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Draft Minutes of the Meeting of the Central Parliamentary Board Held at the Residence of Prof. N. G. Ranga, 4 Sunheri Bagh Road, New Delhi, on August 29, 1969.

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Present :

Prof. N. G. Ranga (in the Chair)  
Prof. M. Ruthnaswamy  
Mr. Dahyabhai V. Patel  
Dr. R. C. Cooper  
Mr. N. Dandeker  
Mr. M. R. Masani - By Special Invitation

1. The Minutes of the Central Parliamentary Board meeting held in New Delhi on July 20, 1969, were confirmed.
2. The meeting was informed that the following had intimated their inability to attend the meeting :

Mr. R. N. Singh Deo  
Mr. G. Latchanna  
Mr. Jaideepsinh (who had been invited)

3. Ratification of Decision arrived at by Circular  
Re: Reservation of Seats in Parliament and State Assemblies :

The Acting General Secretary, Dr. R. C. Cooper, informed the Board that 12 out of 14 members of the Central Parliamentary Board had communicated their approval of the proposal that there should be a gradual elimination of reservation of seats for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes by reducing the number of such seats by one-third at the end of every five years so that at the end of fifteen years the reservation of seats would disappear altogether. The remaining two members of the Board, viz., Smt. Gayatri Devi of Jaipur and Mr. Dahyabhai Patel, did not reply. In this connection, the following advice from Rajaji was also communicated to the Board viz.,

"I approve of the compromise line taken by the BKD. But I wish the Swatantra Party may convince the BKD members to accepting reductions by half the members once every five years so that the reservation may disappear in 10 years instead of 15 as now proposed. Ten years is long enough in all conscience for this objectionable extension."

The President, Prof. Ranga, however, felt that this matter needed further discussion and suggested that it be referred to the National Executive which was meeting the following day. This was agreed to by the Board.

4. Vice-Presidential Election :

The Party not having set up a candidate either on its own or in collaboration with other Parties, the Board considered the question as to which of the candidates in the field should be supported by the Party's Members of Parliament. In this connection, it had before it a letter dated August 26, 1969, signed by Mr. P. K. Deo and eight other MPs to the effect that in view of the attitude taken

by the P.S.P. during the Presidential Election and their campaign against the Swatantra-led Government in Orissa, they (Mr. P. K. Deo and others) found themselves unable to cast their vote for Mr. H. V. Kamath who was a PSP member. The Board, after discussion, decided that Members of the Party in Parliament were free to cast their votes only for Shri Shiva Shanmugam Pillai and Mr. H. V. Kamath in any order of preference. Members were also free not to cast their second preference votes at all.

5. Presidential Election :

A factual note prepared by Mr. M. R. Masani (who was the authorised representative of Dr. Deshmukh during the counting of votes) analysing the pattern of votes cast by the Party's MPs and MLAs in the Presidential election was distributed to those present and discussed. The Note was recorded.

6. In connection with the Presidential Election, the General Secretary Mr. Dandekar, referred to a press statement issued by Mr. C. C. Desai on 12th August to the effect that it was his impression after a visit to Ahmedabad that, while the Party's MLAs in the State would cast their first preference votes for Dr. Deshmukh, they would in all probability not exercise their second preference votes at all because :

- (a) Neither the Chief Minister nor the State Congress Party President had cared to seek the support of our Party's MLAs for Mr. Sanjiva Reddy, and
- (b) that while Mr. Sanjiva Reddy was the Congress candidate, Mr. Giri was supported by the Communists.

Mr. Dandekar added that the Acting General Secretary, Dr. Cooper, had, on seeing this press statement, quite properly issued a press contradiction on August 13, 1969, stating that Mr. C. C. Desai's "impression" was wholly incorrect and that after his (Dr. Cooper's) own meeting with the State MLAs of the Party (at which Mr. C. C. Desai was present), he was satisfied that the Swatantra Party MLAs in Gujarat would cast their second preference votes for Mr. Sanjiva Reddy.

