

CALL TO ACTION

Swatantra to fight on 'agreed plan'

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NEW DELHI, January 28.

SOFTENING its ideological contours, the Swatantra Party today announced that it would fight the coming Lok Sabha elections on the "agreed programme" outlined in the June resolution of the Old Congress AICC.

Swatantra chairman M. R. Masani said this should be the agreed minimum programme of the alternate Government at the Centre. The Jan Sangh had also accepted it, he said.

This is not so much a manifesto as a call to action, a plea to the people to act before it is too late and the lights of liberty are finally dimmed, the six-page document which Mr. Masani released, said.

Within the ambit of the Old Congress resolution, the Swatantra Party has emphasised seven points which are vital in the context of the present elections.

Problems relating to the defence of the constitutional fundamental rights and liberties, maintenance of law and order, employment, rising prices, agriculture, production and minorities and backward class have been highlighted in the manifesto.

Demagogy

Mr. Masani admitted it would be rough going for a middle-of-the-road liberal party as its voice of reason would not be heard well in the prevailing demagogy.

He said the right to property could not be left to the whims and fancies of a majority in Parliament.

There was no limit to what a Government could do without this right enshrined in the Constitution as fundamental. Modest personal belongings like the small farm of the poor cultivator and the provident fund and insurance policy of the salaried employees could be taken away.

Asked if his party would support the Samyukta Socialist Party candidates, who had been adjusted by the four party alliance since the SSP wanted this right to be removed from the list of fundamental rights, Mr. Masani said it would oppose such candidates if the main plank of their campaign would be the removal of this right.

Subversion

He, however, added that this question should be addressed to those who had opposed adjustments on the basis of an agreed programme. "It would be clear in a few days as to who supports whom."

The Swatantra Party called upon the people through its manifesto to

defeat the New Congress which was attempting to subvert the Constitution and to seek assistance of the Communists who had extra-territorial loyalties.

The Government had failed to restore law and order and had been following outmoded economic policies which hindered rapid programmes.

The manifesto also stressed that the important role assigned to the judiciary should be accepted completely.

Unfortunately, systematic attempts were being made from some quarters, both within and outside the country, to wreck the Constitution which would destroy the liberty of the masses. Similarly, there had been an unfortunate abdication of law and order.

With about 150 million partially or seasonally unemployed persons and about 41 million totally unemployed by 1975, the country would be faced with the great problem of having to find full-time employment for all of them.

Damage

The damage done by the mistaken policies and faulty planning had to be undone as the starting point.

A massive public works programme, specially for road-building would be needed. A gigantic programme to build millions of houses in the rural and urban areas would also have to be undertaken. A separate corporation for the educated unemployment and a department of economic opportunities with a budget of Rs. 1,000 crores for a five-year period would have to be set up.

The manifesto stated that inflation was a major enemy of social justice. Unproductive administrative expenditure on unremunerative projects had led to deficit financing and inflationary measures. A drastic reduction in the cost of administration was thus called for to arrest any price rise.

The Swatantra Party feels that peasant proprietorship has proved to be the most productive and nothing should be done to weaken this system.

The present ceilings on holdings should be strictly enforced, but they should not be reduced further. Too frequent changes in the ceilings would lead to insecurity.

The manifesto also suggested that a commission on civil rights should be set up to look into the grievances of discrimination against any section of the people.

All grievances of the minorities ment.

Personal