

## Areas of Free Trade

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GEORGE CATLIN has been described as "one of the leading political theorists of our age," but I found his new book *The Atlantic Commonwealth\** rather less satisfying than I had anticipated.

I found two principal faults, both of which rather surprised me in a book from an author of such emin-

ence. The first was a tendency to "name drop." I realise that some historical importance attaches to the attitude which eminent men take in their own minds to major questions of this kind. Nevertheless I feel that the author rather obtrudes his personal contacts with such people, even when the actual observations quoted are scarcely profound. The second major fault was structural. There are numerous digressions, and the theme did not

it have the power to override the Parliaments of member states? Will it seek to effect tariff reductions vis-a-vis the Communist countries and the "third World," or will it be a rich man's club? Will it be little more than the economic arm of an essentially military alliance?

These seem to me to be the essential questions, and I think that the answers to them would determine the willingness or otherwise of people who read this book to root in favour of the Atlantic Free Trade Area. However, this book is one which would repay reading by those who feel that we may now be on the threshold of some very exciting economic developments.

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seem clear or pervasive. It looks like a book which was completed in rather a hurry.

The book is a discussion of the role of the various supranational economic units in the Atlantic area—the E.E.C. E.F.T.A. and so on. We are told something of their history and background, and are given a prognosis for their future. The author's contention is that some kind of Atlantic Free Trade Area should, and probably will, develop out of the hotch-potch of existing organisations.

Fine, no doubt, but what will this organisation be like? Will it be a Zollverein or a true Free Trade Area? Will it be responsible to governments or to electors, and will