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Fresh crisis in Assam Ministry

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The Speaker of the Assam Legislative Assembly, Mr. J. N. Hazarika, disclosed yesterday that his Secretariat had received a communication from nine Janata Legislators intimating him their decision to resign from the primary membership of the party and requesting him to allot them separate seats in the Assembly.

Mr. Hazarika said that with the resignation of these eight Janata Legislators, the strength of the Janata Party in the 126-member Assembly stands reduced to 48.

Chief Minister Borbora, however, said that he had not received any intimation about the decision of the nine dissidents to quit the party.

Notwithstanding, his Ministry appeared to be on the brink of a collapse as 11 of the 57 Janata Legislators resigned from the party.

The dissidents announced their decision to quit the party immediately after the end of the Janata Legislature meeting at Dispur on Tuesday. The meeting, which was convened by Mr. Borbora to iron out the differences in the party, witnessed acrimonious scenes with the dissidents led by former Minister Altaf Hussain Mazumdar demanding the exit of Mr. Borbora.

Having failed to achieve their objective, the 11 dissident legislators announced that they have resigned from the primary membership of the party.

They also told newsmen that they were communicating their decision to the Governor, Mr. L. P. Singh and Mr. Hazarika. However, enquiries made at the Raj Bhavan here revealed that the Governor had not received any communication from the dissidents till late yesterday evening.

Meanwhile, the Chief Minister continues to claim that he still enjoyed the majority support in the House. He said when he re-

lised that he had lost majority support he will tender his resignation.

Meanwhile, in a desperate bid to stay in power, Mr. Borbora has decided to expand his Ministry by including atleast four new incumbents.

The Assam Council of Ministers will be expanded for the second time in less than a month on Saturday.

Mr. Borbora was busy giving finishing touches to the list of new incumbents to be inducted on Saturday. Besides Mr. Chand Mohammad, Deputy Speaker of the Assam Assembly, who was offered a berth in the Ministry last month but had declined the offer, three dissident Legislators are expected to find a place in the expanded outfit.

At present the Borbora Council of Ministers has a total of 16 members — 10 Ministers of Cabinet rank, including the Chief Minister, and 6 Ministers of State.