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H.T.T. Dandekar

Swatantra future 'bleak'

MADRAS, June 3.

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 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 characterised the decision of the previous meeting of the Executive in April in Delhi.

He said efforts were made at the General Council of the party, 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 decline the offer of re-election to the Executive, Mr. Masani said.

Asked what he intended to do, Mr. Masani said that 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 and arouse members of the party and appeal to the considerable fund of idealism that exists among the party ranks, "so that demoralisation that has crept into the party could be eliminated."

REVERSES

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

He felt that the recent succession of reverses the Swatantra Party had suffered in Haryana by-election in Rajasthan and the panchayat elections in Gujarat provided "a warning that if the

party does not soon awaken to the need for putting its house in order and restore its credibility" he feared the outlook for the future of the party "is a bleak one."

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.

He disagreed with the assessment of the party Secretary Mr. N. Dandekar that the party had passed the cross-roads.

Mr. Masani said he would continue to be the Deputy Leader of the Swatantra Group in the Lok Sabha.

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

The developments in Gujarat 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. —UNI.