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- TRADE COMPETITIVENESS STUDY
FOCUS GROUP TRANSCRIPTIONS -

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Prepared For: EXTERNAL AFFAIRS AND
INTERNATIONAL TRADE CANADA

Prepared By: ANGUS REID GROUP, INC.

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INTRODUCTIONS:

Tad, I'm a grandmother. I don't work, I haven't worked for 40 years, well I guess I did my husband's bookkeeping for a while. I like to quilt, I like to read, I like to travel.

Lindey, I teach in George Brown College's community working program. I like to play golf and read and I'm not married and that's about it.

Bernard, I'm recently divorced. I used to be a theatrical agent that was in England but since I've been in Canada I deal in (canvassing?). I don't like working for other people, I like working for myself. I teach physical training, I've done that since I was 12 years old and I'm a semi-professional. Other than that I don't do very much, I like to lay around a lot.

Ed, I'm 75 years old, I've got a son 41 going on 42 and a daughter 38 going on 39. I was in the air force and when I came out of the air force I went into the insurance business in 1945. Ten years ago I sold my insurance business and since then I've been retired and travelling and playing golf and playing bridge. Sometimes I can play bridge five times a week, you know, like senior citizens.

Petulia, I have two children, two little girls. I'm into old movies and before our second kid we used to play a lot of bridge but right now I don't have much time. I'm just going crazy but I'm a dental assistant when I do work.

Q. WHEN YOU THINK OF YOUR HOMES, YOUR FAMILIES, YOUR JOBS AND YOUR COMMUNITIES, WHAT FOR YOU ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES THAT YOU'RE GOING TO BE FACING IN THE NEXT TWO TO THREE YEARS?

I actually thought about that in the car on the way over and for me money has always been important but now I think that a personal relationship is the most important thing, especially after this weekend. What good is money if there is no one really to share it with.

I think that what's going to happen in the community is that people are going to be focused on the quality of life not the quantity of life, at least I am. At the house I have in Toronto and the house I have in the country, at how to create a better quality of life around it and that means taking more initiative and becoming more a part of the community and not just sitting back and allowing politicians or other members of the community to run rough shod. If you don't agree with it, then you have to actually do something. I tried that for a long time and got burnt out but now I realize again that if I want something to change that I have to be a part of that process.

P. WHAT KINDS OF ISSUES DO YOU THINK OF WHEN YOU ARE THINKING OF GETTING INVOLVED?

Health, the environmental issues of water and air pollution, the garbage situation and recycling, the fact that the North American continent has not been thinking about what to do with all the people in the major city centres and how to make it a better quality of life. I should back up and say that I am an immigrant from the United States. I've lived here for fourteen years and I chose to come here because I thought it had a more progressive and a better quality of life than I could find close to where I grew up in the States. I think we've lost that perspective with over 200,000 immigrants coming into this country and over 50% of them settling in metro Toronto, which is not bad unless you look at the way we are absorbing them in terms of the quality of housing and the way the transportation system operates. So in light of that, if you are going to ask what I am going to do specifically, I'm going to apply

for the at large position on the Toronto Board of Health so that's what I'm going to do, but it takes a large amount of volunteer time to do that.

One of my concerns is drugs. In our particular area we have an apartment building which has become the hot bed of drugs and as a result we're beginning to find more crime in our area. So in that sense I think something more has to be done to protect the young kids from the ... I'm not putting this very well but this is one thing that does concern me.

I pick up the paper every morning and read the front page and I feel that the politicians are letting us down. The politicians to me, whether you take federal or provincial or municipal, I find that they promise all kinds of things but once they get in they feather their own nest so to speak and they forget about what they promised us. Now this is another thing about politicians in Etobicoke where we live, they... no, maybe it was in metro Toronto that this came up but the chief of police in metro Toronto wanted, I think, 2 million dollars for 250 new police officers. He was turned down by metropolitan Toronto because they had 2 million dollars that they were going to put into the opera house at the corner of Wells and Young Street, that's only the beginning of the opera house. They're going to put 50 million into the opera house but they haven't got 2 million to get 250 new officers. The chief of police says, "I can't handle it the way it is, I need more men to send out, we just haven't got the coverage." He wants more than 250 but he was only asking for 250. Maybe my figures are off, they're just off the bit. This is the whole idea, politicians to my mind promise all kinds of things, like the federal of course we've seen this in the last two elections where the man says it will be the end of Canada if we ever put in free trade and the next time, as soon as he gets in, he puts in free trade and the same probably with the GST. I don't know about the GST, I can't believe that the Conservatives are so stupid as to put in something that is so ridiculous as far as the GST is concerned but I don't like the way they're putting it in. I don't like the way they're going to charge us 15% on everything we buy, 8% that we already pay and 7% that's going to be on the GST.

