

Limaye sure Swatantra will join front

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NEW DELHI, January 4.

THE SSP leader, Mr. Madhu Limaye, today expressed confidence that the Swatantra Party would return to the United Front the primary objective of which, according to him, was to defeat the Congress (R).

He told press correspondents he was certain that Mr. Rajagopalachari would not agree to the Swatantra Party's staying out of the front because of the absence of a common programme.

According to Mr. Limaye, each constituent unit of the front would contest the election on its own programme. A common programme would be necessary only if the front was called upon to form a government.

At the moment, the only common programme the parties had was to bring about the defeat of Mrs. Gandhi's party.

CHARAN'S PROMISE

He was also hopeful that the Bharatiya Kranti Dal would do nothing to defeat the objective of the front. On the other hand, the BKD leader, Mr. Charan Singh, had told SSP representatives that his party would fully co-operate in securing the objective of the front. He could not explain the form of co-operation.

As for the criteria for the distribution of seats among the parties in the front, he said they would contest the seats they had held in the dissolved Lok Sabha. The other seats would go to the parties which among the Opposition, had scored the maximum votes in the last election.

Since the Congress was undivided at the time of the last elections, the Congress (O) claim to these seats would be determined on the basis of the Assembly representation from the particular Lok Sabha constituency, the strength of the organisation and similar factors.

PACT WITH MARXISTS

The SSP leader said his party's participation in the front did not preclude its alliance with other parties like the Marxists. This had been conveyed to the other partners in the front.

He said his party colleague, Mr. George Fernandes, would seek re-election from Bombay South irrespective of what Mr. S. K. Patil proposed to do.

Mr. Limaye accused the new Congress of trying to secure jeeps from companies through "fraudulent transactions". He sought the President's intervention to thwart attempts at circumventing the Companies Act amendment which had barred the corporate sector from making political contributions.

He alleged that the delay in the publication of the Tariff Commission

report on rayon and nylon yarn was politically motivated to help some millowners in return for their support to the ruling party.

UNI adds: Mr. Limaye clarified that his party, which was a member of the eight-party combination in West Bengal, would break away from it if it entered into any pact with the ruling Congress or the Bangla Congress.

Mr. Limaye said that Mr. B. P. Mandal of the Soshit Dal had shown "eagerness to rejoin the SSP and we have no objection."

Mr. Limaye said that he would seek election from his present Moghry (Bihar) constituency.

He said Mr. Karunanidhi, with an "unchallenged majority, is perfectly within his legal rights to ask for a dissolution of the Assembly."

"Mr. Karunanidhi is driving a hard bargain. He wants to ensure that he retains office for the next five years and gives no opportunity to Mrs. Indira Gandhi to dictate terms for the selection of Assembly candidates after the Lok Sabha poll."

He added that he had information that the "DMK had demanded a very large amount from Mrs. Gandhi for financing the Lok Sabha and Assembly elections."

C. R.'s confidence

MADRAS, January 4: Mr. C. Rajagopalachari, Swatantra leader, today expressed confidence that the problem arising out of the formation of a national front of democratic parties minus the Swatantra Party would soon be resolved.

Commenting on the withdrawal of the Swatantra Party chairman, Mr. M. R. Masani, from the talks with the Congress (O), Jana Sangh and SSP in New Delhi yesterday, he said it was "natural" that he did not sign the joint declaration.

However, he said, the matter would be settled easily enough at the meeting of the Swatantra Party national executive in Madras.—P.T.I.