

6 JAN 1971

Swatantra sure to join front, say Cong.(O) leaders

By A Staff Reporter

ORGANISATION Congress leaders, including Mr. S. Nijalingappa and Mr. S. K. Patil, are very confident of the Swatantra Party joining their "national democratic front."

They were addressing a press conference in Bombay on Tuesday.

As the Congress President was holding his press conference at the Ritz Hotel, in another part of the city Mr. Morarji Desai and Mr. Minoo Masani were meeting.

Mr. Nijalingappa said: "Meeting

Mr. Desai and meeting me is the same thing."

He was hopeful that the Swatantra, the BKD and, possibly, some PSP members would co-operate.

Mr. Patil was even more certain of the Swatantra joining the alliance.

"There is every chance; it is a certainty," he said. In his view any alliance without the Swatantra would not be so meaningful. In this context Mr. Rajagopalachari had already been approached by "common friends."

Mr. Nijalingappa explained why his party was against the framing of a common programme before the elections. This was not the time. It was like placing the cart before the horse. He said that, if the programme was to be decided here and now, it might not be possible for all the parties to come together and unity might be affected.

On a possible alliance with the BKD, he said: "Mr. Charan Singh is a wise man; hope he will come in."

About the Shiv Sena he was more careful. He would wait for a report from his Pradesh Committee and act accordingly. Asked about his personal views, he only said: "The fact that they opposed the communists in the Parcel bye-election goes with me."

Mr. Patil said that, so far as the defeat of communist candidates was concerned, he was quite sure the Shiv Sena would be with them.

PRINCES FOR DEMOCRACY

On any adjustment with the princes, Mr. Nijalingappa said he had met some of them and they stood solidly for democracy. Whether they would join any political party, he could not say.

So far, no method on the allotment of seats to the different members of the alliance has been evolved. The principles will be worked out at a meeting of all the concerned parties in New Delhi on January 15 and 16. One thing was certain—that the alliance would contest all the Lok Sabha seats.

Mr. Nijalingappa said that, in broad outline, the policy of the alliance was to defend democracy against dictatorship. There would be no dealings with any communist party or any party

which had the least tinge of communism about it.

The two principles of the alliance were to defeat the ruling Congress and avoid a division of votes in all cases.

One thing the Congress leaders were worried about was the report that elections to the Lok Sabha and the State legislature in West Bengal were not to be on the same day. Mr. Nijalingappa hoped this was not so. Otherwise it would be most unfortunate.