

12/4/68

Party to discuss Masani resignation, poll defeat

Hindustan Times Correspondent

New Delhi, April 11—Considerable importance is attached to the meetings of the National Executive and the Parliamentary Board of the Swatantra Party on Saturday convened to consider certain controversial organizational matters.

Party Chairman N. G. Ranga, who visited Ahmedabad last week-end to study the situation arising out of the defeat of the party candidate to the Rajya Sabha, Mr Babubhai Vaidya, will report his impressions and recommend measures to meet the situation.

The two bodies will also discuss the resignation from the executive and the Parliamentary Board of Mr M. R. Masani, who was general secretary of the party till he became Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee of Parliament last year.

Discourtesy

Mr Masani was expected to attend the meeting and explain the reasons which had led him to quit the two important policy making bodies in the building of which he had taken great pains.

Mr Masani is, however, visiting his parliamentary constituency of Rajkot at the week-end. He is reported to have declined Mr Ranga's invitation to be present so that there could be a dispassionate discussion of the situation in Gujarat.

Party leaders have taken a serious view of the fact that as many as 33 of the 57 Swatantra MLAs did not reportedly vote for Mr Vaidya, thus defying the party whip, according to them. This has tarnished the image of the party, which had undertaken in 1966 to help Mr Vaidya's election to the Rajya Sabha in 1968.

Mr Vaidya, in his capacity as the leader of the Independent Progressive Group, greatly assisted in the election of Dr B. L. Antani (Swat) to the Rajya Sabha in 1966 to ensure Mr Vaidya's election during the 1968 biennial elections.

This decision was reiterated by the Board in January this year. To ensure Mr Vaidya's election, the Board had also asked the Gujarat party not to set up a second candidate if it affected Mr Vaidya's prospects.

Mr Vaidya approached the leader of the Party in the Assembly Mr Bhallabhai Patel, as well as another senior MLA, Mr H.

M. Patel with a request for being proposed for the Rajya Sabha election. This was not done.

Mr Vaidya has complained to Mr C. Rajagopalachari that contrary to the decision of the Parliamentary Board, Mr Bhallabhai and Mr H. M. Patel did everything to defeat him. He has also accused Mr Bhallabhai of discourteous behaviour.

Mr Vaidya has also reported to Mr Rajagopalachari that State Party Secretary P. Solanki's behaviour also encouraged the Swatantra MLAs to vote for Mr Mahida (Cong.) without any fear of disciplinary action.

Mr Masani has resigned from the executive and the Board because of this gross indiscipline in the party and also because it was he who had, as general secretary, given the undertaking to IGP for Mr Vaidya's election.

The defeat of Mr Vaidya was preceded by the resignation from the party of the deputy leader of the Assembly Party, Mr Lalubhai Vadilal Mehta.

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