

'Aliens' row lingers

Free Press News Service

NEW DELHI, Jan 19: Despite a three-hour meeting between the Government, the Opposition leaders in Parliament and the leaders of the Assam movement, no agreement could be reached on any issue relating to the solution of the foreigners' problem.

Today was the second day of talks during the current series.

Today's discussions remained basically confined to the steps to be taken for preventing further infiltration into the State. The

proposals made by the Government in this regard did not receive full acceptability from the AASU and AAGSP delegations. It is learnt that the Government agreed to the AASU-AAGSP suggestion for sealing the border by constructing walls or putting up effective fencing

But the Government agreement says such steps would be taken "to the extent possible." This did not satisfy the Assam movement leaders, who want the Government to specify concrete steps without any reservation.

The suggestion of declaring no-man's land all along the border between Assam and Bangladesh also came up for discussion. According to indications, the Government may accept the suggestion to the extent that no habitation may be permitted within a specified distance along the border, because this may help the security forces to watch the movement across the border.

The bone of contention, namely, the detection formula to identify the foreigners, also came up for discussion without reaching any conclusion. The basis of today's discussion on this issue was the 17-point draft which the AASU and the AAGSP had submitted to the Government in August and September last year.

All the previous 19 rounds of talks had floundered on this issue, coupled with the question of deportation of foreigners.

The talks will be resumed tomorrow when the Central Ministers, headed by the Home Min-

ister, leaders of the Opposition parties and representatives of AASU and AAGSP meet in the afternoon.

Earlier in the morning, the Central Ministers and Opposition leaders had a meeting with the Citizens' Rights Preservation Committee and Plains Tribal Council of Assam which were opposing the movement against foreigners.

20 - January - 1982

Free Press Journal.