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Swatantra Party

Subject: Swatantra Party

National Herald, Lucknow

17 JUN 1968

Masani Keeps Key Post

NEW DELHI, June 16.—While Mr. M. R. Masani, former general secretary of the Swatantra Party, has resigned from elective offices, including membership of the working committee and parliamentary board, he retains the key office of deputy leader of the party's parliamentary group.

Mr. Masani also continues as chairman of the Public Accounts Committee to which office he was being appointed by virtue of his being action leader of the parliamentary party. Mr. N. G. Ranga was not then member of parliament.

At the Madras session of the national executive and general council of the party held on May 31 and June 1 and 2, according to informed sources, Mr. Masani's decision to resign from his offices unless the line advocated by him in regard to the Gujarat affairs was accepted did not find much support. In Gujarat the Swatantra candidate was defeated in the Rajya Sabha elections as a section of the party legislators did not vote for him.

Mr. C. Rajagopalachari is understood to have taken a very firm line on Mr. Masani's demand that exemplary disciplinary action should be taken against Gujarat party members who had opposed the official nominee.

Mr. Masani had the support of only three or four leaders, including Mr. B. P. Singh of U.P., Mr. Mandhata Singh of Rajasthan and Mr. C. R. Irani of Calcutta.

The party, however, took strong action against Mr. U. N. Mahida, rebel Swatantra candidate who was elected, and three of his sponsors in the legislature party. Mr. Mahida has been expelled and his supporters debarred from elective posts.

Mr. Masani's plea that exemplary punishment should be awarded to all those among the 34 MLAs as who had voted for Mr. Mahida was not accepted for the simple reason that it would have led to disintegration of the party. Moreover, it was an impossible task to identify as to who among them had voted for Mr. Mahida.

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