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Masani resigns Swatantra Party posts

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From Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, MARCH 29.—Mr. M. R. Masani, Deputy Leader of the Swatantra Party in Parliament, has resigned from the party's National Executive and Central Parliamentary Board.

Mr. Masani's resignation follows the action of some of the party legislators in the Gujarat Assembly in "joining hands with the Congress Party to get our party candidate (in the election to the Rajya Sabha) defeated."

Mr. Masani feels that the failure of a large number of members of the party in the Gujarat Assembly to vote for the party's candidate constitutes a breach of an assurance given by the party in 1966. Mr. Masani, who was then General Secretary, concurred with this.

After the defeat of the party candidate, Mr. Bhailal Patel and Mr. Jaideep Singh of Baria, Leader and Deputy

Leader of the party in the Gujarat Assembly, also submitted their resignations yesterday.

Mr. Masani's letter of resignation will be placed before the next meeting of the National Executive and the Central Parliamentary Board of the party on April 13 and 14.

In his letter, addressed to the General Secretary of the party, Mr. Masani says: "This, unfortunately, is 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 party 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."

Mr. Masani has assured the General Secretary of the party that he would continue to give the fullest support in his efforts to uphold the disciplined and effective functioning of the party.

Meanwhile, UNI adds from Ahmedabad: The Gujarat Assembly was without a formally-designated leader of the Opposition this morning, but the Swatantra Party rectified the position later by notifying the Speaker that its Chief Whip, Mr. Udesinh Vadodia, would act as leader.

The Speaker, Mr. Raghavji Leuva, told the House in the morning that the Swatantra Party had informed him of Mr. Bhailal Patel's resignation as leader, but had not said who would take his place.



Mr. Minoo Masani

SWATANTRA PARTY

Resolution moved by Mr. K.P.Singh Deo, M.P. and unanimously adopted by the General Council

Relief for Orissa Cyclone Victims

This meeting of the General Council of the Swatantra Party extends its sympathies to the unfortunate victims of the recent cyclone that ravaged large areas of Orissa. The human suffering caused by this visitation of nature's fury has only added to the cup of sorrow of the people of Orissa already undergoing the effects of a three-year old drought.

This meeting of the General Council appeals

- a. to the Central Government to render maximum assistance financially and in other material ways to the State Government to enable the latter to provide in adequate measure material assistance like loans to agriculturists, house-building equipment and accelerate Relief Works such as the reconstruction of wells, tanks and medium scale irrigation Works; and
- b. to the people of India in general and to members of the Swatantra Party in particular to donate liberally to the Orissa Chief Minister's Relief Fund.