

the steps taken by them in this regard.

(c) Panchayati Raj is a State subject and State legislations provide for resource mobilisation by Panchayati Raj bodies. These legislations provide for taxation on a variety of items like house property, vehicles, lighting, water supply, markets and fairs, etc. In addition, different State Governments provide for transfer of resources to these bodies in varying manners. Since the measures taken by State Governments are relatable to conditions (including their own resources position) obtaining in their States, it is difficult to list the gaps in their efforts with precision. The communication under reference therefore urges State Governments to review the "adequacy of the present resources of Panchayati Raj institutions" and identify appropriate measures "for improving their financial viability."

#### Rhinoceros in Kaziranga Sanctuary

3316. SHRI R. R. BHOLE: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the population of Rhinoceros has increased considerably in Kaziranga Wild Life Sanctuary;

(b) whether Government are satisfied that the Sanctuary is quite sufficient to accommodate them;

(c) the number of Rhinoceros in that Sanctuary at present;

(d) whether there is any proposal to shift some of the rhinoceros from Kaziranga Sanctuary to their new habitats in other States;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) the number of persons prosecuted for hunting and trapping the protected species of wild life in the country during the last two years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRIES OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI

R. V. SWAMINATHAN): (a) and (b). Yes, Sir.

(c) There are, at present, about 950 Rhinoceros in the Kaziranga National Park.

(d) and (e). The proposal is to reintroduce a few Rhinoceros in alternative suitable habitats of its former range of distribution. Initially, Dudhwa National Park in Uttar Pradesh and Jaldapara and Gorumara Sanctuaries in West Bengal have been identified for this purpose. This is considered essential for the survival of the species.

(f) Information is being collected from the States and Union Territories.

#### Scheme to Check Soil Erosion

3317. SHRIMATI JAYANTI PATNAIK: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have introduced any scheme to check soil erosion in different States;

(b) if so, the name of the States where such scheme has been introduced so far;

(c) whether Government are aware of the large scale damage caused to surface land of Orissa every year due to soil erosion;

(d) if so, the steps taken or proposed to be taken by Government to check soil erosion in that State; and

(e) the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRIES OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI R. V. SWAMINATHAN): (a) and (b). Yes Madam. The problem of widespread soil erosion and land degradation had received attention of the Government since First Five Year Plan. Over the successive Plans the programmes have got diversified and