

Patnaoil
21/3/71

MASANI AGAINST BLOC IN PARLIAMENT

The Swatantra Party has decided against forming any bloc or front in Parliament with its alliance partners, reports PTL.

"Experience has shown that the idea of a bloc is no longer worth pursuing," Swatantra chairman M. R. Masani told newsmen in New Delhi after a meeting of the party's central parliamentary board on Saturday.

A statement unanimously adopted by the board directed the party members in Parliament to "function on their own and articulate the distinctive Swatantra approach and policies."

Mr Masani made it clear at the same time that the decision would apply only to its Parliamentary group, reconstituted on Saturday with Mr Dabhyabhai Patel as its chairman in place of Mr N. G. Ranga, who was defeated at the polls.

DUAL GAME

The decision not to join hands with its electoral allies, the Syndicate, the Jana Sangh, and the SSP inside Parliament did not necessarily mean that other party units should not form their own adjustments and alignments. They could do so "for State purposes and if there are elections to the Assembly."

It was also clarified that the decision does not mean "we are averse to a merger of our parties into a new party." Replying to a question whether the Swatantra would take initiative for a merger, Mr Masani said he did not think so "unless the general council of the party decides otherwise."

The general council as also the national executive of the party have been convened to meet by the middle of next month, either in Madras or in Bombay. On the agenda would be "agonising reappraisal" of the poll results that has left the Swatantra completely routed.

At Saturday's parliamentary board meeting, there was only a "preliminary" review of the elections. Some "fundamental thinking" was still required to be done, Mr Masani said. The council and the executive meetings are likely to be held for this purpose, tentatively on 17 and 18 April, he added.

Resend