

Swatantra Party.

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Swatantra split over language question

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The differences within the Swatantra Party over the official language issue have taken a serious turn.

It is learnt that over 50 members of the party have demanded, in writing, that a special meeting of its national council be convened to decide on the party line on "so vital a matter as the issue of the federal language".

Meanwhile, Mr K. M. Munshi has taken up the question directly with Mr Rajagopalachari himself. He is understood to have made a "private" request to Mr Rajagopalachari to take into full account "the implications to the Swatantra Party" if the latter were to persist in his threat of direct action against the "so-called Hindi onslaught".

According to informed sources, Mr Munshi conveyed his fears to Mr Rajagopalachari when he met him in Madras last week. He is reported to have told Mr Rajagopalachari that the latter's "war-like postures" were responsible for alienating sympathy for the party in upcountry centre.

Mr Munshi is reported to have pleaded with Mr Rajagopalachari to give up his "English-only and English-stand". He has drawn attention to the DMK's resolution favouring a multi-lingual centre, instead of "an English-

only centre" and argued that if even a party like the DMK pledged to secession could not swear by English, "there is little sense in Mr Rajagopalachari persisting in that line without reference to his own party".

If Mr Rajagopalachari still persists in his stand on the official language question with an eye to Madras politics, the Swatantra Party will face a serious threat of split, it is felt among Swatantra circles here.