

AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRI Z. R. ANSARI): I beg to move:

"That in pursuance of sub-section 4(b) of Section 4 of the Tobacco Board Act, 1975, read with rules 3 and 4 of the Tobacco Board Rules, 1976, the members of this House do proceed to elect, in such manner as the Speaker may direct, one member from among themselves to serve as a member of the Tobacco Board, subject to the other provisions of the said Act and the Rules made thereunder, vice Shri P. Venkata Reddy resigned."

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: The question is:

"That in pursuance of sub-section 4(b) of Section 4 of the Tobacco Board Act, 1975, read with rules 3 and 4 of the Tobacco Board Rules, 1976, the members of this House do proceed to elect in such manner as the Speaker may direct, one member from among themselves to serve as a member of the Tobacco Board, subject to the other provisions of the said Act and the Rules made thereunder, vice Shri P. Venkata Reddy resigned."

The motion was adopted.

13.36 hrs.

MATTERS UNDER RULE 377

(i) EQUALISATION OF PRICES OF STEEL, COAL, COTTON, ETC. THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY.

SHRI NIREN GHOSH (Dum Dum): Long back late T. T. Krishnamachari, as Finance Minister equalised the prices of steel throughout India. Prices of coal have also been more or less equalised by arranging the rail-

way freight structure in such a way that freight gradually tapers off on long distance haulage proportionately. Nowhere else in the world is there equalisation of the prices of steel and near equalisation of the prices of coal and not even in countries of continental proportions like USA, USSR and China. Again, years back, upon the persistent demand from some of us on the floor of the Parliament, late L. N. Mishra, promised on behalf of the Union Government the equalisation of the prices of cotton throughout India and it was being actively considered by the Union Government. But nothing has been heard since then. Equalisation of the prices of steel and near equalisation of prices of coal were effected on the plea that all the States would get equal opportunities in the matter of industrial development. But nothing like that has happened. Backward States like Orissa, Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, UP etc. and North-Eastern region have remained abysmally backward. But, on the other hand, States enjoying the advantage of steel and coal have lost their locational advantage and smarting under neglect. Small and medium industrialists have also repeatedly demanded the equalisation of the prices of cotton. The measure would benefit countless handloom weavers. Recent happenings should be an eye opener to the Government. I demand that prices of all basic industrial raw materials, including cotton as a first measure be immediately effected so that really equal opportunities are provided for all the States of India and thus eliminated a potent cause of legitimate public discontent.

(ii) REPORTED INCREASE IN PRICES OF SUGAR AND EDIBLE OILS

SHRI CHINTAMANI JENA (Balsore): The prices of two important essential commodities like edible oils and sugar, have gone high in the last two days which has created a great concern among the consumers specially poor, lower income and middle income groups. The timely start of the