Environment loses out to free trade

RICHMOND (CUP) — Free Trade and the Meech Lake accord will be irrelevant if Canada doesn't address crucial environmental questions for the future, says internationally re-knowned scientist, Dr. David Suzuki.

Suzuki says Canadians value their environment and are willing to support it. But he pointed out that "environment ministries are not high priority areas" in the government budget.

The University of British Columbia genetic scientist, and host of CBC's The Nature of Things, was promo-ting his book, Metamorphosis — Stages in the Life.

Suzuki predicts the Meech Lake accord and the Free Trade pact will dominate the next election, pushing environmental issues to the back

But he warned of drastic effects if

"In 30 years there will be no wildernessleft on the entire planet," he said, "and only a few parks and reserves. In 150 years, 50 per cent of the world's plant and animal life will be extinct, and in 200 years that will increase to 80 per cent."

He says as a species "We've gone out of control. We're the most numerous mammal on the planet: 50 of us are born every minute and overpopulation is putting the re maining species in danger of ex tinction."

"The future aim for the human species must be for negative growth and we shouldn't accept anything less."

Suzuki says that "all life on the planet is falling before us and we are too stupid to see we're poisoning the air. the water, and the soil that

He also had strong arguments against free trade, and believes Canada is a third world country, because "we sell our raw resources and buy our technology back."

He believes Americans want the agreement not because they want Canadian products, but because they want our resources.

"They see vast amounts of en and theirs is running out... they have no fresh water. They're not dumb, those Americans."

Canada doesn't have tough envi-ronmental protection laws like the U.S., and Americans are willing to pay us to let them dump their toxic waste, he said. "Boy are we smart. That's what free trade means

Suzuki plans to donate all proceeds from his book to the redre committee of the Japanese Can-adian Citizens Association.



Free trade designated hitter

"Trade between Canada and the U.S. has increased by 40 percent since 1980... Do we have 40 percent less Canadian culture... Do you feel 40 percent less Canadian' asked Jim Horsman, Alberta's Minary and Canadian's Alberta's Minary and Canadian's Minary and Minary a ister of Intergovernmental affairs and "designated hitter" on free trade.

Horsman, speaking to a capacity crowd at a forum sponsored by the campus Progressive Conservative club, said Canada needs free trade

"There is no status quo" alterna-tive to free trade said Horsman citing rising protectionist trade sent-iment in the U.S. congress. "Our best defense against pro-

tectionism is free trade. Thirty percent of Canada's GNP is linked to trade, three quarters of it with the U.S." said Horsman.

"Duty-free access to a market of 300 million will allow our economy to expand," said Horsman.

Horsman sees consumers as the big winners under free trade.

"Tariffs and trade barriers cost you money," said Horsman, citing Statismoney, "said Horsman, citing Statis-tics Canada data which showed Canadians paid \$21 billion in tariffs on U.S. goods during 1986, and also predicted "increases in wages, dis-posable income, and a better selec-tion of goods."

Horsman also dismissed critics of free trade who suggests Canadian culture will be hurt: "This a commercial deal, an economic agree-



Canada will actually expand its culture under free trade, according to Horsman. "Cultural industries, like the CBC, require money. With economic growth under free trade we will be better able to afford it."

we will be better able to altord it."
During the question period
Horsman agreed that tax levels in
Canada would have to come down
for Canadians to be competitive
with the U.S., but said "that's a
good thing" and could be financed
by expansion of the economic base.
"The key is to increase the size of
the pic."

Horsman also expressed satisfac-Horsman also expressed satisfac-tion with the dispute settlement mechanism in the agreement. For the first time ever, U.S. laws will be subject to scrutiny. A national body will decide whether or not U.S. or Canadian law is applied fairly."

Canadian law is applied fairly.

Horsman acknowledged that the dispute mechanism couldn't over-turn unfair trade actions and said Canada could only respond to unfair U.S. laws by "applying our own unfair law — or terminating the agreement."

Illiterate graduates

by Laurel Hyatt OTTAWA (CUP) — More than five per cent of university gradu-ates are illiterate, according to a report recently released by a task ce on literacy.

torce on literacy.

Illiteracy costs Canada \$10

billion annually, says the report
by the Business Task Force on
Literacy. And among the illiterates are a surprising number of
university graduates, says task
force president Paul Jones.

force president Paul Jones.
"Five or six per cent of univer-sity graduates cannot pass, the basic literacy test," Paul Jones cited from a recent study by Southam News at a press con-ference in Ottawa Monday.

The Southam report defin an illiterate person as "lacking the reading and writing skills necessary in the demands of one's everyday life," Jones said. The report of Jones' task force

says the huge cost of illiteracy to Canada's economy comes in the form of low productivity and the higher cost of training illiterate employees.

employees.
"One in six working Canadians
do not have the reading and
writing skills to do simple functions," said Marianne Williams,
president of the Movement for
Canadian Literacy.

Canadian Literacy.
Jones said, "The one in six number is not some academic number. It results from a large-scale survey of the Canadian public. They were given extremely simple: tests with a very low passing mark."

Some of those illiterate em-ployees graduated from univer-sity, Williams said.

sity, Williams said.
While undergraduates, some students manage to get by withstudents manage to get by without needing to read or write, she
said. "It could be in part that
people use oral exams. Kids
who go into sciences and math
don't have the same level of
literacy because they don't use
reading and writing skills. That
doesn't mean they're not bright."

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