

Oral Questions

is to assist the question to be asked, not to engage in argument about who answered the last question. Will the Hon. Member put his question?

MINISTER'S POSITION

Mr. David Berger (Laurier): Mr. Speaker, I will try another one on him. In his book in 1983 the Prime Minister promised to increase funding for the National Research Council by 20 per cent. Why has he broken this firm promise? Why has he cut the budget of the NRC by some 30 per cent since he took office a sorry two years ago?

Hon. Frank Oberle (Minister of State for Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, again I wish to ask the Hon. Member why he insists so seriously on destroying the morale of the NRC.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Oberle: There has not been a 30 per cent cut. The NRC will experience a net increase, not only of funding but of person-years, in line with the new priorities assigned to it over the next five years.

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[Translation]

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

INQUIRY WHY UNEMPLOYED RECEIVING BENEFITS MUST PAY FOR FORGET COMMISSION REPORT

Mr. Mike Cassidy (Ottawa Centre): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Employment and Immigration. We already know that the Forget Commission will recommend cutbacks of \$620 million in benefits to the unemployed in the Maritime Provinces, \$930 million in Quebec and \$400 million in British Columbia. Can the Minister explain why the unemployed who are receiving benefits must pay for the Forget report? Is this not tantamount to asking a condemned man to pay before going to the gallows?

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of Employment and Immigration): As one can see, Mr. Speaker, any story can be made up. There is no connection at all between the Forget report recommendations and the second part of the Hon. Member's question. I can only repeat what I said earlier. When we want to improve a system, it is altogether normal to appoint a royal commission of inquiry and this is not the first time it has been done in this country, but it is paid for by all the people who contribute to the unemployment insurance fund. And this time we only did what has been done in the past, as I said.

• (1440)

[English]

Mr. Cassidy: Mr. Speaker, if the Liberals did this before the Conservatives, they were both wrong.

REQUEST THAT COMMISSION BE FINANCED FROM GENERAL REVENUES

Mr. Mike Cassidy (Ottawa Centre): This report is going to be the toughest blow to unemployed people since unemployment insurance was set up 40 years ago. Therefore, will the Minister now guarantee that he will withdraw that charge from the Unemployment Insurance Fund and have it paid out of general government revenues?

[Translation]

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I have no commitment to make in that respect today.

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[English]

CANADA POST CORPORATION

SERVICE CUTS—RATE INCREASE

Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Saint-Léonard—Anjou): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. On August 14, 1984, the then Leader of the Opposition, the present Prime Minister, stated: "The Progressive Conservative Party feels that Canada Post's current program of rapid debt reduction is unrealistic, and is the underlying cause of problems with regard to both declining postal service and ventures into ill-conceived schemes to generate greater revenue".

Will the Prime Minister now explain why he is allowing Canada Post to slash service in every community in Canada while there has been a four-cent per letter increase since his Party has formed the Government?

[Translation]

Hon. Michel Côté (Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion): Mr. Speaker, I just want to repeat, for the benefit of the Hon. Member, that this Government's continuing concern for the needs of all Canadians is reflected in the recommendations of the Marchment Committee which consulted with Canadians across this country. The Government wants to ensure that we can have better service at a lower cost, and of course the Canada Post Corporation is preparing a plan to that effect, a plan that the Government has under consideration. When we are ready, we will make the plan public, as soon as possible.