

2.9 Comments on Survey Findings

Group discussants were asked for their reactions to some results of the quantitative survey which indicated that 71 percent of Canadians felt that it would be necessary to change government's social programs, and 40 percent of Canadians felt it would be necessary to reduce employee benefits in order for Canada to remain internationally competitive. The general response from the groups was that, with the possible exception of the welfare program, the existing social programs and employee benefits should not be altered in any major way. Discussants recognized these programs imposed an added cost of doing business in Canada. Some discussants felt that it was time to get some welfare recipients back to work and to strive for greater efficiency in some of the other social programs.

- o The sense for many participants was that some adjustments may be necessary to obtain greater efficiency in the programs. Examples provided included paying for your own meals at hospitals, cutting family allowance and old age pensions for the wealthy, cutting pensions for politicians and putting some restrictions on visits to doctors. A "user fee" system was suggested.
- o At the same time, most discussants were adamant that we need to keep the safety net intact, and adjustments to social programs should not place any additional burden on Canada's poor.
- o There is a need to prevent abuse, especially in the welfare programs. We should put a stop to generations of Canadians being on welfare. Those who are able to work