

These reminders can be salutary because the problems are real. But there is no excuse for the assertion - either careless or calculated - that the economic and political domination of our country by the United States is imminent; or for dragging up old anti-American prejudices. The War of 1812 was fought a long time ago, and "54-40" is now more impressive as a football signal than as a call to conflict across the border, or even as a peroration in a House of Commons speech. The times are too serious and the problems too real for irresponsible exaggeration.

Canada has been urged recently to declare its economic independence of the United States. I wonder what that means. Surely not that our tariffs, our budgets and our laws are now made across the border and that we are a mere satellite or dependency of our great neighbour. Ask them in Washington about that!

Certainly we are not independent of the United States in the sense that we can isolate our economy from hers, at least without tragic consequences.

But what country in the free world can be or would wish to be economically independent of the United States in that sense? Canada least of all. The trade figures with our neighbour are themselves enough to refute any such idea.

Furthermore - and this should comfort the Jeremiahs who predict our new colonialism - the United States in its turn is today by no means economically independent of Canada, and will become less so in the future. The fact is that the economic interdependence of our two countries, and indeed of most important trading countries, is both inevitable and beneficial. It is usually forgotten, for instance, as an illustration of this interdependence, that Canadian per capita investment in the United States is almost twice as great as American in Canada.

I know that anxiety is also felt - and it may be very real - because, as it is put, we have too many of our economic eggs in the American basket. It is worth reminding ourselves, however, that it is the strongest basket in the foreign market. I do not like to think what we would have done without it in recent years; which does not mean that we have not sought - or must not continue to seek - to fill other baskets.

Perhaps, however, by economic independence is meant protection against excessive United States investment in our capital development.