Q. LET'S TALK ECONOMICS FOR A MINUTE. IN THE NEXT TWO OR THREE YEARS, DO YOU THINK THAT YOU AND YOUR FAMILY WILL BE BETTER OFF, WORSE OFF OR ABOUT THE SAME?

I was hoping better off but I think we'll be about the same. Our spending power and income and the GST and I'm concerned about buying a house and everything that comes into it with the taxes. It's really depressing to think about these politicians - you re-elect them and then they really don't do a hell of a lot. I don't know why we are not motivated enough. In Britain they had a tax revolt or Europe in general they are more loud in general - when they want their demands they will do something whereas we sit back and complain about things, we don't do anything, we just complain among ourselves.

P. WHAT DO YOU THINK WILL HAPPEN IN YOUR COMMUNITY AND YOUR REGION - BETTER OFF ECONOMICALLY, WORSE OFF OR ABOUT THE SAME?

Worse off, because where I am there's a lot of problems. I have an area where there's a lot of government housing and it doesn't look good so I think the worse off that people get in being tight for money the worse the situation will become. It's scary but it's a fact that I think I have to become used to.

They're putting all kinds of money into parks and it's funny because we're afraid to go into the parks. When we go for a walk in the park we think twice about just how far into the park we're going to go. The politicians are not worrying about us, they're worrying about having a nice park and getting a few votes because they got the park.

But that's also a state of mind. I live in Riverdale and have forever. I don't move because I would have to memorize a new house number, and my neighborhood went from being a very

mixed neighborhood to a very white neighborhood and the amount of crimes and break ins that have taken place in that transition is just astronomical. The people next door to me have brass numbers and bars on their windows and they've been broken into three times. I've never been broken into, I don't think about it, half the time I don't even put the bar in the sliding glass door and I hate the fact that I even lock the screen door when I go to sleep at night. I don't worry about walking in the parks or coming home from the subway because if I do that, they win. I don't ever want to live in a place that I'm afraid to walk in or sleep in by myself. If you talk about how bad it is and you think twice about doing something, they win. Statistically somebody's going to get mugged and somebody's going to get shot and all that, but the more people panic and don't just keep on living their lives, the more crime wins.

P. I WAS TRYING TO GET TULIA AND THE REST OF YOU GOING ON A CONVERSATION ABOUT THE ECONOMY. THINKING ABOUT YOUR PERSONAL ECONOMY, ONTARIO OR CANADA, TELL ME WHERE WE'RE HEADED IN THE NEXT TWO OR THREE YEARS.

Down hill.

P. YOURSELF, ONTARIO OR CANADA?

Everywhere.

Individually, I think we were getting at that. Individually, Europeans are very politically conscious which Canadians aren't. I don't think Canadians have even found their identity yet, their national identity is sort of a mixture of everything. When they go to England they very happily become English, when they go to America they become American, here they are encouraged to retain their background. Politicians by their professional role are liars anyway. I always felt uncomfortable when I watched Ronald Reagan and I feel extremely uncomfortable when I watch Brian Mulroney, it makes me extremely uneasy. Do you get that feeling?

Yes.

I can't watch the man.

He's very abrasive at times.

P. DO YOU SEE PARTICULAR FORCES IN THE ECONOMY THAT ARE GOING TO BE CONTRIBUTING TO A DOWNTURN OR TO AN UPTURN?

The Conservative's financial policy. The dollar, the interest rates, and a lot of things like we can't even export. I think this country and a lot of others are just for the self glorification of the politicians. I see Mulroney trying to be a world statesman when he should be trying to be a national statesman.

He should be looking after us.

Yeah, right.

P. WHEN YOU SAID WE CAN'T EVEN EXPORT WHAT DID YOU MEAN?

Well, we're not competitive.

Not when the dollar is so high.

Yes, but if you let the dollar come down isn't it more likely that we'll have inflation and everything else will cost so much more that...

Everything has to find its own level really, I think.

That's what they say.

That's why I think the GST is really not necessary. I mean it's a really futile effort and it's rather like putting tax on tax and the debt is still there, it's always going to be there.

