

17 Assam M.L.A.s Withdraw Support To C.M.

GAUHATI, July 19.—The crisis in the six-day-old Assam Ministry, headed by Mr Golap Borbora, further deepened this evening as 17 dissident Janata MLAs withdrew support to the Chief Minister, reports PTI.

Mr Tarini Mohan Baruah, leader of the dissident faction of Janata MLAs, announced here that this decision was intimated to the Governor of north-eastern States, Mr L. P. Singh, in writing shortly after the deadline of the ultimatum given to Mr Borbora to step down ended at 4 p.m. today.

Mr Baruah said the decision was also intimated to the Speaker of the Assam Assembly, Mr J. N. Hazarika.

Mr Borbora late tonight declined to comment on the withdrawal of support to his Ministry by the 17 Janata dissident MLAs.

Asked about the possible repercussion following the withdrawal of support, the Chief Minister said he would not like to say anything at this stage. "Please make your own assessment", he said.

Earlier in the day, Mr Borbora is reported to have told his Cabinet colleagues that he commanded a "comfortable majority" with support also from several legislators—Independent and those representing other political parties. His decision not to respond to the dissidents' ultimatum ruled firm.

The present party-position in the 126-member Assam Assembly is: Janata 57, Congress 23, CPI(M) 11, Congress (I) 8, CPI 6, Janata (S) 4, RCPI 4, Plains Tribal Council of Assam 4, SUCI 2, CPI(M-L) 1, Independents 6.

The Janata Party was supported by the CPI(M), PTCA and some Independents.

The dissidents are understood to have decided to request the Speaker of the Assembly to allow them to sit as a separate group in the Assembly.

Mr Sarat Chandra Sinha, leader of the Opposition, assured the dissidents that the Congress group with 23 members would lend them support to form an alternative Government.

Mr Sinha also called on the Governor, and intimated that Mr Borbora had lost confidence and hence he should resign immediately or advise the Governor to summon the Assembly to prove his strength on the floor of the House.

UNI adds: Sources close to the Chief Minister claimed that there was no danger at all to the Ministry and Mr Borbora had the full support of the legislature party and its associate members.

The Chief Whip of the Janata Legislature Party, Mr Golok Kakoti, said he had begun talks with the dissidents to sort out the differences and was hopeful of the outcome.

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