

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

monsoon almost all over the country did not have any effect on the price rise. The trend of this high price rise cannot be curbed even before coming Diwali. The wholesale price of sugar has gone to Rs. 735/- per quintal only in this week and Rs. 150/- has been increased within last one month. Similar is the case with the edible oils like mustard, groundnut and coconut oils which are raised to a new high level within a span of only one month.

The Union Government may please come forward to check these sorts of high price rises of these essential commodities.

(iii) INADEQUATE SUPPLY OF FOODGRAINS TO MAHARASHTRA BY THE FOOD CORPORATION OF INDIA.

SHRI R. K. MHALGI (Thane): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I would like to make the following statement under Rule 377:

The Government of Maharashtra lift wheat and rice stocks from Food Corporation of India's depots in the State for supply to the consumers through fair price shops. The stock position of foodgrains with the Food Corporation of India in Maharashtra has been far from satisfactory for the past several months and they do not have adequate stocks of foodgrains in all their depots in the State. Due to Food Corporation of India's inability to supply the foodgrains by rail from their nearest depots, it has of late, been necessary for the Government of Maharashtra to lift the food grains from their distant depots and move them by road at heavy cost to ensure that the regular supplies to the public distribution system are maintained. The Government of Maharashtra have moved Government of India that since the State Government is being required to incur this additional expenditure due to FCI's inability to supply the foodgrains from their normal depots, it should be reimbursed in full by the Food Corporation of India. The Maharashtra Government

have moved the Government of India that when the Food Corporation of India is reimbursing road expenditure incurred on road transport even by the Roller Flour Mills, there is no reason why similar expenditure which is being incurred by State Government should not be reimbursed. The Government of Maharashtra have already incurred an expenditure of about Rs. 50 lakhs on road transportation of foodgrains from distant depots in view of the FCI's inability to supply to us these foodgrains from their nearest depots.

I urge, therefore, upon the Hon'ble Minister of Agriculture to make reimbursement of Rs. 50 lakhs to Maharashtra Government immediately and see that the foodgrains are made available in their near Depots.

(iv) NEED FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE (FOR THE FLOOD AFFECTED PEOPLE OF KERALA.

SHRI K. KUNHAMBU (Cannanore): Kerala is in the grip of a devastating flood. In almost all the districts of the State, large-scale destruction of life and property has taken place. In the districts of Cannanore, Calicut, Malapuram and Palghat, as many as ten thousand families have lost their homes. Besides, extensive damage to standing crops has also been caused. Many rivers in North as well as South Kerala are in spate and all the low lying areas are under water.

Sea erosion has further worsened the situation. It has devastated hundreds of acres of coastal land in different parts of Kerala. Thousands of coconut trees have been uprooted and hundreds of huts, particularly of fishermen, have been washed away. Rail and Road communication has been totally disrupted in different parts of Kerala.

Although the State Government has taken quick measures to evacuate people from the flood-affected areas,