The only thing to do is to just cut expenses so we don't have the 30 billion every year, we're getting into debt 30 billion every year.

The US is the second biggest debtor nation...

And they're still afloat.

I think that if you start thinking quite truthfully in terms of what our prices are and what they're going to be, I know they're not supposed to really go up but I can't be convinced that they won't with the tax. If the tax were hidden from us possibly it might not be such a problem but it seems to me that every time you buy something then you add 15%. You're suddenly going to be struck with the fact that this is an awfully expensive item - are you going to buy it? If you don't buy it, this is going to affect our economy, I don't see how it can help us, it's going to hurt our economy all the way through.

Isn't the whole idea that the tax is taking the place of something that's here? I can't see how if the manufacturers are paying 13% now and then they have to pay only 7% that they're going to lower their prices.

Well, under competition they might because each one is competing against the other and we're competing against the American stuff coming in too. So that's what they'd say, that under competition they'd stick to the 8%.

They're trying to convince us that it's 8% here and it's replacing this and then they're going to have market groups trying to keep the companies honest...

They're going to spend billions to police it.

It's disgusting, they've wasted more money...

The thing that I don't understand is why they didn't pick a round number like 5% or 10%, something that people can figure out in their heads and put it on absolutely everything, to me that's a fair tax. That means that if you buy a Porsche and I buy a Ford, I make the same percentage contribution to the tax to reduce the debt. Sure you're going to pay more for your Porsche but at least it would make this country equal. And one thing that I've heard people talking about is that the haves and the have nots are getting further and further apart and that was the one thing that I didn't understand. I know that the government has been trying to buy back votes by taking the tax off food and things but they're going to make more money off the caviar than they are on the coleslaw in the percentage basis. Rich people buy richer food and they're going to make more money there, so it is more equal to put it on absolutely everything and it becomes a forced savings plan for people who have less money or for seniors because then you get the rebates, but by having it on some things and not on others and on things that poor people have to have and on things that rich people don't have to have, I don't understand that and I don't agree with that at all.

Q. DOES OUR ECONOMY OPERATE IN AN INDEPENDENT WAY OR ARE THERE

THINGS GOING ON IN THE UNITED STATES OR IN OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD THAT ARE GOING TO HAVE AN INFLUENCE ON OUR ECONOMY?

Sure. What's happening in the eastern countries is going to have an influence because a lot of our companies are wanting to go over there and open up and do their things in Russia so hopefully a lot of our companies here will benefit from the situation in Europe.

Countries there are getting together and they're going to have a united European state and they're going to compete against the United States and us too.

They consider us ... they don't really know the difference between Canada and the United States.

No, not really.

I thought that too, I thought it was exactly the same thing. I thought that Canada and the United States were exactly the same.

Did you think they were two countries or one country?

No, I knew they were two countries but I came here for a purpose. That purpose was defeated by the fact that I made a bad judgement, they are very distinct these two countries.

But do you think they'll stay apart?

I don't know, you see, because James Buchanan sent a letter to Quebec yesterday saying that we will recognize you as a state if you separate.

They all think we're just ready to jump at a chance like that. Of course, I have friends that spend six months down there....

I bet you in 10 years time we'll be the 52nd state.

P. I WANT TO GO BACK TO WHAT TULIA SAID ABOUT THE CHANGES IN EASTERN EUROPE HAVING SOME KIND OF IMPACT ON US. WHAT DOES CANADA HAVE TO DO TO ADJUST TO THOSE CHANGES OR TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THOSE CHANGES?

You haven't got the entrepreneurs here.

We haven't encouraged research and development.

It's a thing that is inbred as well to a certain extent. I find that if I deal from Canada that people won't listen. Maybe the fact that I'm British helps a little but they don't take Canadian entrepreneurs seriously, they don't have that drive and aggressiveness.

Q. YOU'VE MENTIONED AGGRESSIVENESS AND SOME OTHER THINGS THAT OTHER COUNTRIES HAVE THAT WE DON'T HAVE. WHAT OTHER THINGS DO THEY HAVE THAT WE DON'T?

Vivid imagination, to be able to see something twenty years down the road.

Pride, self worth, we have to say this is what we as a nation love to do or...

Take the Olympics. Toronto is not a world class city, they're forcing the issue too much. What is in it for the common man, nothing but...

They say they'd give all the housing to the poor when they're finished with it. I'd like to see that but I don't imagine it would work out exactly like that.

