

*Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement*

The railways that we built across Canada were expensive responses to deal with American attempts to absorb Canada. They were built to help settle and develop the West through immigration, as well as to bring British Columbia into closer contact with central and eastern Canada.

Tariffs that were in place 100 years ago were established in response to American attempts to move into our territory. They were an attempt to force east and west movement of trade rather than the north-south flow. Again, they worked.

I know that many government Members believe the CBC is an expensive way of resisting American pressure, but it was put into place to fight the predominance of American media on the airwaves. In a sense, Air Canada and the Trans-Canada Highway were used to bring Canada closer together.

We have been successful in resisting absorption by the Americans until now. It has been costly on occasion, but we have resisted. Can we continue to do so?

Until World War II we had a counterbalance to American domination. It was the Commonwealth, or British Empire as it was known then. The Right Hon. John Diefenbaker often spoke about how the Commonwealth counterbalanced the U.S. impact on Canada. He believed that the connection between Canada and the Commonwealth should be strongly supported in order to keep the American counterbalance at bay.

Shortly after the war we ceased to be British subjects. We no longer flew the Union Jack, which is something else John Diefenbaker fought against for many hours in the House. We no longer had the Commonwealth trade preference and moved to the point where we can now amend our own Constitution.

While all these are progressive steps making Canada independent, it also made us much more vulnerable to the drawing card of the United States. That Commonwealth connection was replaced by the American media. Ninety per cent of movies that we watch in Canada are from the United States. Much of the time our children spend watching television is on American programs. Some 90 per cent of music recordings sold in Canada are American, 77 per cent of the books sold in Canada are American, and 75 per cent of the magazines in Canada are American.

Our prospects for survival even before the trade deal were rather doubtful because most of our daily activities are influenced by the United States.

The United States provides more post-graduate education to Canadian students than all the other countries put together. We are already strongly influenced by the United States.

I and some 53 per cent of Canadians oppose the Government's free trade proposal. I know that over 50 per cent of my constituents do not believe in it because they elected me instead of the previous Conservative Member.

However, let us assume for a moment that the Government is right in believing we will increase our wealth. Will we win the other battles for sovereignty? Will we remain politically separate from the United States? Will we remain socially separated from the United States? Will we remain culturally separated from the United States?

We are already awash in U.S. companies, awash in U.S. investment, awash in American culture and media. Economic control is being lost in Canada. If this continues will we be able to remain Canadians?

What will happen when Canadian businesses begin complaining that the taxes they pay for environmental, regional and social programs are too high? Will the Government gradually reduce the emphasis on those social, environmental and regional programs? I believe the more dependent these companies become on the U.S. market, the more policies like medicare and unemployment insurance will have to be changed.

The pressure will come from Canadian companies that want to compete and from American branch plants that could threaten to go back to the United States where they can produce goods cheaper. Even American based companies that do not have a branch plant in Canada will start complaining because the playing field is not level. They will suggest that Canadian workers receiving family allowance, medicare, and unemployment insurance are getting an unfair advantage. They will threaten to withdraw, to refuse Canadian products unless the Canadian Governments do something about it. The pressure to maintain or increase the number of jobs in Canada will force the Government to drop those programs that make Canada different from the United States. Sometimes I wonder if we will have to return to the use of Fahrenheit, pound, feet, and miles as a result of harmonization.

Once the harmonization of economics and ideas occurs, there is little point in claiming that we can reverse it. The six-month cancellation clause becomes more useless as harmonization increases. Besides that, as