

ITAC, Walter Light's committee, will begin its work next month. And yes, it will play a part in refining our negotiating hand.

It should be no surprise to anyone in Canada that we are paying so much attention to the United States. I think everybody knows now that the U.S. is our biggest customer. It buys three-quarters of everything we sell abroad. Its business provides nearly a quarter of every dollar we earn and keeps more than two million Canadians at work. And when you sell that much to one customer, and when that customer keeps calling your complaints department, you'd better start paying very close attention to his case.

Our access to the American market is now in serious danger of being eroded. The Americans, and in particular the Congress, are getting more protectionist by the day. They keep coming up with new ways to keep our products out. This summer, for example, four Western states slapped a prohibition on our pork on the excuse that our pigs were being fed an antibiotic they didn't approve of.

Or take lumber. Americans buy more than half of all we produce, and 60,000 Canadian jobs depend on their continuing to do so. But there

are three separate bills now before the Congress that would restrict our sales of softwood lumber. That puts a lot of jobs in jeopardy.

This is just a sampling. Canadian steel is under recurrent threat. So is sugar. And fish. And salt. And uranium. And raspberries. And blueberries. And on and on. There is even talk in the United States now of imposing a surcharge on all imports, and that would be a severe blow to all of our economy. It has been estimated that just a 10% reduction in our exports could throw a quarter of a million Canadians out of work.

The immediate concern of your Government in exploring trade talks with the United States, therefore, is really quite simple. We can't afford to lose the business, and the arrangements we've got now are just not good enough to keep it. We need something better, just to preserve Canadian jobs.

But that is not all. A better, fairer, more open trade arrangement with the United States would create new jobs, and better jobs. It would encourage new investment, not only foreign investment but investment by Canadians as well, and that would build our industries and make them more competitive throughout the world. We would, in other words, be selling more products