

# Assam panel fails to end impasse

From Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, July 13.

The Committee of Government officials and representatives of the All-Assam Gana Sangram Parishad (AAGSP) and the All-Assam Students' Union (AASU) has failed in its effort to evolve a mutually acceptable formula for the solution of the foreigners' issue.

The Committee met twice today, and at the end of the second meeting, the AAGSP and AASU representatives stormed out angrily declaring that the Government had pushed them back to the street.

The grievance of the AASU and AAGSP delegations was that after two weeks of intensive talks, the Government side had not come forward with any acceptable basis for the identification of foreigners.

In other words, as Mr. Prafulla Mahanta, President of AASU, put it, the Government was not prepared to say in unequivocal terms who should be deemed to be an alien.

The Government side insisted on accepting ration cards, post cards, etc., as conclusive material to establish one's citizenship though none of these things was admissible as evidence, he maintained.

From all accounts it was evident

that the Assam teams were not satisfied with the Government stand that all those who had come as refugees into Assam due to disturbances in erstwhile East Pakistan between 1961 and 1971 would be eligible to stay in the State.

The remarks made by some of the members of the Assam delegations gave the impression that this was their last meeting with the team of Government officials led by the Home Secretary, Mr. S. M. H. Burney, which has been conducting talks with them for the past two weeks.

This does not mean, however, that the talks have come to an end, for it has been arranged that the AAGSP and AASU delegations will have another meeting with the Home Minister, Mr. Zail Singh tomorrow.

The Home Minister has intervened twice before — once on July 4, and again six days later — to salvage the negotiations from collapse. But it is doubtful if he will succeed a third time.

**Talks with Zail Singh today:** The Assam agitation leaders will have a meeting with the Union Home Minister, Mr. Zail Singh tomorrow. All Assam Students Union (AASU) General Secretary, Mr. Bhriгу Phukan said late tonight. "This did not mean any change in our stand", he said.

PTI reports:

Indications are that the Gauhati delegation may not go back unless they have no hope of intervention by the Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, who has said she is taking a personal interest although not sitting in the talks.

"It is an abysmal fall from the position which obtained on Saturday", a senior leader of All Assam Gana Sangram Parishad, Mr. Nibarán Bora, said.

Mr. Bora read out the following statement:

"Nothing could be evolved to our satisfaction at the mini-committee. We are swearing by the Constitution but are being killed by CRP. We have lost valuable time. Our meeting point is zero".

"Now it is clearly indicated that the Government is pushing us to streets. It is satyagraha and picketing for us after hours and hours of discussion".

## L. P. Singh meets PM

Mr. L. P. Singh, Governor of North Eastern States, today called on the Prime Minister and apprised her of the political situation in the region.

Capt. Williamson Sangma, Chief Minister of Meghalaya, discussed with Mrs. Gandhi the organisational and developmental problems of the State.

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