Canada, which represents the people, represented by counsel in order that not only the position of the railways but the interests of the people can be made clear before the commission?

Hon. Donald C. Jamieson (Minister of Transport): I would be glad to consider that suggestion but I believe the procedures are well established under the act. There is ample opportunity for representations to be made by all parties. In any event, should the decision of the CTC be challenged by any authority, then there is a right to appeal to the Governor in Council.

Mr. Woolliams: Yes, but in view of the fact that railway law and railway economics are difficult subjects and subjects upon which railway counsel are well briefed, would the minister not agree that it is costly to retain the services of the right kind of experts and counsel, for which reason it is important that the government should be represented at this hearing in order that the public interest might be protected?

Mr. Speaker: I suggest to the hon. member that his supplementary is a repetition of his earlier question, put in an argumentative way.

PROVINCIAL CENTENNIALS

BRITISH COLUMBIA—INQUIRY AS TO GRANT

Mr. Barry Mather (Surrey): I have a question to direct to the Prime Minister, Mr. Speaker. Taking into account the announcement that the federal government is making a $5 million grant toward Manitoba's centennial celebrations, can the Prime Minister indicate whether similar consideration will be given in the case of British Columbia's centennial celebrations?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): I do not know of any request having been made yet by the province of British Columbia, but when we were discussing the grant to Manitoba several ministers from British Columbia did raise that question with me. I answered then, as I answer the hon. member now, that if we receive such a request we shall, of course, consider it very carefully. It may be that British Columbia, because it has benefited so much from confederation and because it is so generous, will decide to send money to Ottawa.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

[Mr. Woolliams.]

CROWN CORPORATIONS

POLYMER—REMOVAL FROM SCOPE OF GOVERNMENT COMPANIES OPERATION ACT

Mr. Jack Cullen (Sarnia): I have a question for the Minister of Supply and Services; I have given the hon. gentleman notice. Did anyone consult with the city of Sarnia or the province of Ontario before Polymer Corporation was removed from the scope of the Government Companies Operation Act, bearing in mind the fact that a change in the distribution of $1 million in municipal tax money is involved?

Mr. Speaker: I have some doubt as to the admissibility of this question. The hon. member is asking whether the minister consulted with anyone in connection with this situation. However, the hon. gentleman may wish to reply.

Hon. James Richardson (Minister of Supply and Services): I thank the hon. member for having given me notice of this question. I am able to advise him that the removal of Polymer Corporation from under the Government Companies Operation Act was not a matter which required consultation with the city of Sarnia or with the province of Ontario, and that to the best of my knowledge no consultation took place.

I might add by way of explanation that as an agent of the Crown, Polymer paid the City of Sarnia a grant in lieu of tax equal to the assessment which would have been payable had it been an ordinary commercial corporation. I understand that the amount in lieu of tax in 1968 was approximately $825,000—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The reply given by the minister confirms my original thought that the question should have been placed on the order paper.

ECONOMIC COUNCIL

EMPLOYMENT OF OUTSIDE CONSULTANTS

Mr. G. W. Baldwin (Peace River): My question is directed to the President of the Treasury Board, Mr. Speaker. Since it has been alleged that the Economic Council of Canada has been requested to cut back expenditure on the engagement of outside consultants, can the minister assure the House that the government does not intend to interfere with the effectiveness of such bodies as the Economic Council of Canada and the office of the Auditor General?