

# Assam Group's Ultimatum

From Our Special Representative

NEW DELHI, July 3.—Eleven Assam Janata dissident legislators have clearly told the party leadership that if the Chief Minister "is not asked to step down forthwith", they would withdraw their support for the Ministry headed by Mr Golap Borbora.

Dr T. M. Barua, leader of the dissidents, told reporters here today that the threat was contained in a letter addressed to the party chief and signed by 11 legislators "present here". The signatories, including Dr Barua, are: Mr Nagen Sarma, Mr S. Lampan, Mr A Rehman, Mr Rabinder Nath Chaudhary, Mr Padam Bahadur Chaudhury, Mr Altaf Husain Mazumdar, Mr Debanand Bora, Mr Shanti Nandan Dasgupta, Mr M. F. Islam and Mr Ajoy Dutta.

Dr Barua said that they had to take the step as the Chief Minister had not so far obtained the resignation of members of his Cabinet, as suggested by the Central Parliamentary Board. To that extent, it constituted defiance of the Central leadership.

According to him, the dissidents had adopted a resolution in Gauhati on July 8, urging the Chief Minister to step down. "The main thing is that the Chief Minister is not prepared to seek a fresh mandate of the State Janata Legislature Party", Dr Barua said.

Mr Mohan Lal Jalan, secretary of the Assam Janata, who was present at Dr Barua's briefing at the party's central office, said that the dissidents could not wait indefinitely. What surprised them was that the central leadership was a "passive spectator" to what was happening in the State.

Mr Jalan met Mr Chandra Shekhar today and told him that Mr Borbora's Ministry might fall because of the dissidents' decision to withdraw support.

The dissidents' decision, made public today, is a new challenge to Mr Borbora's Ministry. There are 32 dissident legislators (as claimed by Dr Barua and Mr Jalan here today). The total strength of the Janata Party in the Assam Assembly is 61 (including one who joined recently). It is being supported by four legislators of the Plains Tribal Council and three vice-presidents, making a total of 68.

According to party leadership sources, Mr Borbora is in a predicament because all his Ministers have resigned jointly and not individually. They signed a memorandum in pursuance of the decision of the Central Parliamentary Board which on June 22 asked the Chief Minister to obtain the resignation of all Ministers and reconstitute the Cabinet in consultation with Mr Chandra Shekhar. Such en masse resignation reportedly has no validity.

Mr Borbora is expected to come here in a day or two and convey his difficulties to the central leadership. He has not till now been asked to seek a vote of confidence because of the reported stand of the CPI(M) that it would not support any other Janata Chief Minister in the State Assembly. The dissidents' latest move complicates the problem.

*The Statesman*

61-1-1973