

THE GAZETTE

Volume 118, Number 11

Dalhousie University, Halifax

November 14, 1985

Compete eyeball to eyeball with US

By BILL OVEREND

FREE TRADE WITH THE United States will place Canadian sovereignty in jeopardy, says the head of the Council of Canadians (COC).

"If we get sucked into this comprehensive bilateral free trade agreement, you can say good-bye to Canada," Mel Hurtig, head of the newly formed COC and publisher of *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, told an audience of 150 in the Dunn building Nov. 6.

"What the Canadian nationalists have always feared is that we will be engulfed by a massive wave of continentalism that will (mean) the end of the separate country on the northern half of the North American continent. Today we are facing a situation where the very survival of our country is at stake," says Hurtig.

Hurtig appeared in Halifax to attract Nova Scotian support for the COC, a nationalist organization created in response to growing federal government "continentalism." Hurtig was introduced by Eric Kierans, former Liberal cabinet minister and organizer of the COC's predecessor, the Committee for an Independent Canada. Treasurer of the Nova Scotia branch of the COC, Michael Power, was on hand to sign up new members for the COC.

Hurtig says the federal government, embarrassed by resignations and bank failings, needs a success and consequently is making free trade its major economic thrust. By promoting free trade, says Hurtig, the government is courting assimilation.

"If you want a comprehensive free trade agreement, you better be prepared to have the same tax rates, the same interest rates, the same environmental laws, the same wage rates, the same working conditions (as the US) Hurtig told the crowd.

Hurtig implied that if a free trade agreement was reached, the federal government would have to cut taxes to equalize the Canadian and American business climates, or face an exodus of industry. Cutting taxes would mean axing social programs, he says.

"(Under a free trade agreement,) Canadian businessmen are supposed to compete eyeball to eyeball with the Americans," says Hurtig. "Fine. I'm a businessman. I'll compete eyeball to eyeball, no problem. But don't you tell me you're going to charge me higher taxes,.... or I'll move my plant (south)."

In response to veiled threats of American industrialists, says Hurtig, the federal government already has social programs on the negotiating table. Recently, American fisherman called the 58 different subsidy programs avail-

able to the Nova Scotia and Newfoundland fisheries (including unemployment insurance) unfair competition.

Freer trade with the US, Canada's largest trading partner, is not a new issue among Canadians. Proponents argue that lower trade barriers would open a large consumer market to Canadian producers, but others worry that currently protected industries on both sides of the border would be hurt. Canadian policy on trade is now governed largely by the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), negotiated in 1958. Under terms of the agreement, the US ranks as a "most favored nation" trading partner to Canada. Hurtig thinks Canada should avoid a free trade arrangement, and stick to GATT.

Canadian politicians are approaching the trade issue with a 'colonial mentality,' complains Hurtig. "I'm not afraid of the Americans," he says. "It's our own Canadian politicians that I fear much more than the Americans."

"The greatest asset we have, easily, is our ability as Canadians to decide our future down the road," says Hurtig. "That is precisely what the government of this country is prepared to abandon."

Canadians are unaware of the dangers of free trade, he says, because the federal government is discouraging dialogue by trying to "rush into the window of opportunity."

"We must at the very least, have a debate," says Hurtig.

By agreeing to free trade with the US, the Canadian government discriminates against other trading partners, misjudges American owners of Canadian branch plants, and ignores US corporate lobbying power, Hurtig says. Canadian entities, such as comprehensive medicare, provincial power, the communications industry, marketing boards, tax incentives, research and development grants, stabilization policies and subsidized post-secondary education, will be endangered if a bilateral free trade agreement is effected, he says.

"Canada is the only country out of all the industrialized nations of the world that does not have an industrial strategy," says Hurtig. "We're the boy scouts of the world."

