

The vessel is capable of drilling in water depth up to 80 metres in the Arabian sea adjoining the Gulf of Cambay and the drilling rig mounted on it is capable of drilling up to 6,100 metres (20,000) ft. depth. The drilling vessel is expected to be delivered in Japan at the end of September 1971. Its cost, inclusive of drilling rig and machinery and jacking system, is Rs. 10.9875 crore.

PROVISION OF DRINKING WATER IN VILLAGES

90. SHRI S. K. FARMAN :
SHRI KAL VAN ROY :
SHRIBHU JESH GUPTA :

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY PLANNING be pleased to state :

(a) whether any measure made by the Health Ministry recently has revealed that 60,000 villages in the rural region are without any drinking water facilities ; and

(b) if so, whether the Government have made any arrangements to provide drinking water to these villages ?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY PLANNING (SHRI A. K. KISHU) : (a) A survey conducted by the Government of India in 1968-69 through the Special Investigation Divisions set up in various States revealed that there are about 97,000 villages in the country where drinking water was not available within a distance of one mile or within a depth of 5 ft. Out of these, approximately 60,000 villages are expected to be situated in permanently disadvantaged areas of hilly and mountainous regions, saline tracts and arid zones.

(b) Under the fourth Five Year Plan, an allocation of Rs. 120 crores has been made for rural water supply. However, although Central assistance to the States is not being given in the form of block loans and block grants without reference to any particular scheme or sector, the allocation for rural water supply has been earmarked and cannot be diverted to other sectors. The Government of India have advised the States and the Union Territories to give priority to the villages suffering from permanent hardship in saline, hilly and sandy tracts.

POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT IN CHINA

91. SHRI LOKANATH MISRA :
SHRI S. S. MARISVAMY :

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the attention of the Government of India has been invited to a report in the Statesman dated the 9th February, 1971, regarding political developments in China and its impact on China's neighbouring countries ; and

(b) whether the Government of India have received any report in this regard from their embassy in Peking and details thereof ?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SURENDRA PAL SINGH) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir. The original report on which the speculation was based was itself inaccurate and highly exaggerated.

COMMONWEALTH P. M.'S' CONFERENCE

92. SHRI LOKANATH MISRA :
SHRI S. S. MARISWAMY :

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference was recently held in Singapore ;

(b) whether the question of British arms aid to South Africa was discussed in that Conference ; and

(c) if so, what was the attitude of the Government of India in this regard ?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SURENDRA PAL SINGH) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) We strongly opposed any sale of arms by Britain to South Africa.