

*Oral Questions*

What did the Minister mean by those words, and why did she use them?

**Hon. Barbara McDougall (Minister of Employment and Immigration):** Mr. Speaker, I thought I answered that question in response to the first question of the Member. I was asked specifically about the program for fishermen. I said it was outside this program. I said that if and when any changes were contemplated it would involve discussions with other Ministers. I do not see anything remotely threatening in that statement for the people involved in the fishing program under UIC.

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• (1450)

## TRANSPORT

### ATLANTIC FREIGHT RATE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

**Mr. George S. Rideout (Moncton):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Transport. The Atlantic freight rate assistance programs are not promises or a commitment but a negotiated constitutional right. The Deputy Prime Minister, when he was Minister of Transportation quoting the Prime Minister, assured Atlantic Canadians that the freight rate subsidy program would be maintained. Freight rate subsidies create millions in sales and affect over 12,000 Atlantic Canadians. My question to the Minister is this. Will the Minister give his commitment on the floor of this House to the continued maintenance and present funding levels of the maritime freight rates?

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of Transport):** Mr. Speaker, we have said many times that questions of this kind, which inevitably have a financial impact and therefore relate to the Budget, will be answered when the Budget is presented on April 27. I have no other answer to give than that.

[*English*]

### REQUEST FOR ASSURANCE ON FUTURE OF PROGRAM

**Mr. George S. Rideout (Moncton):** Mr. Speaker, I have a supplemental question. This Government is unnecessarily fueling business uncertainty in Atlantic Canada. This issue cannot be subjected to the whims and fancies of the budget process. We need a clear, unequivocal commitment.

Will the Prime Minister please give Atlantic Canadians this Government's assurance that maritime freight rate assistance programs will not be touched?

**Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of Transport):** Mr. Speaker, I will give the same answer in English that I gave in French. I am particularly—

**Ms. Copps:** That bad!

**Mr. Bouchard (Roberval):** —if the Member from Hamilton East would shut her mouth it would be easier.

**Some Hon. Members:** Right on.

**Mr. Speaker:** Perhaps the Hon. Minister could complete his answer.

**Mr. Bouchard (Roberval):** Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to be a member of this Government which has done more than you did in five years for Atlantic Canada. I think that we have a lot of programs, and of course you were against the most of them. It is normal. I repeat concerning the earlier question you raised, that this question if it has to be answered will be answered in due course on April 27.

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## UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

### PROPOSED CHANGES—EFFECT ON COMMUNITY WELFARE ROLLS

**Mr. John R. Rodriguez (Nickel Belt):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Employment and Immigration. It is a very straightforward question, as I always ask.

Can the Minister tell this House what the cost of her proposed changes to the UI will be on the welfare rolls of communities like Belle Island in Newfoundland, and Sudbury, Ontario? Does the Minister from Rosedale not recognize the devastating impact that her proposed changes will have on these communities, which are already strapped for money?

**Hon. Barbara McDougall (Minister of Employment and Immigration):** Mr. Speaker, I will ignore the fact that the Member got my riding wrong, and simply suggest to him that there are enormous benefits for small communities in this new program. I think he should be congratulating us. There are many communities in his part of the world that will benefit from the increased funding to Community Futures.