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Masani quits Swatantra party posts

"The Times of India" News Service

NEW DELHI, March 29.

MR. M. R. MASANI, Deputy Leader of the Swatantra Group in Parliament, has resigned from the party's National Executive and Central Parliamentary Board following what he has characterised as a "breach of faith" on the part of some party colleagues in the Gujarat Assembly.

In his resignation letter addressed to the party's General Secretary, Mr. N. Dandekar, Mr. Masani has referred to the failure of some of the Swatantra MLAs of Gujarat to vote for the party candidate in the election to the Rajya Sabha.

Mr. Masani's action has followed the resignation yesterday of Mr. Bhailal Patel and Mr. Jaideep Singh of Baria, Leader and Deputy Leader of the party in the Gujarat Assembly, on the same grounds.

Giving the background to the new development, Mr. Masani has referred to what happened in Ahmedabad over the elections to the Rajya Sabha. The Leader and Deputy Leader of the party in the State Legislature had resigned "on the ground that no one will now have any faith in the party and its promises."

ASSURANCE RECALLED

In 1966, the party had invited the support of the Independent Progressive Group, of which Mr. Babubhai Vaidya was the leader in the Gujarat Assembly, to secure the election to the Rajya Sabha of Dr. Beharilal Anantani. At that time Mr. Jaideep Singh of Baria, with the approval of Mr. Bhailal Bhal and his other col-

leagues, wanted in return a promise that Mr. Babubhai Vaidya would be the party's candidate for the Rajya Sabha in the 1968 elections.

"I was then the General Secretary of our party at the national level and Mr. Jaideep Singh of Baria asked for my approval to this arrangement and also an assurance that I would see that the Central Parliamentary Board stood by the promise that they were giving to Mr. Babubhai Vaidya. On being assured that this arrangement would be in the interests of the party in Gujarat, I gave an assurance that the Central Parliamentary Board would honour the arrangement in 1968."

CENTRAL DECISION

"Later when the matter came up at the Central Parliamentary Board level, you will recall that it was decided that this promise given by the Gujarat party leaders should be honoured and the Central Parliamentary Board, at its meeting in Bombay recorded that Mr. Babubhai Vaidya would be the party's candidate for the Rajya Sabha in 1968. "It is this solemn promise given by the party that over a score of our members in the Gujarat Legislature have violated by joining hands with the Congress party to get Swatantra candidate defeated. This is unfortunately not an isolated case but one more example of how the general demoralisation in the political life of the country is finding its way into our own ranks."

"As one of those who had pledged the party's word to the Independent Progressive Group and its leader, I too have a personal responsibility in the matter along with our Gujarat leaders. I feel that, as an act of atonement to those who have been let down by this breach of faith on the part of some of our colleagues and in the hope that this may stimulate the conscience of our party, I should tender my resignation from membership of the National Executive and of the Central Parliamentary Board of the Party."

SWATANTRA PARTY

List of Office Bearers and members of the newly elected
National Executive for the period 1967-69

PRESIDENT:

Prof. N.G. Ranga

VICE PRESIDENTS:

Dr. K.M. Munshi
Prof. M. Buthnaswamy
Smt. Gayatri Devi
Mr. R.N. Singh Deo
Mr. Bhailalbhai Patel

GENERAL SECRETARY:

Mr. N. Dandekar

JOINT SECRETARIES:

Mr. Charanjit Rai
Mr. Sundermani Patel
Mr. T. Kriahnamma
Mr. C.R. Irani

TREASURERS:

Dr. R.C. Cooper
Mr. H.P. Nanda

MEMBERS:

Mr. C. Rajagopalachari
Mr. M.R. Masani
Mr. G. Latchanna
Sardar Basant Singh
Mr. P.K. Deo
Mr. Lakshman Singh of Dungarpur
Mr. S.S. Mariswamy
Mr. K.K. Kuruvilla
Mr. M. Mohammed Iman
Mr. H.M. Patel
Sardar Ram Singh
Mr. K. Sundaram
Mr. B.P. Singh
Mr. C. Harimanth Rao
Mr. Dahyabhai Patel
Mr. Martin Narayan Majaw
Mrs. Kailash Rekhi
Mr. J.M. Lobo Prabhu
Mr. C.C. Desai
Mr. Loknath Misra