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strident in this view ("The biggest advantage will be that it will drive down labour costs here"). FTA supporters in both Vancouver and Winnipeg shared this view, although they were less intense and reported that there may be some difficulties in adjusting to trade with a country that had significantly lower labour costs. Residents of Winnipeg pointed out that wages in Canada were too high compared to both the U.S. and Mexico. They expressed significant concern about current wage negotiations among unions in Canada, citing Canada Post specifically. Winnipeg participants used the Canada Post example as one where wages were too high to effectively compete with other countries in the world.

While wages dominated as the main issue in initial reactions to a North American Free Trade Agreement, other issues were raised when respondents were probed on the potential advantages and disadvantages. Among FTA opponents, environmental concerns were raised in all three cities. While the discussion on environmental impact was brief, participants in each group pointed out that Mexico had no environmental standards and was not "environmentally conscious." One Winnipeg FTA opponent pointed out that, according to David Suzuki, Mexico would be uninhabitable (due to pollution) by the year 2000.

Another issue that was consistently raised by moderate FTA opponents was the potential impact on Canadian social programs. While the discussion on social programs was brief, at least one participant in each opponent group raised the potential problems for our medicare system and questioned whether or not we would be able to maintain such a system if we were going to be more competitive with both the U.S. and Mexico. Moderate FTA opponents in Winnipeg were of the view that there could be no compromise on our health care system in any negotiations.

