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Toronto Star Oct. 13/84

(Column by Alan Toulin)

Toulin suggested it has never been as important as now to secure access to markets like the U.S.--"the biggest, richest and closest market we have." He noted that the planet was coalescing into ever-larger trading blocs. Canada was the major industrial country without access to a huge domestic market for its products. Ottawa would be correct to start talking to the U.S. about trade liberalization. But Toulin said there were estimates that bi-lateral free trade with the U.S. would boost Canada's economic growth by 6 to 8 per cent over a five year period. But he cautioned that the move to freer trade would produce winners and losers for both countries.

Globe and Mail Oct. 16/84

(Column by Ron Anderson)

Anderson argued that those who maintained there was no contradiction between a strong Canadian identity and a close relationship with the U.S. were probably correct. It was possible to debate the question of free trade in an objective way because Canadians were overcoming their fear of U.S. economic and political domination. Anderson felt that what has brought about the change in attitude is a growing feeling that the trade options confronting the country are becoming increasingly limited. A big part of the world outside the Canada-U.S. framework has turned inward and erected a "common external tariff and web of protective non-tariff barriers against imports from the rest of the world." Canada's increasing reliance on the U.S. market has come about, not by choice, but in response to forces at work in the world economy.

Toronto Star Nov. 15/84

(Column by Jack McArthur)

McArthur suggests the growing national debate over the possibility of free trade with the U.S. is bizarre. He said that all-out free trade should not be the crux of the debate; instead he said it was a matter of comparatively freer trade. Canada should push for deals for freer trade. And the approach should be "careful and sophisticated in analysis and policy..."

Southam News (Published in the Ottawa Citizen and other newspapers in the Southam group) Nov. 29/84

(Column by Don McGillivray)

McGillivray submitted that in economic terms free trade with the U.S. was not an impossible goal. But in emotional terms, he felt the idea was still a non-starter. To go into such an arrangement suddenly would be a terrible shock to the Canadian economy, but if it were phased in gradually, the shock would become a challenge to Canadians to adapt to a more competitive situation and take advantage of the wider market. In any event, the decision to enter such an arrangement would be taken on a deep emotional level. Canadians were simply not prepared to take what Donald Macdonald (see news item) called a "leap of faith" into free trade.