

John Turner and Ed Broadbent should lay aside the politics of fear that they are now practising against the Free Trade Agreement and try explaining to Canadians how their trade policies would work better than those of this government. The problem is that they can't, because their so-called "alternatives" are no more than a combination of failed ideas and wishful thinking.

Essentially, both the Liberals and the NDP propose the three policies:

- first, tear up the Free Trade Agreement,
- second, seek sectoral trade agreements with the U.S., and
- third, rely on the GATT to resolve trade issues with the U.S.

If Canada tears up the Free Trade Agreement, it would:

- lose major improvements in access to the U.S. market;
- lose the advantages gained in dealing with other trading partners in the Multilateral Trade Negotiations (as we have already resolved major bilateral issues with the U.S. through the Free Trade Agreement); and
- make Canada more vulnerable to unilateral protectionist actions by the Americans.

The Opposition may dispute the benefits of the Free Trade Agreement, but in doing so they go against every major independent economic analysis, Canadian industry and exporters, as well as eight provincial Premiers. They believe that tearing up the Agreement would harm Canada.

The "alternative" of sectoral trade arrangements with the U.S. is no alternative at all.

Sectoral agreements are not consistent with the GATT. (Article XXIV of the GATT permits comprehensive free trade agreements, like that we have negotiated with the U.S., but not sectoral agreements.) Sectoral agreements could lead to retaliation by GATT members. Even if a waiver from other GATT members were obtainable, they would probably claim compensation for this.

But in any case, the prospect of achieving sectoral agreements with the U.S. is nil. The Trudeau government tried the sectoral approach in 1983-84 and it got nowhere. The reason is simple. The U.S. and Canada would pursue sectoral trade only where each saw an advantage for itself.