

Don't Gamble



With Canada

Don't gamble with Canadian culture!

It's no accident that Canadian books, music, films and television have achieved remarkable success in recent years. If not for the policies of past decades, Canadian culture would long ago have fallen victim to the mammoth U.S. entertainment industry.

But in the growing U.S.-dominated world of trade agreements, the cards are stacked against Canadian culture. And, more and more, it's our own government's eagerness to play poker in world trade talks that is giving the U.S. entertainment industry the winning hand.

The recent World Trade Organization (WTO) ruling against Bill C-55 has already dealt a body blow to Canadian magazines, allowing giant U.S. publications to produce split-run "Canadian" editions—magazines with little or no Canadian material—that drain Canadian magazines of crucial advertising revenue.

Even Gordon Ritchie, the former deputy minister of industry, who helped negotiate the original Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement has said: "Having probed the weak spot in the wall (magazines) and been able to get through, the Americans are going to step up the assault. There's no question they're on a crusade here. This is the thin edge of the wedge."

The massive U.S. entertainment industry sees culture strictly as a business and has convinced U.S. trade negotiators at the WTO to fiercely resist cultural protectionism in any form.

That makes Canada's involvement in new negotiations to expand the WTO's **General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS)** a serious worry.

If the U.S. gets its way, Canadian content rules could be scrapped; the CBC could not be treated differently from U.S. networks; radio stations would no longer be required to play Canadian music; and subsidies to the National Film Board and the Canada Council could be challenged.

You'd think the American entertainment industry would be content with having 95 per cent of the films screened in Canadian cinemas; 60 per cent of

all English-language television programs and 70 per cent of all music played on Canadian radio stations. But it seems they want it all.

Culture was always thought of as more than a service or commodity. At least until the formation of the WTO, when big cultural exporters were able to put culture on the same level as any other product.

If protection for Canadian culture is stripped away in future GATS negotiations, the foundation of tax, regulatory and funding measures that sustain our cultural industries will be destroyed. And the ability of Canadians to tell their story to each other and to the rest of world will be crippled.

Send a message to Ottawa:
Don't gamble with Canadian culture!
Tell the federal government to
Get out of the GATS!

Call, write or fax your Member of Parliament and Minister for International Trade Pierre Pettigrew.

Ask them to withdraw from the GATS negotiations—*now*.

(To get your MP's name and phone number, call 1 800 267-7360.)

Write to: Pierre Pettigrew

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Join The Council of Canadians' campaign to stop the GATS.

For more information call 1 800 387-7177
Or visit our Web site at www.canadians.org