Mr. C. C. Desai had then written to Mr. Dandekar on August 17 justifying his press statement. In his reply dated 20th August, Mr. Dandekar pointed out that Dr. Cooper was fully justified in issuing a prompt contradiction, as otherwise Mr. Desai's statement, which gave an erroneous and misleading impression could have had the most unfortunate repercussions not only in Gujarat but in other States as well.

The Central Parliamentary Board, after discussing the matter in the light of the above statements and correspondence, approved the action taken by Dr. Cooper and Mr. Dandekar.

7. Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practice Bill

Mr. Dandekar then referred to a letter he had received from Mr. M. R. Masani, Deputy Leader of the Party in Parliament, concerning certain developments relating to the Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices Bill which was now before the Lok Sabha. Specifically, Mr. Masani drew the attention of the Board to the fact that Mr. C. C. Desai, who was one of the Party's nominees on the Select



Committee of Parliament which considered this Bill, had gone on record as holding and expounding views which were diametrically opposed to those of the Party. From the published proceedings of the Select Committee it was evident, wrote Mr. Masani, from the way in which Mr. C. C. Desai had spoken that "it was not a matter of putting questions to witnesses for drawing them out, which would be the proper thing for a member of the Select Committee to do. These were flat statements of opinion put to the witnesses which could not and should not have come from a member of our Party." According to Mr. Masani, the effect of these questions (put by Mr. C. C. Desai) upon the members of the Committee and upon anyone who read the evidence would be extremely injurious to the Swatantra Party. Though Mr. Desai had at a later stage put in a Minute of Dissent which was broadly in line with the Party's decision, that could not undo the mischief that had been done and which was on record. Mr. Masani's letter was noted. It was decided that, when the Bill came up for discussion in the Lok Sabha, the Leader of the Party's Group should ensure the proper presentation of the Party's point of view by the Leader or the Deputy Leader or some other MP nominated by the Leader.

8. Review of the Monsoon Session of Parliament :

Prof. Ranga then reviewed the Party's performance in the monsoon session of Parliament that was due to conclude the following day. The Board expressed satisfaction at the manner in which our Group had worked, particularly during the discussions on the Bank Nationalisation Bill.

9. Rajya Sabha Elections (1970) :

The Board was informed that the following members of the Party in the Rajya Sabha were due to retire in March 1970 :

|                |                                      |
|----------------|--------------------------------------|
| Gujarat        | : Mr. Dahyabhai V. Patel             |
| Madhya Pradesh | : Dr. K. C. Baghel (since deceased). |
| Orissa         | : Mr. P. K. Deo                      |
| Rajasthan      | : Mr. Devi Singh                     |
| Madras         | : Mr. S. S. Mariswamy                |
| Uttar Pradesh  | : Sardar Ram Singh (since deceased). |

The Board was generally of the view that it was somewhat premature to consider this matter at this stage.

10. The Party's Group in the UP Assembly :

After carefully considering the recent developments in UP, the Board reiterated its earlier policy not to participate in attempts to topple Governments. This naturally implied that our group in the State Assembly should not become a part of any SVD in Opposition.

In case the present Government was toppled, despite the neutrality of our MLAs, the Board decided that they could support an SVD Government provided that such Government did not include Communists. In regard to joining any Government formed by the SVD, this matter could be considered

- (a) only if our MLAs were invited to join, and
- (b) provided such a Government did not include Communists.

In this case or in any unforeseen situation not contemplated above, the Group should consult the General Secretary at the National Headquarters.

11. Functions of the Central Parliamentary Board :

Since there appeared to be some confusion about the functions of the Central Parliamentary Board, it was felt that the National Executive should be asked to confirm the scope of the function of the Board and in particular that among the principal functions of the Central Parliamentary Board were :

- (a) to guide the attitude of the Party's Group in Parliament regarding legislative and policy matters, and similarly in the State Legislatures, especially in regard to matters having all-India repercussions :
- (b) to select candidates for election to Parliament (Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha),
- (c) to approve candidates for election to State Legislatures.

12. The meeting then terminated with a vote of thanks to the Chair.

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