

*Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement*

Why does a loss of Canadian sovereignty no longer concern the Government? Did the Prime Minister have to go along with free trade to obtain a membership in the exclusive trading club known as G-7? Perhaps the Prime Minister was told in no uncertain times that the Auto Pact would be cancelled and a new arrangement renegotiated under GATT unless he played ball with the U.S.

What will be the impact on national markets all over the world when one of the world's richest resource nations, Canada, becomes intimately linked with the world's largest debtor nation? It is absolutely incredible. It is outrageous. Where and when has the Government, either in the House, on the campaign trail, or in any of its publications ever addressed these issues or attempted to satisfy these kinds of questions with a reasonable response?

It falls upon us, because of the unwillingness of the Government to provide the public with any sort of useful information, to make sure that all the questions are raised and every answer checked so that every opposition Member is satisfied that a reasonable accounting can be given on the issue of free trade to the people of their own constituencies who are now purposely being kept ignorant by the Government.

We have the right to ask and a right to know, but most of all we have a responsibility to the Canadian public to inform them fully of every possible consequence to their future which will result from this Bill.

Our Party has said that we would not impede the passage of a free trade Bill and we will of course hold true to our word. However, the election of the Government was hardly an overwhelming endorsement of free trade.

A better measure of the Canadian feeling on this issue was taken by pollsters immediately following the national debate among the three Party Leaders. At that time, the big corporations spent millions of dollars in advertising, buying the election for the Government.

Why was this done? Were the millions spent because free trade would benefit the average Canadian? Even the most naive would not believe that big business suddenly developed this touching concern for the little guy.

Why did most of the big business community so strongly support the Free Trade Agreement? In the past few years we have seen a number of Canadian corporations transferring their operations to the United States,

or buying on a large scale existing U.S. business enterprises. None did so because they would have access to a larger market, they did it because there are fewer effective government interventionist policies in the United States, that bastion of free enterprise where what is good for General Motors is good for the U.S.A., as a former U.S. Cabinet Secretary put it.

Yet these corporations, which one former Party Leader called corporate welfare bums, are usually in the front line at the trough petitioning the Government for special favours and hand-outs.

The concern of my constituents is over what protection the Government will afford its citizens when corporations in Canada insist they cannot compete with U.S. firms as long as they are forced to contribute to the social programs which constitute the safety net that provides a decent minimum standard of living for so many of our citizens.

Are our social services, pensions, tax system, health insurance and other programs to be changed more like those in the United States where the gap between the rich and the poor is steadily growing? For example, in Canada, over 80 per cent of unemployed workers receive unemployment insurance benefits of 60 per cent of their weekly wage for up to one year. In the United States, only one-quarter of the unemployed receive unemployment insurance benefits, getting less than 40 per cent of their weekly wage for only six months.

In Canada we have universal medicare. In the United States, 36 million people, one-third of them children, have no form of medical insurance.

Welfare assistance is readily available for all Canadians but only one-third of poor American families receive any public assistance. It is no wonder there is such a high crime rate in the United States.

Yet the Americans claim that our social programs are unfair subsidies and want compensation for profits lost to American companies if and when Canadians create new social programs like dental care or public automobile insurance.

That is blackmail, extortion and robbery.

My Scarborough—Agincourt constituents have other concerns. They want progressively higher standards in the areas of environment protection, occupational health and safety, consumer protection and minimum wages.

With respect to minimum wages, several of the states have no minimum at all and most others have pegged