And just where are all these tax dollars coming from, where are our priorities? Our priorities are making an opera house and trying to make Toronto look spiffy ... to try and get foreign investment, whatever foreign investment is.

When they get it they complain.

Q. IS FOREIGN INVESTMENT A GOOD THING OR A BAD THING?

That's one thing that perhaps I'm not too sure about. My gut reaction is that it seems to me that we are being taken over by all these foreign investments. I suppose there are benefits but I don't like the feeling of all these Canadian companies becoming Americanized.

Isn't it supposed to be creating jobs, foreign investment?

Yes, but how much does it create and then send the rest back to the States?

Q. I WANT YOU TO LOOK AS WE DID A FEW MOMENTS AGO BEYOND THE CANADA U.S. BORDER, TO EUROPE AND THE REST OF THE WORLD. IF I SAY TO YOU THE WORDS "GOING GLOBAL", WHAT DOES THAT MEAN, CANADA IS GOING GLOBAL?

I would translate that as trade.

I think that's right, we're going to do more trading right around the world rather than just maybe to the States or whatever. We're going to trade right around the world. We're going to be a global bunch of people. Nationalities will maybe disappear a little bit as we all get mixed up.

P. DOES IT MEAN ANYTHING OTHER THAN TRADE TO ANYONE OR...?

I think it means trade but I also think it...I worked overseas for a lot of years and Canada had a much better posture globally of a place where you could be free, you could make your money, this is the place to come to if you are in trouble somewhere else in the world. Canada has a very positive posture globally and I think when you talk about Canada going global you would then talk about what else you would do. It's foreign policy is already positive so it would have to be a larger trade policy.

I agree with what you say about Canada having a good posture but it's for foreigners that it has a good posture. Once we've lived in the country, it's not as wonderful as it appears to be. Obviously if you're living in a country that's worse off, then Canada is great.

P. LET'S GET BACK TO WHAT YOU WERE SAYING ABOUT DEVELOPING MORE OF AN INTERNATIONAL TRADING THING. ARE WE DOING THAT NOW, WORKING ON DEVELOPING THIS INTERNATIONAL TRADE?

No. I've been having this experience for about two years - I get these strange call about whether I could provide urea which is a fertilizer. We're talking about thousands and thousands of tons of this stuff. When you ring up Canadian companies they couldn't care less, they just don't call you back. And all these things I get asked for and they just don't call back, no one ever calls back. These are big orders, I'm setting up a situation that a company could probably live on for the next ten years and make very good money, I don't know what it is.

They aren't hungry.

Well that's it, isn't it.

I think that people aren't hungry enough to respond to those kinds of things. My feeling is that, you know, we sold the store and as much as people made noise about FIRA when Trudeau was in and everything had to be Canadian owned, in the last five years we sold the store, we sold lots of stores, Simpsons and the Bay, literally...

...like do we make things from scratch, how many shoe factories do we have, how many of anything gets manufactured here.

Q. WHAT DO WE HAVE TO EXPORT, WHAT KINDS OF THINGS CAN CANADA AND ONTARIO MAKE THAT CAN COMPETE ON THE WORLD MARKET?

You're not thinking about natural resources are you?

P. SURE, ANYTHING?

Well of course we do have our trees, but not manufactured goods, I can't think.

I have a nephew who has a furniture factory and he would like to send furniture to the States, if the dollar was low again. If he didn't have too much competition from the States he might be able to do alright. As it is right now he's a little worried about it. But, if you ask what we can export, sure the first thing that comes to mind is water, fresh water. We can export all our trees but then what have we got left. We can export our minerals but it's going to be hard to export anything that's manufactured because the Mexicans can make it for so much cheaper than we can because of their wage rates. We are hewers of wood and drawers of water.

P. LET ME TURN THIS AROUND A BIT. DO YOU THINK IT WOULD BE WISE FOR CANADA TO ADOPT A POLICY OF PRODUCING WHAT WE NEED FOR OURSELVES AND DEVELOPING A LOT OF INDUSTRIES AND STUFF SO THAT WE WON'T HAVE TO IMPORT SO MUCH SO THAT WE BECOME SORT OF SELF SUFFICIENT, OR WOULD IT BE BETTER FOR CANADA TO ADOPT A POLICY OF REALLY TRYING TO EXPORT WHAT WE'RE GOOD AT AND GET A LOT OF MONEY FOR IT AND IMPORT WHAT WE NEED TO?

