

Ministry Making In Assam Underway

By A Staff Reporter

GAUHATI, March 4—Intense behind-the-scene activities are going on now veering round the formation of the Ministry and selection of the Janata Legislature Party leader to head the new Government in Assam.

The Janata Party having won 53 seats in a House of 126 is certain to form the Government in the State with the support of its electoral ally the Plains Tribal Council of Assam who won four seats and the communist Party of India (Marxist) who got 11 seats. The Janata and PTCA together have a strength of 57 and it requires seven members to have an absolute majority. Of the 12 independents, 10 are said to belong to the Janata Party some of whom were expelled from the party for contesting the official candidates. Now expulsion order is being revoked in order to facilitate their rejoining the party. The party seems to be more interested in getting back the members who left the party in a huff.

The State Committee of the Janata Party (Assam) which met here late in the evening yesterday directed the newly elected members of the party to go ahead with the formation of Ministry "with the support of the CPM and the like-mind-

ed Independents." The Committee made it clear that the support of the Independents should be taken without any precondition and purely on the basis of ideology. It was the consensus of the majority of the party members that the offer of support extended by the CPM be given due weightage and at the same time efforts be made to get maximum support from the Independents and others in order to stave off any possible crisis of new Ministry in future.

The Committee unequivocally said that new Janata Legislature Party leaders should be selected by the elected legislators themselves and they should see that the choice is unanimous so as to avoid any bitterness and rancour.

The new Janata Party leader will be selected on Monday 6 at a meeting of the newly elected Janata Party legislators and members of State Committee. Aspirants for leadership include Sri Golap Barbor, Sri Dulal Chandra Baruah, Sri Jogen Hazarika and Sri Kiron Chandra Bezbarua. Barbor and Sri Baruah are President and Vice-President of Janata Party (Assam) respectively while Sri Bezbaruah, a Barrister-at Law is a devoted party worker. All the three were detained under MISA during the Emergency. A section of the party workers sees the possibility of Srimati Renuka Devi Barkataki's coming to the State politics at the behest of the Centre if unanimous choice was not possible. Much will, however depend on the attitude of

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the newly elected members. The name of Sri Lakshyadhar Choudhury is also mentioned as a possible contestant for the leadership. He is understood to have been supported by a section of the organizational wing of the party. The Janata Janata Party General Secretary, Sri Ramkrishna Hegde, and the Union Minister of Steel and Mines, Sri Biju Patnaik, are expected to arrive here tomorrow to help selection of the leader smoothly. They are coming to Assam as observers of the Central Janata High Command and will attend the meeting of the Janata Legislators to be held on Monday.

Meanwhile, a good number of elected leaders have arrived here in the city and are seen having discussions presumably on the Ministry-making.

According to indications available the choice of the leader was not going to be as smooth as was thought earlier. Contest seems to be inevitable though not openly but in camera before the final election of the candidate. The new legislators seem to be open minded in this issue and are likely to decide on their choice soon.