

(369)

For favour of publication

Talks between the spokesmen of the Swatantra Party, the Jan Sangh and the B.K.D., aimed at the possible formation of a new party of a National Democratic character, adjourned to-day after two-days' discussions. Those who participated were Prof. Kanga, Ch. Charan Singh, Prof. Balraj Madhok, Mr. Takhatmal Jain, Mr. M.R. Masani, Mr. Prakash Vir Shastri, Dr. Mahavir and Mr. Advani.

The talks that have just concluded were exploratory in nature and were intended to demarcate areas of agreement and to assess and narrow down areas of disagreement between the three parties. The talks have so far been satisfactory and it has been decided that they should be resumed after an interval of time that would enable the spokesmen of the three parties to consult their colleagues in regard to various issues that have been discussed, such as the issue of States Rights vis-a-vis the Centre, the attitude towards the Communist menace, problems of Defence including the question of nuclear armaments, relations with other countries including Pakistan, the Kashmir problem, Nagaland and border areas, Minorities, and the Language Issue.

The position in regard to the election of the President of the Republic was also informally discussed. The Prime Minister's statement that the selection should not be a Party question but a national one was welcomed. It was felt that such an approach should involve that no Party should put up any candidate and that there should be a free vote without any Party Whip.

The three Parties therefore would like the Congress Party and other Opposition Parties to join with them in such an approach which would be in the national interest. In the light of this, the consideration of names of possible candidates was not taken up.

Not for publication:

2 Tuglaq Road,
New Delhi.

27th May 1969.

M.R. Masani
(M.R. Masani)
M.P.