

Stop equivocating, Mr. Hegde

Sir, - The exclusive interview with Mr. Ramakrishna Hegde on Aug.26 has exposed his inner ideas very well. It is clear that Mr. Hegde is making desperate attempts to stay in politics and become popular. The former Chief Minister of Karnataka has been talking these days of 'polarization' and merger of secular forces. He is doing this because of the sorry plight of the Janata Dal which has been reduced to a regional party in the recent elections. Mr.Hegde was discarded and humiliated by the people of Bagalkot in the 1991 Lok Sabha elections. To make matters worse for Mr.Hegde and the Janata Dal, he was removed from the primary membership of the legislative assembly recently. The Janata Dal has also come under tremendous pressure, with a threat by Mr.Ajit Singh to break away from the party. Under such circumstances, it is but natural that the Dal leaders have chosen to talk about polarization.

Mr.Hegde has said in the interview that he has never defected to any party in his life. Does this statement carry any weight? I would like to point out that this is not true. He joined the Janata Party from the original Indian National Congress. Then he moved into Janata Dal from the Janata Party, deserting his own party men. Finally, now, he is talking of virtually getting into the Congress through polarization. Though these may not look like defections per se, they are similar to it in more than one way. It is also a pity that Mr. Hegde is doing these things in order to check the growth of the (so-called) 'communal BJP'. It is ironical that Mr. Hegde now fears BJP which he had predicted would get less than 10 seats in the recent elections. Though he is soft-pedaling on the 'anti-national' issue, his decision to join the Congress, against the policies of which he was fighting so far, will spell disaster not only to him but to the Janata Dal as well. It is high time Mr. Hegde stopped equivocating and stuck to his decision of retiring from active politics soon.