

Masani still dissatisfied with party decision on Gujarat

Madras, June 3 (UNI)—Mr M. R. Masani, MP, said here yesterday that the decision of the national executive of the Swatantra Party to restore discipline in the Gujarat unit would "unfortunately not help its growth but was rather likely to recoil on the party and harm it."

Commenting on the decisions of the national executive and the general council of the party, Mr Masani told newsmen that the executive's decision "adhered to the attitude of surrendering to considerations of a short-term expediency" which had characterized the decision of the previous meeting of the executive in April in Delhi.

He said efforts were made at the general council to rectify matters in the form of two resolutions but they were rejected by the majority of members. In these circumstances there was clearly no alternative for him but to de-

cline the offer of re-election to the executive, he added.

Asked what he intended to do, Mr Masani said the question he had to face now was how to save the party. He believed that the task of those like Dr K. M. Munshi, vice-president, himself and many others who believed in "ethical and disciplinary methods" was to educate the members of the party and appeal to the considerable fund of idealism that exist among the party ranks, "so that demoralization that has crept into the party could be eliminated."

Mr Masani said this could be done more effectively by those who were not trammelled by the responsibilities of administering the party affairs.

Poll reverses

He felt that the recent succession of election reverses the Swatantra Party had suffered in Haryana, Rajasthan and Gujarat provided "a warning that if the party does not soon awaken and put its house in order and restore its credibility," outlook for the future of the party "is bleak."

Mr Masani said that he would try with all his strength to prevent such "a catastrophe."

Mr Masani maintained that the real culprits were allowed to escape while smaller ones were punished.

About the poor attendance at the general council meeting, Mr Masani said that it did not speak well of the party.

He disagreed with the assessment of party secretary N. Dandekar that the party had passed the cross-roads. "I wish, he was right," Mr Masani said.

Mr Masani said that he would continue to be the deputy leader of the Swatantra group in the Lok Sabha.

Earlier, addressing a news conference, party secretary Dandekar said that the controversy over the Gujarat affairs was now over.

The developments that had given a shake-up to the party and lot of poison in the body politic of the party had been removed and we have now passed the cross-roads, he said.

Mr Dandekar declined to give voting figures of the defeat of two resolutions at the general council meeting calling for disciplinary action against Mr C. C. Desai.

The resolution was rejected by a substantial majority, he said.

Mr Dandekar said that most of the members of the general council including those from Gujarat felt the action taken by the executive expelling Mr V. N. Mahida MP, and suspension of three MLAs from holding party positions was adequate.

Heated debate

There was a heated discussion at the general council over the Gujarat issue and the party chairman, Prof. N. G. Ranga, did not attend the meeting so that there might be a frank discussion on the issue, he said. Dr K. M. Munshi's letter to the executive was also discussed at the meeting.

Mr Dandekar said that Mr Masani would continue to be a member of high standing in the party and would assist the party in every way.

He attributed the hot weather in Madras for the poor attendance at the general council meeting.

Mr Dandekar said that Mr C. Rajagopalachari was not happy over Mr Masani's refusal to ac-

cept re-election to the national executive of the party.

Mr Dandekar said the Swatantra Party supported the stand taken by its chairman Ranga declining to join the National Integration Council scheduled to meet later this month.

Mr Dandekar said the National Integration Council should have wider representation rather than be an official one.

The general council in a resolution called upon the Madras Government "to curb the growing influence of the Communists in the political and economic life of the State."

The council adopted nine resolutions during its two-day session which concluded yesterday.

The council noted with anxiety "the virtual breakdown of law and order in Kerala engineered by the Communists with the connivance of the State Government." It charged that "the Communists planned to bring about by widespread terror in Kerala conditions similar to those prevalent in Calcutta and Naxalbari under the United Front Government in West Bengal."

A resolution on floor crossing said that it could not be prevented by legal prohibition but only by healthy conventions among political parties. The council endorsed the decision of the national executive that the party's legislators who defected should be expelled.

Outstanding example

The council by a resolution described the Orissa Government as an "outstanding example of a stable coalition Government," against the background "of unstable United Front Governments composed of divergent and actually warring elements" elsewhere in the country.

The council demanded postponement of mid-term elections in West Bengal "in the interests of the large majority of peaceful and loyal inhabitants" of the State. The prime need of West Bengal was a stable government which in the opinion of the council "is impossible so long as the Communist parties are allowed freedom to operate."

By another resolution the council demanded autonomy for the hill people of Assam.

The council through other resolutions called upon the Government of India to adopt a more positive policy in regard to the problems of people in Indian origin in Kenya, welcomed the trend towards more liberal policies in Czechoslovakia, and stressed the need for mutual security arrangements in South-east Asia with the intended withdrawal of the British from the area.