

Oral Questions

sive framework which will achieve that objective. The hon. member asked what we were going to do to discuss matters with Alberta. As I understand it, and I have not been directly responsible for these discussions, they are moving as rapidly as possible and in the tenor requested by the government of the province of Alberta.

Mr. Wilson: Madam Speaker, the government, the minister and the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources have been given a heaven-sent opportunity to get our economy rolling in an area which is completely under their control so that we do not have to listen to what is going on in other parts of the world.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wilson: We are losing job-creating opportunities in many major projects, for instance, Alsands, Cold Lake and now today we had the announcement that the Judy Creek project is being shelved. Conventional oil drillers are moving south. Orders are being cancelled and jobs are being lost in central Canada as well as in the west. The government has been sitting idle for six weeks listening to the advice of the experts in the field and doing nothing about it.

In view of the fact that unemployment is approaching the one million figure this year and we are having a balance of payments deficit in the manufacturing account of \$17 billion, will the minister listen to the Economic Council of Canada, which is the primary economic adviser to the Prime Minister and the government, and will he take their advice as to how to unwind this deadlock between Alberta and Ottawa in energy development?

Mr. MacEachen: Madam Speaker, the government is obviously prepared to study and consider all the proposals made by the Economic Council of Canada in its annual review. I have begun the process of reading and studying that report, which was written prior to the budget and the National Energy Program. I have been greatly reassured by the fact that there is very broad consistency between the budget and the comments and concerns expressed by the Economic Council of Canada. I can hardly turn a page in that review without finding support for a major element in the budget presented on October 28.

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TRANSPORT**FUNDING ASSISTANCE FOR LIGHT RAPID TRANSIT SYSTEM IN VANCOUVER—GOVERNMENT POSITION**

Mr. Ian Waddell (Vancouver-Kingsway): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of State for Trade. According to yesterday's Vancouver *Sun*, the minister indicated that any federal funding for the new proposed light rapid transit system for Vancouver had been jeopardized by the premature announcement of the British Columbia government. The minister knows that we on this side of the House have been

pushing for light rapid transit development. Would the minister assure us that the citizens of Vancouver will not end up as innocent victims of or bystanders in this federal-provincial dispute? Could the minister also tell us whether there has been approval in principle—I am not asking the minister for amounts—of Government of Canada funding for light rapid transit for the city of Vancouver?

Hon. Ed Lumley (Minister of State, Trade): Madam Speaker, I have been given a mandate by my cabinet colleagues to enter into negotiations with the province of British Columbia and the local transit authorities to further negotiations between our two governments for federal participation in the Vancouver project. As the hon. member knows, we think this is a tremendous opportunity for Canadian industry. It gives us an opportunity to enter into a multibillion dollar industry internationally. It is a great Canadian project and we will do our very best to follow up those negotiations.

Under the chairmanship of the Minister of Employment and Immigration, who chairs the cabinet committee on western affairs, this is just one of a number of initiatives for western industrial development in Canada that are being considered.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Paproski: What about Edmonton and Calgary?

Mr. Waddell: Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his usual loquacious announcement. I remind him that we have been pushing for that for years and I am glad to know he is in favour of this scheme in principle. I want to thank him for that and for taking myself and some of my constituents to see the new project in Kingston yesterday.

Since this is a new project and has not been tried, and although it has advantages for Canadians buying Canadian technology and for east-west relations in Canada, is the minister prepared to assure the House and the city of Vancouver that federal funds will be given directly to the city and that he will not allow the provincial government to deduct from its portion of funding the amount which comes from Ottawa? In other words, that the federal money will go directly to the city of Vancouver. Is the minister prepared to consider that and give the House that commitment?

Mr. Lumley: Madam Speaker, since we have not started any specific negotiations, it would be foolish for me to give that kind of commitment to the hon. member. This is a partnership. The federal government is trying to propose a partnership among the provinces, the local authorities, the private sector and the Government of Canada so as to fulfil its obligations.