

SHRI M. C. SHAH : Especially when India has taken some interest in this growing technology, may I know whether the Government intends to go in for some experimental work even though for the present the cost may be prohibitive ?

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI : Sir, experimental work is going on even now.

SHRI M. C. SHAH : May I know the place where it is going on ?

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI : At the Atomic Energy Establishment in Trombay.

SHRI P. K. KUMARAN : May I know whether the cost structure revealed by the study has been compared with the cost of supplying water to the Bombay area now ?

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI : The cost, as I have said, is very much greater by this process of desalination. It becomes cheaper if such a plant is attached to an atomic reactor or plant.

SHRI SANTOKH SINGH : Is this scheme being carried on somewhere else in any part of the world, and may I know the cost also, because this cost seems to be really very prohibitive ?

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI : I do not know of other places where it is carried on. But I do know that experiments have taken place in the United States and—I stand to correction—perhaps also in Japan.

SHRI N. SRI RAMA REDDY : Is there any possibility in the near future of reducing the cost and bringing it down to the level at which water is at present available to the various cities ?

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI : I should not think this should be possible in the near future.

MR. CHAIRMAN : The Question Hour is over.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

ASIAN AND PACIFIC COUNCIL

*444. SHRI N. R. M. SWAMY : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the Asian and Pacific Council, has sent an invitation to India to join the Council; and

(b) if so, whether India has applied for the membership of the Council and on what terms ?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SARDAR SWARAN SINGH) : (a) and (b) No, Sir.

INDO-PAKISTAN MEETING

*449. SHRI SITARAM JAIPURIA : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government of India have studied the Pakistan Government's note recently received regarding the Indo-Pak meeting;

(b) if so, what are the details of the note;

(c) what reply has been sent by the Government of India to the Government of Pakistan in this connection; and

(d) when the Indo-Pakistan meeting is expected to be held ?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SARDAR SWARAN SINGH) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) A copy is laid on the Table of the House, alongwith the terms of our original proposal to the Government of Pakistan and of our latest note to them. As will be seen from these exchanges, India has proposed that another meeting be held between the two Governments under the Tashkent Declaration that it should be an officials level meeting which could prepare the ground for a Ministerial meeting, and that at such a meeting either side should be free to raise any issues and seek as wide