Hurtig hinted that the COC has a plan up its sleeve to canvas leaders at the First Minister's conference, Nov. 28 and 29 in Halifax. Last summer in another media stunt, the COC dropped a Canadian flag from an airplane onto the deck of the *Polar Sea*, an American icebreaker which plied the Northwest Passage in defiance of Canadian sovereignty.



Publisher Mel Hutig knows a good paper when he sees one. Hurtig recently spoke at Dalhousie on the threat of free trade to Canadian independence. Photo by Todd Miller, Dal Photo

Dal's deficit clipped

By CHARLENE SADLER

DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY has chopped its deficit by almost \$5 million without cutting services, but the axe is not quite bloodless.

The money necessary for the cuts came from the Dal administration's very controversial suspension of employer contributions to the Dalhousie Faculty Association's (DFA) pension plan. The suspension is commonly known as a 'pension holiday.'

"It was quite simple, really," says Robbie Shaw, executive vice-president of finance.

The pension fund has accumulated a \$12 million surplus. "Eight million was used to improve the plan and then we used four million to reduce the deficit," says Mike Wright, director of finance.

"There were no losers," says Shaw, but adds that the DFA would argue that point.

The division of the surplus was very contentious. Both the DFA and the Dal administration wanted the whole sum for their own purposes.

"It was a fine method of deficit reduction," says John Graham, assistant vice-president of university services. "Nobody had to raise student fees or reduce services; therefore it was a painless, proper thing to do," he says.

Dr. Bob Rogers, chair of the Psychology department and DFA observer on the budget advisory committee, says the deficit cut was "done with the 'agreement' of the Association". The DFA is happy with it, says Rogers, because of the improvements in the pension scheme.

However, Rogers says he is not very sympathetic with the administration. "They are the causes of their own difficulties," he says. "There is a popular notion that Dal is in severe trouble, but it is a fairly wealthy university."

Rogers points to Dalhousie's endowment fund, which is estimated at between \$50 million and \$65 million. The interest which Dal receives from the fund is about \$5 million per year.

The deficit reduction was necessary to keep within the guidelines of the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission (MPHEC). MPHEC rules stipulate that the university's operation deficits must not be in excess of two percent of the current year's government grant.

"It's a good rule because some universities would spend themselves into oblivion," says Shaw. "In Ontario it's legislated."

DSU plans exam aid

By VALERIE MATHESON

WITH EXAMS ONLY FIVE weeks away, the Dalhousie Student Union (DSU) has come up with a plan to make studying easier for Dalhousie students this year.

The idea is to get students to bring last year's mid-terms and final exams to the Student Council office so they can be photocopied and put on file for the students' use at the Enquiry Desk.

Reza Rizvi and Catherine Blewett, vice-president and president of the DSU, formulated the idea because of the computerized system that is now being used at the University of Alberta and McGill University.

The DSU is looking for exams from the faculties of Arts, Science and Commerce. "We want to start small and build it up so we can correct any errors," says Rizvi.

Sara Gorelick and Michele Gagon, second year Biology majors at Dalhousie, were ratified two weeks ago on a volunteer basis to be the Registry Coordinators.

Letters were sent on Oct. 22 to the chairs of the various departments with a form to be filled out asking whether or not they will participate. The coordinators

received about 40 replies with about 50 per cent agreeable and 50 per cent not.

Some professors from the Geology department, however, did send some exams. "We didn't want to go behind the professors' backs," says Gagon.

As of now, there has been little response from the student body. "We are not going to bother to go through with this unless we get a positive response from the students," says Gagon.

Some professors argue against the plan because they use take-home exams and others think last year's exams will mislead students.

"The argument was made in Council that some courses only have limited material, so as a result of giving last year's exams, this year's exams will be harder," says Blewett.

Gorelick and Gagon plan to get in touch with the professors who show concern but do not want to cooperate. They say it would be better to talk to the professors in person.

Gorelick says, however, the majority of the exams should come from the students. "It is a student service, so the only way it will work is if the students help out," she says.