that the President and the General Secretary should contact the Congress Opposition leaders in view of the fact that prior to the death of Mr. Rane, the seat was held by that Opposition Congress member. If Mr. Rane's son was put up by the Congress Opposition, it was decided to support his candidature. Otherwise, Mr. V. N. Patil may be permitted to contest the seat on condition that he will be a self-supporting candidate.

3. Mr. C. C. Desai

The President reported on the fact that he had called Mr. C. C. Desai, as suggested at the last National Executive meeting and requested him to give an assurance that from now on at least he (Mr. Desai) would behave in a disciplined and loyal manner. Mr. Desai, however, said that there was no need for such an assurance as whatever he had done was deliberate and justified and that in his view he had not acted against Party discipline. In the light of Mr. Desai's reply, the President said that he had no alternative but to hand over to Mr. Desai the letter from the General Secretary conveying the National Executive's decision calling upon Mr. Desai to explain why action should not be taken against him.

The President also reported that, in response to Mr. Desai's request for an extension of time to furnish his explanation, an extension had been given to him till the end of March. This matter will come up before the next meeting of the National Executive in New Delhi on April 11 and 12.

4. Letter from Urdu Committee

The Board considered a letter dated March 4, 1970, from the Secretary of the Urdu Committee regarding their proposed convention in Delhi. It was decided that such of the members as wished to may be deputed to attend the Convention and report to the National Headquarters.

5. Mr. V. T. Sreenivasan's letter regarding election of Leader of the Legislature Group :

It was decided to inform Mr. Sreenivasan that the matter was left entirely to the Mysore State Assembly Group to set up a Convention if they so desired. The Central Parliamentary Board would not like to intervene in the matter.

6. Bharatpur By-Election to Parliament

It was decided to consult the Congress Opposition leaders regarding the Bharatpur by-election to Parliament.

The meeting then terminated.
