

Assam Janata to Stake Claims to Form Govt.

FROM OUR SPECIAL
CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI, March 1.

The prospect of governmental instability loomed large in Assam to-day with an absolute majority in the newly elected Assembly having eluded all the contenders for office.

Meanwhile, Mr. Golap Borbora, President of the Assam Janata Party, which has secured the largest number of seats in the legislature said that the Janata "is prepared to form a Government with the support of progressive and democratic elements."

The Janata itself has won 53 seats and its ally, the Plains Tribal Council has secured four seats. But even with 57 seats, there would be a shortfall of seven for an absolute majority in the 126-member house.

The Congress had secured 26 seats and the CPM has emerged as the third largest party in the House with 11 seats. Incidentally this is the CPM's first success in Assembly elections in Assam. The Congress (I) has got eight seats.

The CPI has won six seats (including an independent supported by it), four seats have gone to the RCPI, two to the SUCI and one to the CPI (ML). The remaining 11 seats are shared by independents.

Even though Mr. Borbora did not identify the party or parties from which he expects support in forming a ministry, it is obvious that he counts principally on the CPM.

Despite the failure of efforts to forge an electoral understanding, the CPM extended its support to Janata candidates in constituencies where it or its allies, the RCPI and the RSP, did not have candidates.

There are indications that the CPM will offer to support a Janata Ministry from outside on a programmatic basis.

If the Janata Party is able to form a Ministry the most likely choice for Chief Ministership ap-

pears to be Mr. Borbora. He is a former member of the Rajya Sabha and has been President of the Janata Party's Assam unit ever since its formation.

The newly elected Janata members of the Assam Assembly will meet at Gauhati on March 6 to choose their leader. Mr. Biju Patnaik, Union Minister of Steel and Mines, and Mr. Madhu Limaye, General Secretary of the Janata Party, are expected to be the central observers. Meanwhile, the State Committee of the Janata Party will meet earlier on March 3.

The rout that the Congress led by the Chief Minister, Mr. Sarat Chandra Sinha, has suffered has come as a surprise to many. It was generally believed that no party would gain an absolute majority in the new Assembly, but few had anticipated that the Congress would win fewer than a half of the seats annexed by the Janata.

One of the major causes of the dismal performance of the Congress is the splitting of votes by the Congress (I) which has not done too well either.

CONG. STALWARTS DEFEATED

Among the Congress stalwarts to fall are Mr. Mahendra Mohan Choudhury for several years Chief Minister of Assam and until recently Governor of Punjab. The APCC President, Mr. C. S. Teron, has also been humbled by a relatively little known candidate in his home district. In both cases the winners are Janata nominees.

Six of the 15 members of the outgoing Council of Ministers have also lost the battle of the ballot. Among them are Mr. Girin Choudhury, Dr. Lufur Rahman and Mr. Indreswar Khound.

The President of the Gauhati DCC, Mr. B. C. Choudhury, has been defeated by a young Janata candidate, Mr. Ajoy Kumar Dutta. The Chief Minister, Mr. Sinha, has of course, retained his seat.

Among the prominent casualties on the Janata side are Mr. K. P. Tripathi, former Finance Minister and a prominent INTUC leader, Mr. Biswadev Sarma, also a former Minister, and Mr. Ranendra Mohan Das, former MLA. Two of the CPM hopefuls who have lost are Mr. Nandeswar Talukdar and Mr. Uddhab Barman.

The successes of the CPM, CPI, RCPI, SUCI and CPI (ML) are an indication that like West Bengal and Tripura, the leftist tide is quite powerful in Assam. Between them they share 24 seats. Like the CPM, the SUCI and the CPI (ML) also make their debut in the As-

sam Assembly. The CPI has improved its position from four to six.

Arunachal Pradesh Party Position

The party position in Arunachal Pradesh:

Total seats: 30.
Results declared 14 (including two uncontested).
Janata: 7
Peoples Party of Arunachal: 4
Ind.: 3.

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