

*Oral Questions*

[Translation]

**Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of Employment and Immigration):** Yesterday, I said I thought it was a shame to make such allegations and exploit people's insecurity. There never was an information or briefing session at the Prime Minister's Office or anywhere else regarding the Forget Report. This is a complete fabrication, and it is one more example of a situation being exploited to make Canadian workers insecure.

[English]

## GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

**Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber—Port au Port—St. Barbe):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister digs himself in much deeper than he can possibly imagine. Let me ask the Minister directly will he not acknowledge that even as we speak in this House senior officials of his Department at his instruction are today preparing a detailed government response to a report that both he and the Prime Minister claimed this date they have not seen?

[Translation]

**Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of Employment and Immigration):** Mr. Speaker, I cannot ask for a paper on a report I have yet to receive. I do not have a single document in my possession. I repeat before this House: I do not have a single document referring to the Forget Report in my possession.

## MINISTER'S ROLE

**Mr. Jean-Claude Malépart (Montreal—Sainte-Marie):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Employment and Immigration. Yesterday, he and the Prime Minister said that they had not been informed of the recommendations in the Forget Commission's report. Could the Minister confirm to the House today that a meeting was held with Mr. Forget in the middle of August, and second, that he has ordered two officials of his department to prepare the reply to the report, and third, that last August in St. John's, Newfoundland, the Minister informed Cabinet Members at a meeting of the Priorities and Planning Committee of Cabinet?

**Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of Employment and Immigration):** Mr. Speaker, I did meet Mr. Forget. As a new Minister, I have met many other people as well, and I fail to see why I should not meet Mr. Forget, when I meet other people for the Department. But as far as putting up with the Hon. Member's fantastic fabrications, that is something else again!

## RESPONSE TO FORGET REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

**Mr. Jean-Claude Malépart (Montreal—Sainte-Marie):** Mr. Speaker, first of all, will the Minister deny that Mr. Forget informed him of his intentions, and second, will the Minister confirm that Messrs. Wyman and Carin have been ordered by the Minister to prepare the reply to the Forget Report's recommendations, yes or no?

**Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of Employment and Immigration):** Mr. Speaker, I repeat what I said yesterday and again today: I do not have a copy of the Forget Report. I cannot ask people to reply to or deal with a document I do not have. I cannot ask people to comment on a text that isn't there. Again, I repeat before this House: I do not possess a copy or any contents of the Forget Report. I cannot ask my officials to comment on the report because I don't have it.

[English]

## PAYMENTS IN ATLANTIC CANADA

**Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Prime Minister on the same subject matter. The Minister has just referred to anxieties of people and suggested that the Opposition has raised problems of anxiety for people in Canada. My question is directly related to that. A news report which appeared yesterday suggested some \$3 billion was going to be cut from payments going to unemployment insurance recipients. I checked that and obtained precise figures from the report, not from the newspaper, which suggested, for example, that \$620 million would be cut in Atlantic Canada alone. Will the Prime Minister allay the anxiety of Atlantic Canadians and say that \$620 million will not be cut from payments to UIC recipients in Atlantic Canada?

[Translation]

**Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of Employment and Immigration):** Mr. Speaker, we gave an answer yesterday and we are going to repeat exactly the same thing today.

The Hon. Member referred to certain reports; once more, the Minister of Finance said the following in his speech:

● (1425)

[English]

I want to emphasize that we are not undertaking the review with an objective of reducing federal contributions to the unemployed.

Wherever they are coming from, the Atlantic provinces, the central provinces or the western provinces, we will not reduce the contributions to the unemployed.

[Translation]

## UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE BENEFITS—GOVERNMENT POSITION

**Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to put a question to the Minister.

Yesterday, he used the term "contributions". My question is this: Can the Minister assure the House that the Government has no intention of reducing the contributions to those who now receive unemployment insurance benefits?

**Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of Employment and Immigration):** Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the New Democratic Party is going into the details of reports which no one has and of recommendations which I have not seen myself. I cannot comment on something which is not there. It will be