

VIII. FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS' ADVICE TO MINISTER/NEGOTIATORS

As a wrap-up to the groups, respondents were asked what one piece of advice they would give to the Minister of International Trade or NAFTA negotiators as negotiations progress.

In their advice, most participants cautioned the Minister/negotiators not to give up everything and not to bow to the United States. In Winnipeg, moderate FTA supporters specifically mentioned being cautious about our natural resources and not giving away anything to appease the U.S. ("be more careful of our resources. Keep more for ourselves;" "don't give up everything;" be very careful with natural resources"). Residents of Winnipeg also wanted the Minister to demonstrate leadership, to be fair and to "manage the trade." They insisted on being kept apprised of the process and of being provided with information.

Moderate supporters in Vancouver expressed similar views, again stressing the need to communicate with Canadians about the process and the content of a potential agreement. They also advised Canada to "be strong, don't be 'yes' men," "be flexible but set your limits," "be fair." Residents of Vancouver also stressed the need for a good team of negotiators with a specialization in international trade.

Interestingly, moderate FTA opponents did not differ significantly in their advice. Again, the need for information was stressed as was keeping Canadians informed ("get a feel of what the people want, don't ram it down our throats," "do market research like this and listen to what we say").

Generally, participants wanted to ensure that Canada was tough in its negotiations, but also fair. There was significant concern that Canada would again not get a good deal with the U.S. and they did not want Canada to be "steamrollered." There was a strong demand for information, for keeping the public informed and for ensuring that negotiators listen to what Canadians want.

