

Hopes Of Success Dampened

NEW DELHI, Oct. 28.—Hopes of a successful outcome to the Assam talks beginning here tomorrow have been dampened by agitating organizations taking a "tough stand" in their latest proposals to solve the foreigners' problem, reports UNI.

Sources said tonight that the Assam leaders had virtually reopened the entire issue after having agreed on the treatment of foreigners who had entered the State between 1961 and 1971—a point which had defied an overall solution till now.

They said that the last round of discussions in August had been held on an agreed draft, but the Assam leaders put forward a new draft when the talks ended.

Sources close to the Assam agitation leaders said they had not agreed to anything which would allow the foreigners who had en-

tered the State between 1961 and 1971 to remain there.

They had stuck to their stand that these people must be sent to other States for a solution to the problem.

The Government has been trying to convince the leaders that the foreigners who had entered between 1961 and 1971 were, in fact, refugees and their interests had to be protected. Besides it would be impracticable to move about a million people to other parts of the country.

While the Assam leaders have raised the legal aspects of accepting these people as citizens, the Government negotiators have suggested that "humanitarian considerations and international obligations" should not be overlooked.

Though the Government and the leaders have agreed in principle on detecting and dispersing these foreigners, disagreement persisted on who could be considered foreigners.

The two sides had agreed at the last meeting to identify foreigners with reference to various documents and existing laws, but the Government did not want those who could show proof of residence with the help of a public document to be categorized as foreigners.

This was not acceptable to the Assam leaders as it would have had the effect of retaining almost all the one million people whom they consider aliens under the country's Constitution and other laws.

A five-member delegation of the All-Assam Students' Union and the All-Assam Gana Sangram Parishad arrived here tonight for the talks.

As AAGSP leader, Mr Girin Barua, who was nominated to be a member of the delegation stayed back because of personal reasons. He might join the talks later.

The All-Assam Students' Union has urged the Governor, Mr Prakash Mehrotra, to make the regional recruitment board for nationalized banks in Assam functional without further delay.

In a letter to the Governor, which was released here today, the AASU president, Mr Prafulla Kumar Mahanta and the general secretary, Mr Bhrigu Kumar Phukan, said that the lack of sincerity on the part of the State Government to respond to the hopes and aspirations of the people of Assam "stands exposed by the delay in making the recruitment board for nationalized banks functional".

They pointed out that while the formation of the board was announced in Parliament and a secretary appointed, advertisement for recruitment in Assam still continued to appear from Calcutta. A board of this magnitude could not function without a chairman, they said.

Prospects Of Forming New Assam Ministry 'Dim'

From Our Special Representative

SHILLONG, Oct. 28.—The prospects of a Ministry being formed in Assam before mid-November are considered dim by knowledgeable circles. Neither the Congress (I) nor the Opposition is in a position to form a "stable" Government.

Hypothetically, even if a Ministry is formed, the Governor may stipulate that the Assembly be summoned within a specified interval for a trial of strength. The Opposition leaders who met the President at Kaziranga recently were told so by the Governor who was present at the meeting.

The Opposition leaders have not met the Governor formally to stake

their claim to form a Ministry. Their memorandum to the President was a "tactical" response to Mrs Taimur's earlier meeting with the Governor in Gauhati at which she had claimed a comfortable majority to form a Ministry. Mrs Taimur's meeting with the Governor was in itself pre-emptive lest the Opposition develop a rapport with the Leftists who evidently are keen on strengthening their bargaining power with either camp.

Both the Opposition and the Congress (I) face the question of leadership. Mr Sarat Sinha of the Congress (S) is a contender with a marginal support from the Janata which is still with Mr Golap Borbora. Mr Sinha has, however, a better equation with the Left. The Opposition memorandum to the President was passive in nature: Their leaders were more concerned about the possibility of a "minority" Congress (I) Government being installed. The request that the Opposition be given a chance to explore the possibilities of forming a Government was vague. There are hurdles to be crossed.

Despite Mrs Taimur's claims, the leadership issue in her party is an open question for certain reason, primarily the stubborn Opposition of entrenched groups "reservations" among her own minorities and a reputation for tactlessness. The State Congress leaders will visit New Delhi in the coming weeks to settle the leadership question. However, the ultimate choice may be left to Mrs Gandhi.

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