

The last renewal of the act, in 1958, was hailed for its long term. Four years is the longest that any renewal has run. But it was less meaningful than it appeared to be. The negotiating authority vested in the President was small, and when the American negotiators prepared to do the actual negotiating at this year's session of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade in Geneva, they found themselves hamstrung by the law's protective clauses.

At this juncture we see only one course to consider as the Reciprocal Trade Agreements Act presents itself for action next year.

If the act were allowed to expire, this would be a clear victory for protectionism. The symbol of our liberalism would be gone. The President's negotiating authority would be gone. But the protectionist clauses of the act would remain, for they are permanent law.

The challenges of the times demand a substantial broadening and reshaping of the act for another term of several years. This approach recognizes the limitations of the act as now written, and recognizes that the United States needs an enormously stronger hand than it has if it is to meet the competitive challenge that is built into the Common Market. But we hope that this would not mean a postponement of reckoning with the greater question we must face.

We believe that the United States must form a trade partnership with the European Common Market and take the leadership in further expanding a free world economic community.

As a minimum step in that direction, the Trade Agreements Act must give the President authority to negotiate tariff reduction across the board in place of his present authority to negotiate item by item. Our allies in Europe are no longer dealing in item-by-item terms, and we must adapt our negotiating authority accordingly.

It is frequently suggested that there be a Federal program to aid industries and workers, and even whole communities, injured by competing imports, to help them adjust to new ways of economic activity. We believe that the dislocations of labor or capital as a result of increased imports can be adjusted better by the affected parties than by the Government, but we would support a public program for extreme cases.

We note that the government-aid adjustment program of the Common Market itself has had relatively little use. Actually, in this country it is hard to find an industry whose troubles can be traced to imports alone, and we suspect that too liberal an adjustment assist-