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Congress defeats Swatantra in Rajasthan

JAIPUR, April 25.

THE Congress today wrested the Dausa Lok Sabha and the Chomu Vidhan Sabha seats from the Swatantra Party in the most keenly contested by-elections in Rajasthan.

The double victory will considerably add to the Congress confidence as the by-elections had been made a prestige issue. The defeated Swatantra nominees had been backed by all Opposition parties.

The Swatantra Party had been holding the two seats since 1962.

In the Dausa poll, Mr. Nawaf Kishore Sharma (C) defeated Maharajkumar Prithviraj Singh (S) by 6,327 votes in a straight contest. In the Chomu Vidhan Sabha constituency, Mr. Ram Kishore Vyas (C) defeated Mr. Tikaram Paliwal (S) by a margin of 5,800 votes. The two Independents in the field lost their deposits.

Mr. Vyas is a former Home Minister, and Mr. Paliwal, former Chief Minister, had resigned from the Congress only a fortnight ago.

The Swatantra Party's popularity

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1967, the late Mr. Chinaiit Rai (S) won this seat defeating the Congress candidate by a margin of 4,500 votes.

In Chomu also the same story was repeated. In 1962 the Swatantra candidate had won by a margin of about 10,000 votes. Again in 1967 the Swatantra candidate defeated the then PCC President, Mr. Ram Kishore Vyas, by a margin of about 10,000 votes. Today Mr. Vyas avenged his General Election defeat.

Never before such a large force of Congress workers, legislators and Ministers had been pressed into action in by-election. The Chief Minister, Mr. Sukhadia, had declared at an election meeting that Dausa and Chomu would be Swatantra Party's "graveyard". He has achieved what then seemed to be an empty boast.

SHOT IN THE ARM

The victory will act as a shot in the arm for the Congress whose prestige and popularity had reached a new low following the police firing at Jaipur on March 7 last year, the imposition of President's rule and the manner in which it came back to power.

The Congress Legislature Party which is pocked with defectors had not been united and disciplined team.

The Swatantra Party sadly lacks this essential requirement and yet aspires to replace the Congress. Since its formation the party has never made any serious effort to organize itself into a people's party. All it had done was to come to life just before elections and send as many people to the legislature and Parliament as could be returned through the efforts of Maharani Gayatri Devi.

The Maharani has now lost the glamour. Her name or canvassing at election time were not enough to influence voters or counter the well organised propaganda of the ruling party.

The two by-elections revealed that

the Swatantra had no workers even in its camps near the election booths. Surprisingly enough, the name of Swatantra in constituency was not by the late Mr. Chinaiit Rai was complicated by its absence. There was jubilation in the Congress rank and file at today's victory.

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