

Action against Swatantra rebels in Gujarat likely

Hindustan Times Correspondent
New Delhi, April 13.—Members of the Central Parliamentary Board of the Swatantra Party today stressed the importance of taking "some" disciplinary action against the 33 members of the Gujarat Assembly who defied the party directive and voted for Mr U. N. Mahida, a Congress-sponsored Swatantra rebel candidate, during the recent biennial elections to the Rajya Sabha.

Mr Babubhai Vaidya, leader of the Independent Progressive Group in the last Gujarat Assembly, was the Swatantra candidate who was defeated despite the party having a strength of 57.

The members were, however, not sure how the erring MLAs could be identified as the voting was by secret ballot.

There was also a difference of opinion over the nature of the disciplinary action to be taken against the members who did not vote for Mr Vaidya.

Panel may be set up

In view of the difficult situation, there is a possibility of the national executive of the party passing a resolution generally disapproving the conduct of the members. The executive, which is meeting tomorrow, might also set up a small committee to go into the question.

The report of the committee would come up before the executive in Bhubaneswar next month. It will also provide the executive an opportunity to refer the matter to the general council meeting at Bhubaneswar on May 30 and 31.

Members from Gujarat also expressed their views on the defeat of the party candidate for election to the Rajya Sabha at the meeting. It was also informed that the leader of the Assembly party, Mr Bhailal Patel, and deputy leader Maharaja Jaideepsingh Baria had resigned from their posts, following Mr Vaidya's defeat.

Masani's resignation

The Board also considered the letter of Mr M. R. Masani resigning membership of the Board as well as from the national executive.

It was unanimously decided to request Mr Masani to withdraw the resignation as other members also shared the deep concern felt by Mr Masani in the matter.

The Board was informed about the suspension of Mr Mahida from party membership.

The Board also discussed the defections from the party which had taken place in Gujarat and Rajasthan.

There was a brief discussion on

the question if it would be advisable for the party to continue its association with the Samyaktva Vidhayak Dal. The Board decided that the executive should consider the matter further in the light of the Governor's report to the Centre recommending the dissolution of the Assembly and holding mid-term elections.

General Secretary N. Dandekar gave to the party a resume of the campaign for the Haryana mid-term election.

The leader of the opposition in the Rajasthan Assembly, Maharawal Laxman Singh, is among the prominent party leaders who are visiting Haryana early next week.

Party vice-president Maharani Gayatri Devi is expected to go to Haryana after the Dausa parliamentary by-election in Rajasthan for which the Swatantra Party has nominated Maharajkumar Prithwiraj Singh, a former M.P.