

6-3-68.

From: Dr. T.A. Ramasubham  
Economic Statistician  
Dirn. of Agil. Economics,  
ICAR, Madras 12.

Dear Dr. Swaminathan,

This is in continuation of some of the unfortunate sequence of events that have culminated in the needless delay and postponement of the holding of the Viva exam. of my students s/shri. R.K. Singh & Parmatma Singh, Ph.D. students of this Dirn. While I am thankful to you to give me & Dr. Sinha an opportunity last week to discuss this matter with you, I have been unsuccessful to meet you later, as I very much wanted to, and lay the entire matter squarely before you to enable you to make an objective assessment of the whole situation. Even this evening I checked with your PA and asked him to fix an appt. with you for about only 15 minutes and he regretted that even this is not possible for another one week or so in view of your preoccupations. I have thus no alternative but to communicate through this letter. This letter of necessity turns out to be a lengthy one and my request would be to bear with me in spending a few minutes of your valuable time.

The written comprehensive exam. of these students along with a few others were held in the Dirn. from 7-11-67 to 30-11-67. As usual, the local examiners

concerned with the various disciplines having evaluated the papers turned <sup>them</sup> in with the score sheets to the Prof. After a few days, the Prof. gave me to understand that the over-all performance of Sh. R.K. Singh was satisfactory and that of Sh. Parmatma Singh and another student of his, Sh. B.L. Mishra, though satisfactory in the major and minor papers were "marginal, but from above" (to quote his own words) in the core subjects particularly in Economic theory. As a further elaboration, he explained that in this paper they are on the higher side of the border line of pass-fail but are very close to the line. Having thus been told that, at any rate, Sh. Parmatma Singh is on the pass side of the border line, I inquired from the local members of the Adm. Committee, the nearest date that may be suitable to them to conduct the Viva exam. I was told that this would be between 15-20 Jan. 1968. I conveyed this to the Prof. and on his consent took the first steps of writing to Dr. Juhl (PAU), ~~who~~ (the external examiner of Sh. Parmatma Singh) on 26-12-67 requesting him to convey to me a date between 15-20 Jan. that will be suitable to him to make his trip to Delhi. At the same time, I also requested the Prof. that he may write to Dr. Kohlon (PAU) on my behalf for fixing a date between 15-20 Jan. for holding the Viva of my other student Sh. R.K. Singh and to this he agreed. This arrangement was due to

the fact that Dr. Kohlon was also the external examiner approved by you for Sh. B.L. Mishra (Prof's student) and that he was proposing to correspond with the examiner for his student.

To ~~my~~ my letter to Dr. Johl, I received a reply from him that 20<sup>th</sup> Jan. (the last day of our first trimester) was suitable to him. I asked Prof. whether I can send my letter to Dr. Johl confirming this date. It was at this stage, I was told by him that the Dirn. is now contemplating a revision of the Adm. Committee of my students Sh. R.K. Singh & Parmatma Singh and in particular of converting my Chairmanship into one of Co-Chairmanship. Naturally, I was quite baffled that this revision and along these lines should come up at this stage for no failure on my part I could think of and expressed my strong resentment in accepting the Co-Chairmanship. Two things need be mentioned in this context. One is that only a month earlier, the revision of the Committee of the same students was proposed <sup>by</sup> the Dirn. in order to include Dr. K.V. Singh in place of Sh. A.R. Khan (who had retired). This revised proposal was approved by you on 19-12-67. Even during this recent revision, the question of Co-Chairmanship was never mooted. Secondly, even if the revision of Committees had to be effected, why pick out only these two when there is a score or more Ph.D. student Committees

-5-

in the Dirn. On raising these questions with the Prof. I was finally told of the only pet reason which I had suspected namely that my field of specialisation is Econometrics and not farm management and that therefore I can be the chairman of only those students <sup>who</sup> may ~~be~~ be majoring in Agril. Econometrics; that all the same, since there is no approved field of Agril. Econometrics in the Dirn at present, the Dirn. would write to the Dean about the need for creating a major in Econometrics. I am sure you can understand how my feelings could have been. I put a straight question to the Prof. how come that the situation is viewed in this light now when the Dirn. has proposed my name for chairmanship originally and allowed the continuance of the same for as long as 15 months or more; all the more particularly when the Dirn, more than anybody else, knows that in the recent past, almost the entire burden of theses work of some of the students of the Dirn. majoring in Farm Management had fallen on me as a member of their Committees and that these theses have been accepted with no adverse remarks by the Dirn. as well as by the external examiners who had adjudicated these theses for the degrees.

I could get no convincing answer to this question and the days were slipping by. In the meantime, the

external examiner requested a confirmation ~~be~~ for holding the Viva on 20<sup>th</sup> Jan'y so as to enable him to make further arrangements at his end. When I again approached the Prof. to know what I should do in the circumstances, he told me that in the state of indecision, the Dirn. has to postpone the exam. Accordingly, I wrote an express letter to Dr. Juhl saying that the exam. has to be postponed and that the Dirn. will get in touch with him later to refix another date. The viva exam. of my other student Sh. R.K. Singh also fell out for the very same reasons of revising the Chairmanship.

~~In the~~ Subsequently, I was told <sup>by the Prof.</sup> that a letter has been addressed to you by the Prof. requesting you to take a decision on my Chairmanship and also to approve the creation of a major in Econometrics in the Dirn. All these developments, very bitter and quite embarrassing to me left me very disgusted and painful. I therefore addressed a letter to you requesting you to relieve me of the Chairmanship of the two students. Soon after, I along with Prof. met you last week and the "official" version of the situation was explained to you by Prof. I thought that in the fairness of things, it is only my duty to keep you informed of the other details as well but as I said in the beginning, I have not been privileged ~~to~~ have a personal

audience with you so far.

