

Assam talks to go on

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, July 14.

THE Union government and the Assam agitation leaders today agreed that the talks on the foreigners issue would continue "until a solution is found," according to a home ministry spokesman. No time limit has been fixed.

The statement indicated that the home minister, Mr. Zail Singh, has once again succeeded in persuading the agitation leaders to carry on the dialogue despite the bellicose statements made by them yesterday, about resuming the movement.

It is, however, likely that the talks will be recessed for some time after the mini-committee holds another session tomorrow. The agitation leaders have expressed a desire to return to

Assam in view of pressing problems at home, including the situation created by the floods.

The Assam leaders had another two-hour meeting with the home minister this evening after the mini-committee had failed to draw up an agreed formula on detecting foreigners and evolving an agreed definition on who were the "unauthorised" people residing in Assam.

They had accused the government of going back on what it had committed itself to on the dispersal and deportation of foreigners who had entered the state between 1961 and 1971. They said the government had broken the understanding that all foreigners of that period would be sent away from Assam if they agreed to keep those who entered the state during 1951-61. They carried the impression that the government did not

want to send out any one.

After the meeting the home minister today they were no longer in a belligerent mood of yesterday when they threatened to break off the talks, return to Assam and resume the agitation pledging that they would "fight until the last drop of our blood."

However, they did not seem to be fully satisfied with today's talks. They said that while Mr. Zail Singh verbally agreed to all they had said, he was not willing to put it in writing. They were suspicious that the government would back out of the verbal commitments. They wanted to evolve a proper agreement put down in black and white.

Nevertheless, they did not seem to be averse to the idea of continuing the discussions and thrash out an agreed solution as suggested by the home minister.

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