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Masani hits out at party leadership

By Our Special Representative
NEW DELHI, May 23—The strains inside the Swatantra Party, which developed after defection of a section of partymen in Gujarat resulting in the defeat of the Swatantra nominee in the Rajya Sabha biennial elections, have grown and assumed serious dimensions.

This becomes evident from an eight-page confidential note, circulated by former general secretary M. R. Masani, to members of the general council of the party.

In his note, Mr. Masani has sharply criticised the present leadership of the party, including its president, Prof. N. G. Ranga.

Mr. Masani says that for nearly seven years as the party's general secretary he had sought to maintain the supremacy of clean me-

thods and disciplined functioning. "If I have failed to convince my colleagues of the need for such an approach, it is only fair that they should feel free to try out an alternative approach which they may consider to be more in line with the party's interest."

Mr. Masani makes a pointed reference to some of Mr. Ranga's remarks, who told him late last year that since he was no longer the general secretary he should not seek to impose his policies on the party.

Obviously hurt by these remarks, Mr. Masani retorts: "I can assure our president and you that I have no desire whatsoever to impose any policies on those who do not believe in them and I was grateful to our president even as he spoke for opening my eyes to the fact that my attempts at maintaining certain standards of behaviour and discipline had done some violence to him and perhaps some others amongst our colleagues."

Commenting on the present state of the party, Mr. Masani says: "I believe that the interests of the democratic functioning of the party demand that there should be no conspiracy of silence as between leaders and that you, as an elected member of the party's general council, the supreme deliberative body of our party, have a right to know the facts."

SNIPING AND NEEDLING

Accusing a "considerable" section of the state leadership of lack of sincerity of purpose, Mr. Masani says that he had informed Mr. Rajagopalachari two years ago that the consciousness of this weakness and somewhat limited success one had in dealing with it lessened the zest determination and satisfaction with which one did one's task. The central office had been at the receiving end of so much sniping and needling that they had come to the end of their tether.

Referring to the Gujarat developments which led to the present

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tension inside the Patiala Cl... houses perhaps the biggest... private collection of ra... precious relics of tremendo... general historical and religious signi... early as... and sacred arms of Gu... by the... Singh, the 10th Guru... board th... the elec... Vaidya... But in... vened, ... party k... ports t... had no... commi... Mr. Bhaill... party... Mr. F... the st... office-... JABALPUR, May 23—Addre... cined a meeting of the local Cong... minatessmen this evening durin... junior's brief visit to Jabalpur; Mr... Not... Charan Shukla, Stat... denied... Minister for Home Affairs... dress favoured re-entry of defectors li... to an... parent Congress organisation li... against... adhya Pradesh in the interes... preed the state as well as the pub... or six... He was confident tha... belong... congressmen would honou... Ahmed... solution adopted by the... include... Congress Legislatu... memberty and opined that op... work... opportunity would be provided to... defectors in Madhya Pradesh to... Who... sent for their follies which... issued... had committed in the pas... da, rebel... Swathin... relations with... who defeated Mr. Vaidya, the... minutes recorded that "severity... of disciplinary action would... exclude expulsion from the... party". Thus, the rebels were... told that they need not expect... any serious action against them

Re-entry of MP defectors favoured

From Our Correspondent
JABALPUR, May 23—Addressing a meeting of the local Congressmen this evening during his brief visit to Jabalpur, Mr. Not... Charan Shukla, State Minister for Home Affairs, expressed his favour for re-entry of defectors to the parent Congress organisation in Madhya Pradesh in the interest of the state as well as the public. He was confident that the Congressmen would honour the resolution adopted by the Congress Legislature membership and opined that opportunity would be provided to defectors in Madhya Pradesh to work for their follies which they had committed in the past. He said that the relations with the rebels who defeated Mr. Vaidya, the former general secretary, were such that "severity of disciplinary action would exclude expulsion from the party". Thus, the rebels were told that they need not expect any serious action against them.

The effect of all this on the party's credibility in the eyes of the voters at the time of next elections, if not earlier, should not need too much imagination to estimate. One would have thought that the national executive would have considered ways of trying to erase this unfortunate development by presenting a new image and a new face for the party in Gujarat.

There were ways of doing this. One would have been for the president and general secretary of the state unit themselves to tender their resignations in view of their failure to perform their obligations. Another would have been to dissolve the state executive and to replace it by an ad hoc committee on the lines of U.P.

Mr. Masani has also taken exception to action not being taken against Mr. Bhagwanji Patel of Rajkot District who had worked against him and other party