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"good, but limits options;" "has potential, but not working out well;" "implies competitiveness and a competitive populace is good;" "can't have something for nothing, that's what trade's about;" "we should be more competitive in a high-tech way, not in selling natural resources."

Both the Winnipeg and Vancouver 'opponents' were somewhat more negative in their responses to international competitiveness ("we are babies in competitiveness;" "competitiveness is not unavoidable, we can do it all here;" "we have such resources, we should be able to put it off"). Much of the discussion among opponents, particularly in Winnipeg, centred on the issue of the costs of consumer goods. Participants were strongly of the view that competitiveness had done little to alleviate the problem of more expensive consumer goods in Canada when compared to the United States (automobiles, clothing, gasoline were all cited as examples). They questioned why this continued to be the case and why the same product in the U.S. was priced substantially lower than in Canada. Links were also made to the negative effects of the GST on consumer products.

It is worth noting, however, that while the discussion repeatedly returned to the costs of consumer goods, some participants among the opponent groups in Vancouver and Winnipeg were prepared to concede that competitiveness was important to the nation's and individual's prosperity. One respondent in Vancouver noted, "If I'm not competitive, I'm dead. We're not using our heads. We are throwing up our hands and saying that's the way it is."

Despite negative reactions to international competitiveness among FTA opponents, most participants (both moderate supporters and opponents) reported that competitiveness and exports would be important to Canada's economic future. Focus group attendants reported that our economy is based on exports and that

