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using the GATT and also talking separately with the United States. The fact is that the Government is downgrading our activity and influence in the multilateral GATT process. Instead of developing the necessary industrial and economic policies that will make Canada more innovative and competitive in world markets, the Conservatives have put all of their eggs in the basket of comprehensive bilateral free trade with the United States. This is nothing more than a new and dangerous form of continental protectionism.

The Conservative Government has failed in so many ways. It has failed to take effective action to help the more than one million jobless Canadians find productive and permanent employment. It has failed to address the financial problems confronting post-secondary educational institutions and in fact Conservative policy has made these problems worse. The Government has reduced expenditures on industrial and regional development programs. It has reneged on its promises to increase federal expenditure on research and development. In fact, it has gone in the opposite direction, as was demonstrated during the past several days when we saw evidence of how it has been savaging the National Research Council. Instead of cultivating Canadian sovereignty and our freedom to develop our own style and quality of life, the Conservative Government has rushed blindly into negotiations for bilateral free trade to integrate Canada further with the economy of the United States, weakening our capacities to develop policies to help our country become a successful and a first-class competitor in world markets.

In opening his free trade talks with Washington, the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) has dramatically raised Canada's profile in the current American national debate about trade. His timing and that of the Government could not have been worse. Business and Congress in the United States are in an absolute panic because they believe they are not selling enough in world markets. They want fewer rather than more imports from Canada and the world and this means that conditions are not right to get a trade deal that is a good deal for Canada. The only way the Government can get any kind of trade deal with the United States is to make concessions that will be unacceptable to Canadians generally.

While speaking for the Government today, the Minister said a lot about what she wants from the United States in a trade deal, but she did not say one word about what she is willing to give up in return. That is the problem. The silence of Conservative Members on this subject speaks volumes. It tells us quite frankly that there is no way we will get any kind of deal with the United States that is good for Canada without paying a price that Canadians will not want to pay.

We have seen how British Columbia shake and shingle producers have been damaged by President Reagan's imposition of a 37 per cent tariff. What happened there shows how the Prime Minister's alleged special relationship with President Reagan is meaningless when it comes to preventing the United States from taking steps to damage Canadian interests. Now there has been the recent decision made by American

authorities to impose a 15 per cent duty on softwood lumber. This is the latest evidence of the incompetence of the Conservative Government and its bad management when it comes to trade relations with the United States.

The Minister for International Trade and the Prime Minister have, since that decision, been trying to argue that it shows why we need a comprehensive free trade agreement with the United States. They say that such an agreement would mean that the United States would no longer be able to carry out harassing actions against Canada like the duties on shakes and shingles and on softwood lumber. Nothing could be further from the truth. Nothing could be more mistaken. President Reagan, in his famous letter to Senator Packwood, said very clearly that the United States will never give up its present laws enabling it to impose countervailing duties and other trade protection measures in any trade agreement with Canada. If that is the case, the Prime Minister, the Minister for International Trade and the entire Government are wrong. What is the point of seeking a general free trade agreement with the United States if it will not protect us against harassment by the United States of Canadian exports and will at the same time put at risk hundreds of thousands of Canadian jobs and our ability to make our own decisions about the future of our country and its people?

There is no doubt that American negotiators at the bilateral free trade talks have specific and well-defined goals. The Americans have already talked about seeking a level playing field in their relations with Canada. They have already talked about wanting national treatment in their relations with Canada. What is especially disturbing is that the Prime Minister, in a speech made last spring on trade, said that he and the Government are ready to give national treatment to Americans.

He spoke of seeking for Canadians national treatment in the United States and there is no way that could be obtained without giving the same thing to the United States. This means that we will no longer have the ability to develop our own policies to foster Canadian enterprise, to foster specific Canadian industrial sectors, to foster Canadian economic development in less developed parts of our country, unless we give exactly the same treatment to the United States, to its companies, and to its own regions.

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It is clear that in these free trade negotiations the Americans will seek to curtail regional incentive programs which encourage industrial development in disadvantaged areas like the Maritimes. They will seek to weaken the unemployment insurance program and other social programs so important to Canadians. They will seek the dismantling of our agricultural marketing boards across Canada, requiring Canadian farmers to face stiff foreign competition during an extremely tough financial crisis in Canadian agriculture.

American trade negotiators will ask for commitments affecting investment that will prevent future efforts to