

of Tripura have informed that migrants who register themselves with their Relief Department are understood to have entered Tripura in a deplorable condition.

(b) No migrant has yet given any written statement to the effect that their cash and jewellery was taken away by Pakistani miscreants or by Pak-authorities.

(c) In view of the answer to (b) above, the question does not arise.

Erosion of Panchayati Raj

*650. SHRI S. KUNDU : Will the Minister of FOOD AND AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government are aware that in certain States there has been erosion of Panchayati Raj and some of the States have done away with Zila Parishads : and

(b) if so, whether Government are considering any Constitutional amendment to guarantee formation of Zila Parishads within the Constitution :

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD, AGRICULTURE, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND CO-OPERATION (SHRI S. C. JAMIR) : (a) No, Sir. A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

(b) Does not arise.

Statement

In all States except three namely, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir the Panchayati Raj Institutions have been established. The Chief Ministers and State Ministers for Community Development and Panchayati Raj, when they met in a Conference at Madras on 11th June, 1968 decided that Panchayati Raj as the instrument of democratic decentralisation should continue ; the question of having a two tier system or three tier system being left to the States. Save in case of Orissa where Zila Parishads have been placed by District Advisory Councils and Uttar Pradesh where Zila Parishads have been superseded, no report of States having replaced Zila Parishads has come to the notice of the Government. On account of inadequate devolution of powers and resources, the performance of Panchayati Raj Institutions has fallen short of expectations in some States. The Programme Evaluation Organisation of the Planning

Commission are taking up a study on the functioning of the Panchayati Raj Institutions in selected districts in the country with a view to suggest needed improvements.

Reclamation of Sunderban Area of West Bengal for Rehabilitation of East Pakis'an Refugees

*651. SHRI SAMAR GUHA : Will the Minister of LABOUR AND REHABILITATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether persistent representations on behalf of the Sunderban coastal area of West Bengal were made to the late Pandit Nehru, late Lal Bahadur Shastri and present Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi for the reclamation of the vast areas of Sunderban for settlement of the East Pakistan refugees there ; and

(b) if so, when Government propose to take up the Sunderban reclamation project ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR, EMPLOYMENT AND REHABILITATION (SHRI BHAGWAT JHA AZAD) : (a) Certain representations were received from time to time for reclamation of certain areas in Sunderbans for the rehabilitation of migrants from East Pakistan.

(b) As a saturation point had already been reached in West Bengal, a policy decision was taken in 1964 in consultation with the State Government that new migrants (*i.e.* those who came from East Pakistan from 1-1-1964 onwards) who sought admission in relief camps and were sponsored by the West Bengal Government would be given rehabilitation assistance outside West Bengal. However, the possibility of rehabilitating refugees from East Pakistan as a part of the residuary problem in Bengal, in Hero-bhanga Scheme No. II in Sunderbans area of West Bengal is being examined by the Government of West Bengal who have been granted a loan of Rs. 5,000/- for carrying out a detailed investigation of Hydrological conditions and Soil characteristics of the area. Their report is awaited.

Steps for Improvement in Production of Rice

*652. SHRI SARJOO PANDEY : Will the Minister of FOOD AND AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the green