

Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru

Volume 41

Reference on Pondicherry

To U.N. Dhebar¹

New Delhi

30th March 1958

My dear Dhebarbhai,

Yesterday the Pondicherry Assembly was to have met and to have been formally opened by our Chief Commissioner² there. As a matter of fact, as there was no quorum, it could not meet. This lack of quorum was due to the fact that ten members of the Congress Assembly Party deliberately kept away. They are opposed to Goubert³ and want a change in the Executive Council. This was their way of exercising pressure. The Assembly meeting was thereupon adjourned to next Tuesday, 2nd April.

The fact that the Assembly was adjourned does not create any crisis, as in fact the Assembly has very little power to do anything. Nevertheless, it is indicative of the inner troubles and frictions. Our Chief Commissioner in Pondicherry telephoned from there yesterday suggesting that someone might go down from Delhi to talk to these people and he further mentioned Shriman Narayan's⁴ name for this purpose. Obviously, it is far easy for people from Madras to go there. But some of the Pondicherry people, and

¹ JN Collection

² M.K. Kirpalani

³ Edouard Goubert was a member of the Executive Council of Pondicherry Assembly.

⁴ General Secretary of the Congress and Member of the Planning Commission

especially Goubert, are rather allergic to the type of persons who come from Madras and more especially to Kamaraj Nadar.⁵

There is no question of sending Shriman Narayan from here all the way to Pondicherry for this business. I think, however, that it would be a good thing if someone went from Madras-not Kamaraj Nadar-and just talked to these people quietly and told them that the attitude they had taken is not helpful to them or to anyone else. As a matter of fact, we have been held up in Pondicherry by the great delay in the ratification by the French Parliament of our treaty with them about Pondicherry.⁶

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

⁵ Chief Minister of Madras

⁶ A treaty ceding full sovereignty to India over French territories in India was signed in New Delhi on 28 May 1956. The treaty was ratified by French Parliament in May 1962 and the instruments of ratification were exchanged in New Delhi on 16 August 1962