

*Inquiries of the Ministry*

own position in relation to his suggestion that negotiations take place between Canada and Russia for closer trade relations?

**Right Hon. C. D. Howe (Minister of Trade and Commerce):** Trade between Canada and any country behind the iron curtain is carried on subject to permit. In other words, a permit must be issued by my department for any transaction concerning exports to those countries. There has never been any prohibition against trade in certain commodities, while there is a definite prohibition against trade in commodities that are on the restricted list. I refer to strategic materials. Subject to that reservation, if any Canadian merchant can arrange trade with Soviet Russia, his application will be considered by the department.

**Mr. Fleming:** Then from what the minister has said am I to take it that the government as such has no particular interest in the suggestion made by the Russian ambassador but will leave the matter to Canadian merchants?

**Some hon. Members:** Order.

**Mr. Fulton:** May I ask the minister a supplementary question—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. Does the hon. member for Eglinton wish to ask a supplementary question?

**Mr. Fleming:** Yes, Mr. Speaker; because my question was not answered.

**An hon. Member:** There was no question.

**Mr. Fleming:** I was asking the minister as to the government's position in this matter in relation to the Russian ambassador's suggestion of expanding trade between the two countries. Is it the decision of the government, in the light of what the minister said, to leave this matter to the merchants?

**Some hon. Members:** Order.

**Mr. Speaker:** If the minister wishes to answer, all right.

**Mr. Howe (Port Arthur):** The government is interested in the expansion of any trade provided it does not conflict with government policy, but the government does not enter into trade directly. As I say, if there are facilities for carrying on the trade and if private Canadians wish to develop trade with Russia, the government will be glad to consider the nature of the transaction and either to issue a permit or not do so, as the circumstances warrant.

**Mr. Fulton:** May I ask, as a supplementary question, whether the facilities of the export  
[Mr. Fleming.]

credits insurance corporation will be made available for the purpose of expanding trade with Russia?

**Mr. Howe (Port Arthur):** That depends on the view of the insurance company in the particular transaction. It usually requires security from the government of the country receiving the goods. Whether it would approve a request for insurance is a matter for decision based on a particular application.

**Mr. Fulton:** The government would not issue any over-all directive to them in that connection?

**Mr. Howe (Port Arthur):** Mr. Speaker, the government does not tell the insurance company what to do. The insurance company has its own board of directors. It is supposed to operate as a self-contained unit. While the insurance company tells the government what it will or will not do, the government does not attempt to tell the insurance company what it should do.

**PRIVILEGE**

MR. POULIOT—REFERENCE TO REMARKS IN DEBATE  
ON FEBRUARY 16

On the orders of the day:

**Mr. Jean-François Pouliot (Temiscouata):** Mr. Speaker, I have to rise on a double question of privilege, and I will do so in the mildest possible manner. In the first place, the hon. member for Moose Jaw-Lake Centre (Mr. Thatcher), at the opening of his remarks yesterday said this, as reported at page 2135 of *Hansard*:

First I must comment on the speech which we recently heard from the member for Temiscouata (Mr. Pouliot). I am sure that the house was surprised, and certainly we in this group were shocked to hear the anti-labour tinge of his remarks.

Et cetera. I will tell my honourable and capitalist friend that there was no anti-labour tinge in my remarks because I have been pro-labour.

**Some hon. Members:** Order.

**Mr. Pouliot:** It is most unfair to make an insinuation of that kind just as it is unfair to growl when I protest against it. In the second place, what I am extremely sorry for is that the words of the hon. member for Moose Jaw-Lake Centre were taken seriously by another gentleman who in his remarks, as reported at page 2156 of *Hansard*, said this:

It is no good damning the trade unions offhand in a press report if they have a delegation down here. The government has a responsibility.

This so far did not apply to the member for Temiscouata; and after the legitimate