

The hon. gentleman claims his Party was first off the mark on that, and that is simply not true, Madam Speaker. There are Members in this House—I could cite the Hon. Member for Niagara Falls—who, long before the NDP became interested in this matter, were exploring it with officials in the U.S. The NDP is jumping on a bandwagon which has long left.

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NATIONAL DEFENCE

F-18 FIGHTER AIRCRAFT PROGRAM—ALLOTMENT OF WORK TO PROVINCES

Mr. Dan McKenzie (Winnipeg-Assiniboine): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Defence who stated in the House yesterday that almost half of the new fighter aircraft work would be allotted to the Province of Quebec and the remaining 50 per cent would be spread amongst the other nine Provinces. Can the Minister justify such a discriminatory arrangement?

Hon. J.-J. Blais (Minister of Supply and Services): Madam Speaker, the hon. gentleman ought to have followed the dossier a bit more closely. Had he been able to read the French press in the Province of Quebec he would have seen that the criticism from that Province is indeed that Quebec is not getting the number of offsets from the F-18 Program that the Quebec aerospace infrastructure would justify according to the allegations. I point out to the hon. gentleman that I would be pleased to provide him with the full figures relating to the projected offsets, including those for the Province of Manitoba which is doing well under the F-18 Program.

Mr. McKenzie: Madam Speaker, I have studied the Minister's answers of yesterday, and that is why I am asking the question today.

REQUEST THAT MANITOBA GET PERCENTAGE OF WORK

Mr. Dan McKenzie (Winnipeg-Assiniboine): Madam Speaker, as 10 per cent of the aerospace industry is in the Province of Manitoba, would the Minister give us a firm commitment that 10 per cent of the NFA work will go to the aerospace industry in Manitoba?

Hon. J.-J. Blais (Minister of Supply and Services): Madam Speaker, the Government has never indicated, or at least offered any guarantees for regional distribution of the offsets of the F-18 to any region of the country. What the Government has done is included two terms within the contract, one involving the Blade and Vane plant that has gone into Bromont; the other was with reference to a numerical controlled machining centre that is going into Eastern Quebec as well. Those are the only undertakings that were contractually provided for by the Government.

The balance of the offsets will be determined, Madam Speaker, based upon the ability of individual companies within

Oral Questions

Canada to compete not only with other companies in Canada but indeed in North America.

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ENERGY

CLOSURE OF SATELLITE ICE TRACKING STATION AT ST. JOHN'S, NFLD.

Hon. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. Could the Minister tell the House why the Government has taken a decision to close the satellite tracking station outside St. John's which will leave a very serious gap in our search and rescue capability in terms of, for example, tracking ice and getting immediate data on ice movements which seriously impact on the safety of our offshore workers?

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Madam Speaker, there was a problem of costs involved in that. I am informed by the officials that the system we have will be adequate for the supervision needed, but we are looking into the problem at this time. There is some discussion about alternative solutions to the problem and I will advise if we can change the decision. So far the decision was made because of much higher costs to operate than before.

JUSTIFICATION FOR CLOSURE

Hon. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Madam Speaker, is the Minister aware that a senior official of Petro-Canada has described that station as "a necessary element to the safety and efficiency of frontier exploration"?

Can the Minister also explain to the House, when he talks about cost efficiency, how the Government can justify closing down this very important tracking station while at the same time planning on spending over \$1 million to build a tracking station in Thailand?

Hon. Judy Erola (Minister of State (Mines)): Madam Speaker, the Shoe Cove installation was designed originally to receive signals from SEASAT. The SEASAT installation has disappeared, and it is in fact obsolete, to be replaced by a better system which will provide better services.

Mr. Clark: In Thailand.

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ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

POLLUTION OF NIAGARA RIVER—MINISTER'S STATEMENT ON SAFETY OF DRINKING WATER

Mr. Joe Reid (St. Catharines): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of the Environment who will recall answering a question of mine some six weeks ago by stating that the S-Area does not constitute a threat to the quality of the drinking water of some four million Canadians.