You can't isolate the country though. You lose all your best talent in Canada anyway, there are a tremendous amount of brains in this country but they're all gone. If you look at the movie industry, which I'm very familiar with, I guarantee you that all the big names, technicians, 50% are Canadian. If you look at some of the famous names most of them are Canadian that you never even realized were Canadian and you go on in other fields like that.

What is uniquely Canadian is that you are not recognized unless you go out of this country and come back. I've never understood why you're not good enough when you're here.

I think you have to do both. We didn't have a company in Canada that could do anything with the recycled newspaper, all of our newspapers were exported. The flip side of that is that we have to find more things to trade and be competitive, we always had a trade surplus but that's because we are selling off the natural resources. We no longer have trade surpluses and we need to come up with things that we can manufacture reasonably and/or process reasonably. And we've got to reuse what we already have in a more efficient way because although we've got tons of land we can't be shipping garbage.

Q. IF WE GOT GEARED UP TO FIND DIFFERENT THINGS TO EXPORT, WOULD THAT BE EASY OR HARD FOR US TO DO? WHAT KIND OF IMPACTS DO YOU THINK IT MIGHT HAVE?

You haven't got the aggressive style that you need.

We have to be more aggressive. When you think of all these other countries they all have something that they're known for, Italy has furniture and shoes and clothes. What is distinctly Canadian, we really have to think of something...

Maple syrup.

I was going to say that, there's our thing.

Do you know what our problem is, it's the written word. They always want the business plan - what are the projected earnings? Will it work?

Will the government cover the loan.

P. DO YOU THINK THAT ADJUSTING TO MORE TRADE IN CANADA WOULD BE EASY OR HARD FOR US TO DO?

I think it's going to be pretty hard because of the dollar. If the dollar goes down it could be very handy, but you've got to get the people who are enthusiastic and are willing to sell the stuff.

P. A LOT OF PEOPLE AROUND THE TABLE SEEM TO THINK THAT WE NEED TO BE MORE COMPETITIVE. WHAT DOES THIS MEAN IF WE BECOME MORE COMPETITIVE IN THE WORLD MARKETS, SPECIFICALLY IN TERMS OF IMPACTS TO CANADA OR TO ONTARIO?

Competitive is a matter of price and product but you see it's the people who go out and do it.

I think we have to have better salesmen, people are too quiet and reserved, they don't go out and sell.

I think that what most people have to accept if they are not going to be competitive and aggressive is what their standard of living and lifestyle is going to be in relation to that. Accept a lower standard of living and lifestyle the less competitive and aggressive you are. You're not going to have everything that you want by being a peaceful gentle person.

No, but you're content with what you have.

I think that people who don't own houses at the moment are going to have to do something very special to get a house or something very special is going to happen in this country for more people to have a house in a metropolitan area. Now, the average price of a house in Regina is \$68,000 so if you really want a house you go live in Regina and figure out what you're going to do once you get there.

Newfoundland is even cheaper.

I've worked backwards. I said I was going to retire by the time I was 35 and I did, but I had very specific goals of what I was going to do till I got there and I met them and so I'm working backwards. I watch my peers who are still moving forward and who are staying in one place, and which you said your standard of living was going to be the same in the next 3-5 years...

Unless I win the lottery...

The lottery which is the biggest business we've got in this country.

There you go, we should sell that.

Well we did, we exported it to the States, they now have lotteries in the States, but what we haven't imported is casino gambling.

We will though.

P. I THINK WE'RE DIGRESSING A TINY BIT.

But it all seems to hinge on money, this conversation.

P. I WANT TO HEAR FROM PETULIA. FOR CANADA TO BE MORE COMPETITIVE IN WORLD MARKETS WHAT DO WE HAVE TO DO?

Quality products and sell them, none of these little cheap things that we seem to do, the little we do manufacture. We need to have quality products and take it and sell it and say, "Look, this is Canadian."

I have a friend in England that has made it really big making Canadian souvenirs.

P. SO WE'RE IMPORTING A LOT?

Yeah.

P. ARE WE EXPORTING MORE OR LESS THAN WE IMPORT?

I think I read in the paper we have a trade deficit.

Q. IF CANADA WORKED TOWARD BEING MORE COMPETITIVE, IN YOUR MIND DOES IT HAVE ANY CONNECTION WITH JOBS?

We have to produce a good or service at an exportable price and that means that the end price of that product has to be competitive and that people in the production of that also have to be competitive. One of the things about living in a more socialistic country and the benefits wanting to be accrued by the workers means that you make concessions along the way that are not made in other countries that are producing goods and services. And you're right, because like you were saying, the goods and services we produce we expect top dollar for and that is certainly going to reduce our competitive edge. That's the whole problem, they go to Mexico, they go to the States where the wages are more in line with what the end result is. That's our problem, we expect extraordinary wages to make something that isn't going to produce.

