

liberately discriminatory it is obvious that the exporter is at a competitive disadvantage compared with the manufacturer serving his national market."

"Secondly, a direct trade barrier may be caused if the body responsible for certification and approval acts in such a way as actually to prevent or hamper the access of foreign goods to the country in

which it operates." For example the body can refuse to certify foreign goods, charge prohibitive fees for testing foreign products or it can deliberately delay the granting of its certificate or mark of conformity.

Non-tariff barriers must not be underestimated in their hindering effect on international trade; they show signs of being the outposts in a world dotted with customs unions.

imports. But more valuable still, they have 45 per cent rebate in death duties on agricultural property, and under section 314 of the Income Tax Act 1952 agricultural land owners are entitled to recover income tax and surtax on improvements to farm buildings and the erection of farm cottages. These are enormous advantages, and with the prospect of entry into the Common Market, a further steep rise in land prices is predicted.

REVIEW

EEC alternative

THERE is much evidence that many of the exponents of British entry to the Common Market are not so much impressed by any of the positive arguments for going in as by sheer despair at the present drift of the British economy. This situation makes it very necessary to examine possible alternatives. Are we indeed faced with a simple choice between going on as we have for the last twenty-five years—or merging ourselves in the Common Market?

People who support the idea of unilateral free trade will have a resounding answer to that question. Ordinary experience suggests that it is relatively easy to impress the most disparate people with the traditional free trade arguments; yet it would be fatuous to deny that the public as a whole is very largely ignorant of those arguments, and is no more willing to take a leap in that direction than it is to take a leap in the Common Market direction. It may well be profitable to examine possible ways of acclimatising the British public in a more gradual manner to the ideas of free trade.

The concept of an Atlantic Free Trade Area (AFTA) has often been proposed, and Lionel Gelber's pamphlet, *World Politics and Free Trade** is a recent exposition. Unfortunately it is not all that recent, and seems first to have seen the light of day in 1968—which makes some of it sound very dated. Nevertheless, the fundamental argument remains, and is well worth studying. The AFTA idea is still far from crystal-

lised, but it seems to envisage a free trade area—a glorified EFTA, not a "Common Market"—encompassing both cis- and trans-Atlantic countries, and bearing special links with countries like Australia and New Zealand. Mr. Gelber's method is definitely one of "soft-sell," but his booklet is highly instructive, and calls for full study. Not least is it of value for the way in which it confronts the "political" arguments for membership of the Common Market. AFTA certainly isn't the whole answer, either economically or politically, and there are dangers of entanglement; but at least this booklet suggests that AFTA is a step in the right direction—which is a great deal more than may be said for the EEC.

R.D.

Land, Protection and the EEC

S. W. ALEXANDER

(President, Free Trade League)

IT HAS LONG been evident that pressure to enter the Common Market comes primarily from big business and from the big landowners whose protectionist ideas have dominated our affairs now for nearly fifty years. The agricultural landowners have been determined to safeguard their own positions no matter what happens to the rest of the community and particularly the urban population.

Over many years the ownership of land has become concentrated in fewer hands. Owners of land have had the advantage of higher food prices caused by quotas and other devices to keep out competitive

Those who support entry into Europe argue that larger units in industry and agriculture are desirable. They are dangerously wrong. The stability of a nation depends very much on the existence of a large number of self-dependent master men in industry and agriculture. The protectionist policy, by creating the conditions under which monopolies and price rings flourish and in which smaller people without access to cheap imports find it difficult to survive, has driven out of business during the past fifty years, vast numbers of small independent business men—one estimate runs into hundreds of thousands.

This concentration of agriculture and industry is one of the causes of massive pollution in the countryside and in the towns.

Equally important is the fact that owing to the protectionist policies men have sought work in the town, and life in the countryside has declined. Massive power has brought massive error. We need to have more independent men making their own decisions. The majority will make the right decisions. So far as agriculture is concerned we need a situation in which the price of land will fall thus providing opportunities for smaller people to hold their own land and continue as responsible citizens. The tremendous movement of men away from the smaller units to big combines is an element making for the growth of ill feeling between employers and employees—which in former times hardly existed. We need also to get back to a situation where it becomes more widely recognized that "God made the land for the people," not for providing privilege and economic safety for the rich.

*Atlantic Trade Study, 60p