

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, December 21, 1966

The house met at 2.30 p.m.

[Translation]

TRADE

TABLING OF CORRESPONDENCE ENCOURAGING EXPORTS

Mr. Jean-Charles Cantin (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Trade and Commerce (Mr. Winters), I wish to table copies in English and French of two letters designed to give further effect to the intensified trade promotion program which the minister announced in October, 1966.

One letter is directed to companies which are deemed to have export potential, but which are not active in the export field to date. The other is written to companies which already export.

The purpose of the letters is to encourage Canadian companies in their export programs and to make the facilities of the Department of Trade and Commerce available to them.

I therefore ask leave to table those letters.

[English]

Mr. Speaker: Has the hon. member leave to table the letters to which he has just referred?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

SUGGESTED CANADIAN PARTICIPATION IN EXECUTION OF GERMAN WAR PRISONERS

Hon. Paul Hellyer (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, in accordance with the undertaking I gave on November 8 in response to a question by the hon. member for Royal (Mr. Fairweather), I should like to make a further statement regarding the trial and execution of the German sailors, Dorfer and Beck, in Amsterdam in 1945. Hon. members will recall that on October 11 last I dealt with this matter in the house. Since that time I have had further investigations made. Those investigations are now complete and I wish to assure the house that nothing has come to

light which would in any way modify the statements I previously made on this subject.

In sum, any suggestion that any Canadian officer or soldier acted illegally or that the executions of Dorfer and Beck were Canadian inspired or encouraged by the Canadians is absolutely false.

The suggestions that have been made have, I think, been based on some misconception as to what actually occurred and the context in which events took place. The Germans, by the terms of surrender, were made responsible for the discipline of their troops who were awaiting return to and disbandment in Germany. The surrender terms made no mention of any change to be effected in the German disciplinary processes available to them for the maintenance of discipline. As I said in an earlier statement on this subject, restrictions on German disciplinary procedures were contained in military law No. 153. This was not received by the headquarters 1st Canadian army until the afternoon of May 14, the day after the execution took place.

There is no information that Dorfer or Beck deserted because of any appeal from the allies and indeed the evidence as set out in the article in *Der Spiegel* is to the contrary. Similarly, there is no evidence to support any suggestion that either of the two men had been engaged in collaboration with the allies during the time of their desertion from the German forces, and indeed all available evidence is to the contrary.

While the local Canadian military authorities furnish captured German rifles and ammunition for the execution, and provided transport, these two matters have been completely misinterpreted. The Germans had been disarmed and, if the sentence was to be carried out, rifles had to be returned to them for that purpose. When these were given to the Germans, the German authorities stated that they were going to carry out the execution on the spot in full view of their own troops, which would also have been in view of Canadian personnel. The Canadian officer present refused to allow this and was accordingly requested by the Germans to furnish transportation so that the executions might be carried out elsewhere. This was the only reason that a Canadian truck was made