It's not a unique product, if we produced a unique product then it wouldn't matter.

Yeah but we don't and that's why a lot of companies are closing.

P. SO WHAT IS GOING TO GIVE, IF WE HAVE THESE HIGH SALARY EXPECTATIONS DOES THAT MEAN WE ARE NOT GOING TO BE COMPETITIVE WORLD TRADERS OR DOES THAT MEAN WE ARE GOING TO HAVE TO ADJUST OUR SALARIES? WHICH END IS GOING TO GIVE?

The problem is inflation. Living in Toronto, people expect high salaries because they're living in a city that you can't afford to live. So we expect \$50 an hour instead of \$20 and then the companies close up and say, "Forget this, we can't afford to be in Toronto."

P. WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THAT TRADE-OFF ISSUE BETWEEN HIGHER WAGES

AND THE ABILITY TO PRODUCE THINGS AT A COMPETITIVE PRICE? HOW DO WE RECONCILE THOSE?

The only way I guess is to get all these immigrants coming in and give them \$5 an hour to make things because nobody that is already here is going to work for \$5 an hour.

That's why we bring them in now but what happens is that they get smart and then the unions or whatever come to them and say, "You're making \$5 an hour, do you know that is pathetic. Demand \$20 an hour and if you don't get it go on unemployment or welfare or whatever."

So the mistake that Canada is making is letting them go on pogy so they won't work for \$5.

That's right.

I think it's ridiculous bringing all these people in and they won't even let them work for a while, put them to work right away. They won't quit if they don't get another job or they don't get pogy.

Q. WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT CANADA AS COMPARED TO OTHER COUNTRIES IN THE WESTERNIZED WORLD LIKE FRANCE, GERMANY, BRITAIN, OR SPAIN, ARE WE DOING ANYTHING ABOUT HOW MUCH WE EXPORT AND IMPORT AND HOW MUCH THEY EXPORT AND IMPORT, ARE WE DOING WELL OR POORLY COMPARED TO THEM?

Well they're trying to open up Europe with the European Economic Community.

Yeah, 1992.

And I think that's what's trying to happen in North America.

Trying to compete.

Yeah, trying to have Mexico and the United States and Canada become a part of it.

P. ARE WE DOING WELL OR POORLY RIGHT NOW?

I think we're working towards trying to do well. I think we're caught in a transition period where more people are forced out of their jobs and depending on what age they are whether or not they can ever be retrained. I think a good example is the beer companies when they are closing down so many of the breweries in each of the provinces. Now whether or not we are creating jobs which those people are willing or able to work at for the remainder of their working career would mean that we are doing well. If all we are doing is eliminating jobs and consolidating and creating a better competitive atmosphere and we are subsidizing those people for the rest of their lives, then we are doing poorly. That's part of what the unemployment in the Maritimes in the fishing industry is all about. They're only working for 10 weeks and they're collecting for 40 weeks but when you do that you don't generate any entrepreneurship that says you've got money for ten weeks and you've got to come up with money for the other 40 weeks and we don't force people to do that. There might be some way to deal with that if you kept all the health care benefits and you eliminated all the wage benefits.

We don't actually have a world standing as a trading country. People think highly of Canadians, a safe country, very law abiding, but if you go to Europe and you look for any mention of Canada in the newspapers, you'll never find one. It's a very nice place to be but that's about it.

Q. IN ORDER TO GEAR CANADA UP FOR MORE TRADE AND TO BE A BETTER INTERNATIONAL TRADER WHO'S GOING TO HAVE A MORE POSITIVE INFLUENCE, WHERE DOES THE DIRECTION AND THE LEADERSHIP HAVE TO COME FROM - FROM GOVERNMENT, FROM BUSINESS, FROM LABOUR, FROM INDIVIDUAL WORKERS, ACADEMICS, WHERE DOES THE INFLUENCE HAVE TO COME FROM?

I think you've really got to get it from the government, you've got to really push the country, I don't think that you can push Canadians though.

P. SO YOU THINK IT HAS TO COME MORE FROM THE GOVERNMENT THAN FROM BUSINESS?

Yeah, business has a big hand in all of this.

