

transportation. What is the status of the Treasury Board submission? Can we expect a winter road to be built this year, to be the vital link to those people in those communities? Does the Minister personally support a winter road being built into the Athabasca Basin?

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, with respect to that particular issue, I would remind the Hon. Member that the reason for the negotiations now taking place between ourselves and the Government of Saskatchewan, the Government of Alberta, and the Indian bands in the Athabasca Basin is the close down of the mine which substantially reduced the traffic that we would carry through the Northern Transportation Company Limited.

Whatever savings may accrue from a reduction of that service, we will be reallocating those into that area to make sure there is a constant transportation route. However, it does involve two provincial Governments, Indian bands, and some companies which are involved that will reinstate the actual barge service.

I would indicate that we are committed to preserving and maintaining the transportation linkage. It has not yet been resolved as to what the exact nature of that will be.

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[Translation]

ENERGY

ALLEGATIONS OF MISUSE OF FUNDS BY PETRO-CANADA IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa-Vanier): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. On the TV program *Question Period* last weekend, the Leader of the Official Opposition claimed that Petro-Canada was wasting money or had its priorities wrong when it engaged in drilling on the ocean floor in developing countries. In other words, Petro-Canada is wasting its time helping developing countries find oil resources within their territorial waters.

Could the Minister explain to the House in which countries Canada is operating at the present time and why we are carrying out oil exploration in developing countries?

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, Petro-Canada International was given a mandate by Parliament to help developing countries find oil. One of the greatest problems facing developing countries is their lack of oil self-sufficiency. That is why we are helping these countries, through our foreign aid programs and with Canadian technology and Canadian experts, to become self-sufficient in oil. The countries that are benefiting from Canadian Government aid are very poor countries such as Haiti and Senegal. I think it is intolerable that when we want to help poorer countries find oil and natural gas people

should say we are doing the wrong thing. I think this is an entirely intolerable attitude on the part of the Leader of the Opposition, who is not in the House.

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[English]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

CF-18 AIRCRAFT—COMPUTER SYSTEM MALFUNCTION

Mr. Terry Sargeant (Selkirk-Interlake): Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of National Defence. He will know that our favourite flying white elephant has developed yet another problem. This time it is with the onboard computer system. Can he tell us what he is doing to ensure that this seemingly minor problem is not indicative of greater computer problems? Will he also guarantee to the House that the manufacturer, McDonnell Douglas, will pick up the cost of any repairs?

Hon. J.-J. Blais (Minister of National Defence): Madam Speaker, I can assure the hon. gentleman that I can provide him with a positive response on both counts. He is quite right in highlighting the fact that the problem is a minor one.

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SEARCH AND RESCUE

REQUEST THAT MILITARY HELICOPTERS BE STATIONED ON NORTHERN COAST OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena): Madam Speaker, my question is also directed to the Minister of National Defence, who is the chairman of the interdepartmental committee on search and rescue. As the Minister is aware, we on the northern B.C. coast have been working for a number of years to try to get the Minister and his colleagues to agree to place either military helicopters in Masset and Prince Rupert, or massively upgrade other helicopters to make them available for search and rescue work. Would the Minister advise the House whether a decision has been made to place military helicopters on the north coast in 1984? Would he also give us the date of delivery of the two coast guard cutters, one to be placed in Prince Rupert and one to be placed in Queen Charlotte City?

Hon. J.-J. Blais (Minister of National Defence): Madam Speaker, first I would like to thank the hon. gentleman for his interest in search and rescue on the West Coast. Of course he understands that there has been a report, styled "The Cross Report", that has dealt with the question of helicopter services for search and rescue in the Prince Rupert area. That report indicated that there was a requirement for some strengthening of the helicopter capacity. We are addressing that quite within the ICSAR context, as he has indicated. A decision has not been made. I would hope that we would be in a position to make such a decision very early on in the new year.

In terms of the delivery of the two search and rescue cutters, I will inform myself and advise the hon. gentleman.