Just two days ago, the Prof. told me that you have decided to allow me to continue as Chairman for both the students and that you have also asked the Dirn. to put up a proposal for setting up a major in Appl. Econometrics in the Dirn. for consideration of the Ph School. I am indeed very grateful to you for your kind consideration in the matter.

Consequent to this decision, I was asked to correspond again with Dr. Jahl and Dr. Kohlon to fix up new dates for the Viva exam. This I did on 1-3-68. Simultaneously, I also informed the Prof. that one of the members of the Committee, Dr. Hopper is abroad and that therefore an approval by you would be required to hold the Viva exams. maintaining the absence of Dr. Hopper. I also put up a request to this effect to be forwarded to you by the Prof. Once again, at this point the Prof. told me that Dr. Hopper in his meeting with Head and himself (sometime in early January) had expressed that while Sh. R. K. Singh can go ahead with the Viva exam, Sh. Parmatma Singh and Sh. B. L. Mishra (who were earlier considered as of "marginal performance but from alone") have to reappear compartmentally in Econ. Theory paper before they can be allowed Viva exam. This was yet another "bolt from the blue" and was the

first news to me so far all these months from 30-11-67 to a couple of days ago, I although the Chairmen was never informed of this decision. This fresh news surprised me all the more because (1) during all my discussions, <sup>earlier</sup> with the Prof regarding the Viva, no mention was ever made of this (only Co-chairmanship issue was talked about) and (2) in deference to this decision of compartmental exam. (a decision taken in "Camera" as it were) such an exam. in Economic Theory was held some time back for the Prof. student S.B.L. Mishra and the other student (mine) Sh. Parmatma Singh who was bracketed with Sh. Mishra for the exam. was left out. When I asked the Prof. what next, in view of this new information flung <sup>at</sup> me at this stage, <sup>he</sup> said that he still considers Sh. Parmatma Singh's performance "marginal from above" and that in any case, since Dr. Hopper may not be present for the Viva exam, we may go ahead with the exam. And so asked me to continue with the finalisation of the arrangements for holding the Viva. But this morning, he had come to know that after all, there is a possibility of Dr. Hopper being in Delhi in the next few days and therefore of his being present at the Viva exam. of Sh. Parmatma Singh. Faced with this possibility, he has now decided

-8-

that a complementary exam (or "a series of such exams. between now and the date of VIVA exam, if need be") in Economic Theory should be held and Sh. Parmatma Singh has been conveyed of this latest decision. Rightly, the student (let alone one who has been reduced to a silent and helpless spectator of all this) feels hurt and considers that his time is being gambled for no sin of his during all these four months. A question that very logically arises is that if it was considered that his performance in Econ. Theory was not upto the mark, a thing known to the Prof. as early as 3 months ago, why is it that this was not conveyed either to the Chairman or to the student himself for all these months and why was he not asked to write the compartmental exam along with Sh. B. L. Mishra whose case was identical in this respect. Again, it also further raises another question namely whether the onus of faking decisions of this nature does not rest with the Adm. Committee concerned.

In this context, it may also be of surprise to you that Sh. B. L. Mishra having completed his compartmental exam in Econ. Theory has also completed his VIVA exam on 24-2-68 for which Dr. Kahlon was the external examiner who is also the examiner for my other student Sh. R. K. Singh. The presence

of Dr. Kohlon on this occasion was not utilised to complete the Viva exam of Sh. R. K. Singh who unlike Sh. Parmatma Singh has completed satisfactorily the written part of the Comprehensives. The reason for this is that, as I explained earlier, the Director was in a state of indecision about my chairmanship of the student <sup>at that time.</sup> Any way, the result once more is that this student also has to wait for his Viva and thereby delay his research work etc. and again for none of his fault at all or that of his Chairman.

Sir, you are the sole and chief custodian of P.G. teaching and research in this Institute. I have elaborated to you quite in extenso the entire sequence of events as factually as I possibly can that have led to the present state of affairs. Apart from the humiliations I have suffered and the strain I have undergone, what has particularly saddened <sup>me</sup> as a teacher, most in this unfortunate episode is that the students involved have been put to undue and needless hardship and have spent their last four months or so for nothing. All said and done, both are reasonably good students, have taken quite considerable pains to prepare for the Comprehensives (both written and oral) and are ready with their research problems to be taken up as soon as the

Viva exam. is complete. With all these, don't they deserve a better treatment?

Well, I have a lot to say. Perhaps I better not, lest I may be considered as transgressing my limits. However, as the present matter directly concerned me and my students and since you are the protector of the interests of the teachers and the students, I thought I would be unfaithful to my profession as a teacher if I do not bring this matter to your notice. I am indeed very sorry that the letter has been very lengthy despite all my efforts to be brief. My sincere thanks to you for your hearing with me this long. May I make a request to you that this correspondence may kindly be treated as purely personal and confidential. I have treated this completely off the records and would very kindly plead with you to treat it in the same way. I am sure you understand my anxiety. Finally, I seek your personal pardon if you think I have taken undue liberty or ever reached upon your good self. Let me assure you that if I have done so, it is unintentionally or unwittingly.

Thanks.

A. K. Ramani