

SWATANTRA PARTY NOT TO EXPEL REBELS FOR FEAR OF DEFECTIONS

REBELS in the Gujarat unit of the Swatantra Party may get away without any severe punishment for having voted against the official candidate set up for the Rajya Sabha by elections, according to indications available in New Delhi after the stormy Parliamentary Board meeting of the party on Saturday, reports UNI.

It is understood that at the meeting there was a sharp cleavage of opinion as to whether these members should be expelled or not.

Prof N. G. Ranga, Mr N. Dandekar and others were reported to have argued that bulk of the members were after all innocent and they have been misled by a few. A farsighted view should be taken about the matter, they argued.

DEFECTON FEAR

Mr M. R. Masani and some others are, however, understood to have urged stringent action against the members in order to keep the morale of the party.

The issue will be resolved at the national executive of the party on Sunday.

Mr N. Dandekar told newsmen that the question of defection from the Gujarat unit of the party was discussed by the Parliamentary Board of the party. He did not spell out the details of the discussion.

It is understood that there was difference of opinion bet-

ween Mr Bhaila Bhai Patel and Maharaja Jaideep Singh of Baria who have resigned their party posts in Gujarat after the bye-election.

While Mr Patel wanted disciplinary action to be taken against 38 of the 55 members who voted against the official candidate, Mr Babhubhai Vaidya and Mr Jaideep Singh pleaded for lenient treatment.

Some members were of the opinion that if disciplinary action was taken against those who played a leading role in the defeat of Mr Vaidya, there was likely to be a large-scale defection from the party.

Mr Dandekar said that the party's Gujarat unit as such would not participate in the agitation against the Kutch award, but members would be free to participate on individual basis if they so desired.

The Parliamentary Board requested Mr Masani to withdraw his resignation from his office; Mr Masani's reaction was not immediately known.