

Action against Swatantra rebels

Express News Service

NEW DELHI, April 14—The National Executive of the Swatantra Party which met here today decided with near unanimity to take disciplinary action against those who had flouted the party line and which led to the defeat of the Swatantra candidate in the bye-elections.

Mr. N. Dandekar, Secretary of the Party, briefing newsmen declined to go into details of the discussions beyond saying that the only member who voted against the disciplinary action move was Mr. C. C. Desai.

The National Executive also endorsed the appeal of the Central Parliamentary Board to Mr. M. R. Masani to withdraw his resignation. It took note of his mighty contribution to found and strengthen the party.

The National Convention of the

party which was to have been held at Lucknow from May 30 has been postponed to some time in October. Instead the Central Parliamentary Board and the National Executive will meet in sessions on May 31, June 1 and 2. They would decide about the disciplinary action.

The National Executive also discussed the issue of Kutch awards in the light of the feelings in Gujarat. It reiterated its view that, however unfortunate the award was, it should be honoured as India had international obligations in this respect. It deplored the issue of reference agreed to by the Union Government which, it felt, being a hard and fast, Parliament the Executive noted had passed a resolution approving reference to an international tribunal.

Individual effort

Having said this, the National Executive also recognised the validity of the stand of the Gujarat unit that the latter could as a matter of moral conscience protest against it. It conceded the freedom for the unit to take a line which went counter to the party line. It however made it clear that no a yagana would be started by the unit identifying the party with it. At best a satyagraha would be an individual effort.

The Executive passed a number of resolutions including one on the Insurance Amendment Bill now before Parliament. It decided to oppose the Bill as an "unjustified and excessively interfering" measure as it assumed Draconian powers. It decided to appeal to the public and others concerned to mount an agitation against the measure.

On the Kenya situation a resolution said pressure should be brought on the British Government to honour its obligations to holders of British passports through the Commonwealth Conference and the UN. It however asked the Union Government to allow those Indians who held British passports and who wanted to come here to be enabled to disembark at any port without obstruction.

On food a resolution congratulated the farmer on his performance. Mr. Dandekar said this year's production might be in the neighbourhood of 100 millions and so there should be no imports to build a buffer stock. The resolution called for removal of all barriers preventing free movement and demanded that while procuring foodstuffs the Government should fix a remunerative price and not just a minimum price.

Handloom goods

The National Executive viewed with concern the accumulation of handloom goods and the consequent unemployment. It urged the Government to give temporary credit advances to relieve distress.

Questioning by newsmen was confined almost wholly to the disciplinary action move. Mr. Dandekar explained that he or the party could not act on assumptions as voting was secret. So the National Executive decided to ask the four sponsors of Mr. Mahida namely, Thakur Sahab of Dhrol, Nalwar Singh Solanki, Mr. Jagan Bhai Bhatt and Mr. Chuni Lal Vavara to show cause why action

should not be taken against them. Similarly, Mr. Chandra Kant Parikh, who acted as the polling agent of Mr. Mahida will also be asked to explain his conduct.

Did the National Executive view the Gujarat development as an isolated aberration? No, said Mr. Dandekar who thought that it was a climax of a growing sense of dissatisfaction. At present there was no machinery for consulting the MLAs who were the people who voted. Mr. Dandekar said he was in correspondence with the state units.

Asked who would lead the Gujarat unit, Mr. Dandekar hoped that Mr. Dilip Singh would accept it.

The National Executive has also decided to expel seven in Gujarat and 16 in Rajasthan who had defected from the party.