

Many Canadian nationalists think we are too close to the U.S. already, that our extreme dependency on one country is compromising our sovereignty, and that multilateralism with many nations rather than bilateralism with one should be our goal. Others claiming to express sound business principles say that over-dependence upon a single market runs counter to the most basic axiom of prudent business strategy, which demands a diversified customer base. All seem to be contributing to an ever-growing doubt about whether it is wise to continue to present negotiations while Canadians remain divided about their objectives and apprehensive about the results of an agreement.

It is my own view, however, that no matter how difficult it may be to resolve the matter, still it must be done for reasons that I will enlarge upon later, and it is gratifying for me to see our two countries once more addressing themselves seriously to the task.

At least for Canada, the question of free trade is not just free trade with anyone but free trade with the United States. Seventy-six per cent of our exports are to you and seventy-three per cent of our imports come from you. We are much more closely bound to you than are, say, France and Germany to the other countries of the Common Market.

And while the comparable percentages for the United States are not so overwhelming, still we are your biggest trading partner, accounting for twenty-one percent of your exports, nearly twice as many as you send to your next largest partner, Japan.