

THE GREAT TRADE DEBATE
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Canada-U.S. Trade: Myths and Realities

More than any other great nation in history, perhaps, the United States is a myth-making country. The Old West, for example, is a classic American myth which is not only larger than life, but truer than life. Indeed, in some sense, America itself is the "American dream": the mythic America, that new-found-land which is forever young, forever innocent, forever new. Our own Canadian dreams are, perhaps, not so different, although we are more diffident in proclaiming them. My subject instead is some of your lesser myths, namely, in the field of international trade and economic relations. More specifically, I have in mind some current myths about your economic relations with Canada.

At first blush, you may find it hard to believe that we Canadians have found our way into American mythology. That we have done so is perhaps a sign of the times. The massive trade deficit now facing the United States provides fertile ground for such myths to spring up, and grow like topsy. But these growths are weeds, of no use to anyone, and they ought to be eradicated.