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Swatantra split

NEW DELHI, Aug. 5.

Close on the heels of the Bharatiya Kranti Dal, the Swatantra seems to be heading for a split on the issue of merging its identity to form a new party — the Bharatiya Lok Dal. The BLD is to be formed with the merger of seven

Opposition parties on August 29. Simmering differences within the party on whether to merge or not burst into the open today at the seventeenth national convention, specially called here to decide the issue.

Mr. Piloo Mody, president of the party, claimed to have won the mandate of the party by 407 votes to 53 at the convention.

But Mr. M. R. Masani, who had been chairman of the party earlier, told newsmen that the entire proceeding of the convention had been vitiated not only by a new procedure enabling a disproportionately large number of delegates to come from UP and by intimidation and violence within the conference hall.

He conceded that the voting was done in a democratic manner but said that the decision did not reflect the wishes of the rank and file.

Five State units decided to continue to keep their units alive if the party was dissolved and merged with the BLD.

Leaders of the rebel state units—Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Delhi and Haryana — announced their decisions to this effect at a press conference here this evening.

However, Mr. Masani, one of the top-ranking leaders of the party, said that at present there was no question of a split.

Mr. Masani, told a press conference held after the one by Mr. Mody, that Mr. Jayaprakash Narayan's non-party movement and not the BLD was the national alternative to the ruling Congress.

Party president Piloo Mody told

a news conference that it was the first integrating move of the Opposition in three decades.

It was a process of history. There was, he added, no third choice for non-Congress and non-Communist political parties.

Mr. Mody told the press conference that he would call the executive a couple of days before the launching of the BLD and announce Swatantra's dissolution almost simultaneously with the formation of the new party.

The resolution adopted by the convention would allow those like Mr. Masani who do not wish to join the BLD to carry on such non-partisan activities, which eschew all elections, as they may choose in any name other than the Swatantra.

Mr. Mody is to take steps to get the party election symbol frozen by the Election Commission to prevent its "unfair exploitation."

UNI, PTL

Notice of Resolution to be moved at the Seventh National Convention of the Swatantra Party on August 4 and 5, 1974 in New Delhi.

The Seventh National Convention of the Swatantra Party has carefully considered the proposal placed before it that the Swatantra Party be dissolved along with the similar dissolution of six other parties so as to facilitate the formation of a new Party.

The Convention notes that of the seven parties that are expected to dissolve to enable the formation of the new Party, the others being confined to particular States or parts of a State.

The Convention is firmly convinced that the Party's principles and policies continue to be valid and that had the policies of Government been formulated on the basis of the said principles, our country would not be in the present critical situation.

The Convention is equally convinced that the new Party will mark no advance in the search for a truly national alternative comprising as it does those who, though for the present have consented to get together on a general programme are bound to disagree in regard to the interpretation of a vague and general statement of policy.

Moreover, with opposition parties like the Congress (O) and the Jan Sangh continuing their individual existence, the objective of a two-party system and its electoral benefits will continue to elude us. On the other hand, there is real danger of the ruling Congress on the one side and the Jan Sangh on the other being the direct beneficiaries of such a development.

The National Convention of the Swatantra Party does not consider the time or occasion opportune for the disappearance of the Swatantra Party from the Indian political scene and therefore **rejects** the proposal to dissolve the Party.

Proposed by:

Seconded by: