

But, the idea that Canada can increase trade with other countries to substitute for trade with the U.S. runs counter to the plain facts of commerce and geography. Mr. Deifenbaker wanted to increase our share of trade with Britain instead of the U.S. It didn't work. Mr. Trudeau's third option of the early 1970's was supposed to direct us away from the U.S. to overseas markets. It didn't work.

The sensible goal, one that this government is following, is to pursue a balanced trade strategy, seeking new markets wherever there is an opportunity to do so. That's just common sense.

The Liberal "alternative" to the FTA is not an alternative at all. It ignores the threat of U.S. protectionism, it expresses high hopes for what the multilateral trade negotiations may be able to achieve (if the 95 member states agree) and it ignores the benefits (in terms of security of access and dispute settlement) achieved under the Free Trade Agreement.

Here's what the Ottawa Citizen had to say about it:

"The five point plan the Liberal Leader would implement as Prime Minister would replace the Free Trade deal with a rehash of tried and failed policies and motherhood statements about improving the international economy."

La Presse was equally harsh:

"The Turner alternative is nothing more than an unrealistic mumbo-jumbo of mercantilism and unthinking optimism."

The key to understanding the so-called Liberal alternative is contained in the words of the member from Montreal-Ste. Marie:

"This thing wasn't dreamed up overnight... it was worked out after a lot of thought; we relied heavily on findings of various public opinion polls."

Do the people of Canada want to place their trust in a national party that designs its trade strategy based on opinion polls instead of analysis of what exporters need to get the job done? Do they want to place their trust in a national party that cooks up two trade alternatives in less than three months?