

## CONCERN OVER RHINOCEROS DEATHS

### LACK OF WATER IN KENYA

FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT

NAIROBI, Dec. 6.

The game authorities here are seriously concerned about the danger of extinction of the rhinoceros in Kenya. Their anxiety has been sharpened by the disclosure here today that in the past eight weeks or so between 80 and 100 rhinoceroses have died in Tsavo Royal National Park alone. Some were victims of African poachers but the majority died of water starvation.

Tsavo, the colony's main game park, which lies on the vast plains midway between Nairobi and Mombasa, has an estimated 500 rhinoceroses out of a total for Kenya of 2,500. Colonel M. Cowie, director of the Royal National Parks of Kenya, who reported recent deaths here today, said they were "an absolute tragedy", as the number of rhinoceroses was already dwindling rapidly. They bred at the rate of 5 or 6 per cent a year but the death rate was about 20 per cent.

A fair proportion of deaths are caused by poachers: this is believed to be carried out by Africans directed by highly organized gangs working from Nairobi. Rhinoceros horn is highly valued in eastern countries as an aphrodisiac.

Colonel Cowie made it clear today that the major problem at present is the lack of water. Though a few of the dead animals had wire nooses on them, the majority had died of starvation. Carcasses and horns had been found along Tsavo and Athi River and some of the animals had died in the rivers.

### VETERINARY INQUIRY

They had been unable to find water in their normal feeding grounds and had made for the rivers, where feeding was poor. Rhinoceroses live mainly on bush vegetation and need to drink about every two days.

Colonel Cowie said that a veterinary investigation was being carried out to make sure that disease had not caused the deaths. The remains found indicated that the deaths were not confined to any age group.

A report from a senior game official at Tsavo, he said, had ended with a warning note: "The situation has now improved, owing to the odd shower of rain, but unless we get good rains in December I foresee trouble in February".

Colonel Cowie expressed the hope that his "water for wild animals fund" might help to alleviate the situation. The fund was receiving contributions from all over the world and money was being used for boreholes in good feeding areas. If more money was received catchment dams could be put in.

### £10,000 NEEDED

At the present rate of loss it appeared that rhinoceroses were on the way out in Kenya. If, however, £10,000 could be raised much could be done to check the high death rate.

During the same period in which the 100 rhinoceroses had died only one elephant had been found dead in the area. Elephants were much wiser and found their own water by digging holes in the ground.

Colonel Cowie also announced an increase in fees for admission to Kenya's national parks. He said that some American tourists had felt insulted at being asked to pay only half a dollar (about 3s. 6d.) when they would willingly have paid \$10 (about £3 10s.).

## STORMS HIT THREE CONTINENTS

### EUROPE GRAPPLES WITH FLOODS

FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT

THE HAGUE, Dec. 6

Although generally the flood situation in the Netherlands is no worse than yesterday there are still four areas which are suffering from the abnormal rainfall of last weekend. Half of the small town of Meppel, in the north-east, is under water, and 150 people have been evacuated. Troops have been called in to help move goods from warehouses. South and east of Arnhem, the Borculo area is partly flooded, and all schools in that village are closed.

In the central region between Utrecht and Wageningen, several roads are unusable, while in the south-west several places in the Breda area, up to the Belgian frontier, are inundated.

PARIS.—Though the storms have cleared, a steady drizzle is still falling on most of northern France, and the floods have not entirely subsided. In the Calais region many fields are still under water, and cellars in the small town of Aire are flooded. Roads are still impassable. The keeper of Armen lighthouse, off Brittany—the most exposed lighthouse in France—is seriously ill, but all attempts to take him off or to bring him aid have so far failed. The weather even prevented a helicopter from dropping medicine. Waves were breaking up to the top of the lighthouse.

BONN.—British troops were called in to help to repair a breach in the dyke of the Mittelland canal, near Osnabrück. In other parts of west Germany several more dams have overflowed since Monday, when water broke over the top of the Möhne dam. In north Germany streets are flooded.

### LIGHTNING KILLS THREE

STOCKHOLM.—The captain remained on board the 3,155-ton Yugoslav steamer Nis after the vessel developed a severe list off the island of Öland, south-east Sweden. His crew of 22 were taken off by British and Dutch ships and a Swedish helicopter. The British ship Baltic Explorer (1,655 tons) picked up seven seamen. The Nis was later taken in tow.

NICOSIA.—Gale-force winds off eastern Cyprus yesterday drove two ships on to rocks outside Famagusta. The Japanese Nagato Maru (8,500 tons) dragged her anchor, and later the Yugoslav ship Snjeznik, which went to the Nagato's aid, was also driven aground. It was hoped to try to refloat them today.

DURBAN.—Three people, one of them white, have been killed by lightning in storms which have ravaged large areas of Natal. In the Underberg district of the Drakensberg foothills, livestock were drowned in flooded rivers, and hail shattered 140 windows of the local school and damaged farm buildings. Pupils at a girls' college had to be evacuated when hail caused the roof to collapse. At Pietermaritzburg, two inches of rain fell in half an hour, and near Greytown an African girl was drowned trying to cross a stream. In other districts crops have been destroyed and hundreds of fowls killed by huge hailstones—all this in summer, with ground temperatures in the 80s.

WINNIPEG.—A blizzard from the United States on Monday disrupted traffic in Manitoba, where five inches of snow fell in a 50 m.p.h. gale. There is 40 deg. of frost in the province as a cold wave moves in from the Arctic.

### MOON CONFERENCE IN LENINGRAD

Moscow, Dec. 6.—Experts from Britain, the United States, and other countries are taking part with Soviet scientists in a Leningrad symposium on the moon, organized by the International Astronomic Union and the Soviet Academy of Sciences—which opened today, Tass reports.—*Reuter*.