I disagree on that, I really think it has to do more with business.

Yeah but they don't bother so the government has got to have incentives, to push.

I think the government should be doing this and talking to business about it. We've got so many forms of government and so many people that we pay to run the governments. As soon as they get in they forget about us, those guys should be working for us.

The government should become competitive.

Q. WHY DOES THE GOVERNMENT WANT TO GET INVOLVED IN THIS INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND THIS INTERNATIONAL COMPETITIVENESS?

They should get involved because they're working for us.

Hand in hand, government and business have to say, "Ok, we're going to revamp the system."

I don't care a lot for Margaret Thatcher and her policies but she is a leader, to me Brian Mulroney is a terrible whimp.

I think that Mulroney has let us down terribly, he's a liar and he's sold us down the river.

If there was more money made available for people to become more entrepreneurial, and I don't mean strip clubs in Quebec, but where you didn't need to have a \$20,000 business plan and you didn't need to have a \$300,000 house as collateral. If you have a group of women who want to sew and make something and they needed the money to rent or buy the machines and they took more chances on real small businesses, that could in fact generate more jobs and self-esteem for more people in this country. I think that would be money very well spent whether it came from business or whether it came from government. I work in social services and there are two theories that I want to throw out at you - one is that if people who are going to be on unemployment for a year or on welfare for a year were given all the money up front to do something with, they could in fact do something with a business instead of just having the \$400 a month. If you have \$4,000 or \$5,000 in your pocket some of those people would do something with that money. The other theory is a bit more radical and that is if you took the money that they spend to administer the welfare system, and that means all the salaries that go into paying the bureaucracy that administers the welfare system and you gave that directly to the people, those people would have a significant increase in the amount of money that they have to live on. It would also put a significant number of middle class anglos out of work which would create a whole other unemployment sector.

Q. WHY DO YOU THINK THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT WOULD BE LOOKING AT

INCREASING INTERNATIONAL TRADE?

It is a puzzling question, it should be to make things better for everybody but I get the feeling when watching these politicians that it's really to make things better for themselves.

The question is can we survive without global trade? Or do we want to, do we want to be the Sweden of North America.

Trudeau was a world player in the political realm and Mulroney wants to do it any way he can. He can't make it in the political realm so he's trying to do it through trade, the free trade deal, importing trade in the form of allowing people to buy immigration. I see Denmark, Sweden and Finland sitting at the top of Europe the way that we sit at the top of the United States and it's my gut feeling that somehow they've worked out how to do that better than we have because we seem to be struggling and they seem to be more content with their situation. And able to produce what they produce well.

Q. FOR THE 1990'S THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IS GOING TO SPEND A LOT OF EFFORT AND ENERGY AND ATTENTION ON GETTING CANADA IN THE WORLD MARKET. ASSUME THAT THAT IS TRUE FOR THE NEXT FIFTEEN MINUTES. WHAT'S IT GOING TO MEAN TO YOU AND YOUR JOB, WHAT'S IT GOING TO MEAN IN TERMS OF THE NUMBER OF JOBS IN CANADA, IN TERMS OF RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT, JOB TRAINING, WHAT ARE WE GOING TO HAVE TO DO, WHAT'S IT GOING TO DO?

A lot of manufacturers are moving to the United States and Mexico. I don't see our trade increasing.

P. SO WE'RE GOING TO BE WORKING FOR THE NEXT TEN YEARS TO TURN THAT AROUND, WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?

We need to spend more money on scientists and research and development and less money on lawyers and bureaucrats.

Thank-you.

Absolutely, yeah.

We have to focus our training and education on things that will create more jobs. If we are going to go global then we need to have uniquely Canadian products that are made here first and can get world patents so that nobody else makes them for ten or twelve years. We've got the brain power in this country and we've got the creativity...

But the incentive...

...and that's where the money comes in.

It means we all have to get down and work and be more serious, change our lifestyle and I think it's going to get worse for us first because we're going to have to cut back.

P. WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY WORSE?

Inflation, fewer jobs but only for 2 or 3 years and then hopefully...then we'll start saying ok, pick it up.

Well, the government is going to spend more money doing this and we already are 350 billion

in debt, so we're just going to be getting deeper and deeper in debt and inflation is going to go up, so it's just not going to work unless something is done about the debt.

Q. DO YOU THINK THERE'S ANY LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT RIGHT NOW THAT HAVE POLICIES OR INITIATIVES IN PLACE THAT HAVE TO DO WITH MAKING CANADA READY FOR INTERNATIONAL TRADE?

