

*Oral Questions*

deal with accordingly, in turns of the interests of developing transportation in Canada.

## REDUCTION OF SERVICES—GOVERNMENT POSITION

**Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa):** Mr. Speaker, one thing is quite clear: During the election campaign, the Government promised one thing, but after the campaign it did the exact opposite. Canadians have no trouble understanding that!

According to a report published today in the *Globe and Mail*, the Government intends to cut back services in the province of Québec. The Government promised during the campaign to increase services. There are 33 regional trains running in the province of Québec, but according to today's report, the Government intends to reduce those 33 regional trains to zero. Is that correct, according to the Minister?

[English]

**Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of Transport):** Mr. Speaker, I think the Leader of the New Democratic Party knows very well what I think about leaked documents.

For Quebec or for any other province, it is exactly the same. This report has not been given to anybody in the Department. I have never seen the report.

Before the end of June VIA Rail will give the proposals that we have requested. They will be considered by the Government, and then we will give the answer. Until then I have nothing to do with a leaked document.

**Mr. Broadbent:** Mr. Speaker, we know what the Government thinks of leaked documents, and we know what the people of Canada think of this Government, too.

## POSITION OF GOVERNMENT

**Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa):** Mr. Speaker, considering the Minister says that he has not received the report yet, will he give us assurances that the Government will not move in the direction indicated in this report?

Specifically it says with reference to regional service in Atlantic Canada that the recommendation will be to reduce regional service from 52 trains to zero. In terms of western trains the recommendation is to reduce service from 36 trains to 8. As I said earlier, in the Province of Quebec regional service will go from 33 trains to zero.

Since this would amount to the complete decimation of rail service in Canada, will the Minister give us his

assurance that these regional trains will not be reduced along these lines and that the Government will live up to the commitment it made in the 1988 election campaign?

**Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of Transport):** Mr. Speaker, first I want to deal with what Canadians think about our Party and the Hon. Member's Party. They saw the difference on November 21.

Second, of course I will not give any commitment. VIA Rail will make proposals. We will consider the proposals. We will make a decision. Once again, I will not give any guarantee because VIA Rail has not even given any proposal.

## IMPACT OF CORPORATE PLAN

**Mr. Joe Comuzzi (Thunder Bay—Nipigon):** Mr. Speaker, my question is also for the Minister of Transport, and it concerns the future of VIA Rail in our country.

Today we were advised that VIA Rail's five-year corporate plan will eliminate almost half or 48 per cent of all VIA Rail's total operations as we know them in Canada. This plan calls for the elimination of all 52 regional services in Atlantic Canada, 33 in Quebec, all 23 in Ontario, and 7 in the West. Now that we have heard what the VIA Rail budget cuts were, we know what is the plan for VIA Rail and VIA Rail workers in Canada.

Will the Minister tell the House and Canadians today, especially the workers at VIA Rail, what are the plans for their future employment in Canada?

**Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of Transport):** Mr. Speaker, my friend is lucky to have been advised about the future of VIA Rail. I have not been yet. I will be, yes; the Minister will be advised, but by VIA Rail of course. We can be advised by the Leader of the Opposition, but what does it mean? I want to be advised by VIA Rail, and when I will be advised by VIA Rail I will make up my mind.

**Mr. Comuzzi:** Just in reply to the Minister, some of us were not advised about the Budget, either, but we had to make a comment on it.

**Some Hon. Members:** Oh, oh!