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PM's gamble will fail: Masani

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THE Chairman of the Swatantra Party, Mr. M. R. Masani, predicted here today that the gamble of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi would fail and she would emerge weaker and not stronger after the mid-term poll.

He was happy that to that extent the democrats could relax since the threat to the Constitution would have disappeared.

Mr. Masani, who was the guest speaker at the Press Club luncheon, said: "Even if she gets 99 per cent majority she will have no right to change the fundamental rights which the Constitution had held could not be truncated."

Mr. Masani said Karl Marx had held that the exploiters had expropriated the masses to the point of making them a slave. He quipped that Marx was right about the promises but wrong in his conclusion. He should have said: "Therefore let us all have property-owning democracy," Mr. Masani said.

Fundamenta

Referring to the arguments heard about big and small property, Mr. Masani said it was all designed to draw wool over the eyes of the public. His party wanted the people to have property rights and ascertain control over their environments.

The right to property was something which distinguished a free man from a slave. If one talked of curtailing big property today he would go to other things later. It might lead to the Government dipping its fingers in peoples' bank accounts, insurance policies and provident fund. Where did one draw the line.

Mr. Masani fired a broadside on the Planning Commission and the kind of planning which the country had experienced.

There was shortage of coal and small coins. Indian Airlines was suffering from gross indiscipline. "This is a Government of drift and incompetence," said Mr. Masani.

Mr. Masani said his party wanted agriculture to be given the pride of place, progressive decontrol, abolition of zonal and other barriers to free movement of food grains.

Above all he wanted the Planning Commission which took after the rigid Moscow type to adopt an indicative planning method.

Personal