

5 5692 E-7
April 23, 1970

My dear Rajaji,

I trust your health has improved even though slowly.

I have just come back from a visit to Rajkot and have received detailed reports of the meeting of the Gujarat State Council of our Party, on last Sunday. They have vindicated what you described as my optimism about the consequences of C.C. Desai's expulsion. The meeting which was expected to start with a bang ended with a whimper. The Gujarat State Council was so divided that a substantial minority of people, particularly from Saurashtra, supported a resolution introduced by Ratibhai Wabhai Patel supporting the National Executive's stand, ~~so that~~ in the end a platonic request to the National Executive to reconsider the matter was unanimously adopted as a compromise.

It was generally understood that this was a face-saving device by which the Gujarat leaders could climb down and avoid a clash with the Centre. Naturally, we propose to take no notice of this resolution except formally to reject it when the National Executive next meets, which will not be till July at the earliest.

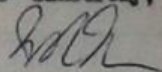
On coming to office this morning, I find a telegram from Mariswamy saying that the Tamil Nadu State Parliamentary Board wished to set up Mr. V. Stanislaus as our candidate in the Colachel Assembly by-election. I have just seen a report in the Hindustan Times of today that the DMK has literally forced us to fight a tougher seat against the Congress (O) in Colachel, while they themselves have appropriated Cheramandevi, which is a comparatively safer seat, though both these seats were contested by us in the last General Elections. Apart from this unfair treatment by the DMK what bothers Cooper and me is the implication of this in so far as our relations with the Opposition Congress are concerned.

In the last two weeks, two by-elections to Parliament have arisen: one in Buldana in Maharashtra and the other in Mathura in UP. In the first, we withdrew our candidate because the vacancy was created by the passing away of Mr. Rane of the Congress Opposition Party on the basis of the principle that the first option to contest (as between friendly Parties like ourselves) should be left to that Party whose member last occupied that seat. In the case of Mathura, where nominations are still pending, I have written to M. G. Malingappa and Sadiq Ali of the A.I.C.C. and to Mr. C. B. Gupta in Lucknow, asking them to get the Opposition Congressman who has been nominated to withdraw by the last date for withdrawal viz., the 24th, as the vacancy was created by the death of Giriraj Suran Singh of Bharatpur who was our sitting member and we were putting up his brother, Raja Man Singh as an independent candidate with the support of our Party. Similarly in Rajasthan, I got the Jan Sangh to withdraw from the Nasirabad Assembly Constituency by resting our case on the same principle.

You will appreciate that our Tamil Nadu Parliamentary Board's decision to set up a candidate in the Colachel Assembly by-election where the vacancy has been caused by the death of a sitting Opposition Congress member cuts across the principle which we have been advocating and may cause us embarrassment when other vacancies arise through deaths or resignations particularly in our ranks between now and 1972 quite apart from the good will or ill will that such incidents generate. I would like to have an indication of what you think on this subject.

In so far as the Colachel by-election is concerned, since the last date for nominations is tomorrow and the approval asked of the Central Parliamentary Board is almost platonic, we are neither approving nor disapproving the "decision" of the State Parliamentary Board which has been reported to us. I hope we shall win the by-election.

Yours sincerely,



(M. R. Masani)

Mr. C. Rajagopalachari,
Maoroji Road,
Chetput,
Madras 31.

MRM:ri