Canadian businessmen are travelling abroad.

I think the free trade agreement was the beginning of that so that when everything happens in 1992 in Europe at least we have some experience in operating in that kind of a ball game.

International trade is a good idea but the trouble is how to make it work which is basically what you're asking us...

...I don't think we have been competitively creative enough with what they do with the tariffs and taxes in this country to really generate "buy Canadian". We're not protecting our interests because it's cheaper to buy somewhere else because of the taxes that are and are not levied on things. Take VCRs - if you were to take all the taxes off of Electrohome and put taxes on the others there would be a significant part of the population that would buy Canadian.

That's right, instead of going over the border and bringing them back, how many people do you know that do that?

All kinds of people go across the border to buy major products like cars and VCRs and bring them across the border and pay the taxes and it's still cheaper, is that international trade?

Sure, billions of dollars.

We've got to protect our interests.

Q. THE FREE TRADE AGREEMENT WITH THE U.S., IT'S BEEN IN EFFECT SINCE THE BEGINNING OF 1989, WHAT DO YOU THINK OF IT SO FAR?

It seems to me that we've lost a lot of good companies and I can't honestly see how that can be a good thing. I can't honestly see any benefit from it.

P. HAVE YOU CHANGED YOUR MIND ABOUT IT SINCE IT CAME IN?

No, I don't really think I have.

P. IS IT HAVING PRETTY MUCH THE EFFECT THAT YOU THOUGHT IT WOULD?

Yeah.

It was supposed to generate trade for us, we were supposed to be able to make our furniture here and sell it down in the States but I haven't heard if my nephew is selling any down there yet. It seems that all the publicity that we've heard about plants closing and that seems to be the results of the free trade so far. Everything that they said was supposed to happen hasn't happened. I think it's deleting Canada so to speak, making Canada less Canadian. There's only a thin line across the 49th parallel separating us from being Yankees. I think that most of us that are born here want to stay Canadian but I don't think it's going to be possible if we have complete free trade, it's just going to be one big country and that's going to be because of free trade.

To me free trade has done a little bit of damage, well a lot of damage, but then again I'm hoping that it'll turn around. We have to start picking up ourselves, it's a stupid way to put it but the free ride is over and we really have to work.

What can you do though to sell furniture in the States?

I don't know, hire a salesman.

P. DO YOU THINK THIS IS A SHORT TERM TRANSITION OR A LONG TERM TRANSITION?

I think it's a short term thing because everyone is scared and protecting their own. But then we're going to be forced, hopefully we're going to be forced into action, right now we are not forced into action, we are just sitting back and complaining about free trade but we should be going out and becoming more competitive which means not paying the workers \$40 an hour to produce a booklet. Let's rationalize because they don't do it in the States and they don't do it in Mexico and they don't do it in Europe...they give incentives other ways. The company thinks it's a family, like Japan, they don't get paid extraordinary amounts of money for producing cars. What happens is it's more of other incentives whereas here...in the automotive industry you go to work, get paid \$25 an hour and go home, it's just a job. We've got to start thinking more pride here, we're Canadians, let's produce something that's fantastic.

What you're saying is that we should get rid of the unions here.

The unions, it did protect the worker and it still does. I'm not totally against unions but it protects the worker and yet it gives them too much power.

P. EXCUSE ME FOR A MINUTE, I WANT TO KNOW WHAT LINDEY THINKS OF FREE TRADE?

I think that the government hasn't really told us yet what is going on with free trade and everyone including myself is basing their opinion on what we've read in the newspapers which is not positive. The government has spent a lot of money to convince us that it was going to be a positive thing but they haven't spent any money on the follow-up showing us how it has been, which means one of two things - they either haven't spent the money to show it has been a positive thing, or it hasn't been a positive thing. I don't think the businessmen in this country would have allowed the free trade agreement to go through if it wasn't going to benefit at least a certain percentage of the business people. As far as where it's going, I don't know, I still think that if you look at what has been put forth in the media it's not a happy situation and the government has not been assertive enough in showing what's positive about it.

Q. SOME PEOPLE TALK ABOUT FREE TRADE AS IF IT IS PART OF A LARGER SCHEME OF THINGS. DO YOU THINK OF FREE TRADE AS PART OF A LARGER TRADING SCHEME OR IS IT A SORT OF STAND ALONE THING?

No, it definitely should be part of a larger scheme of things. I think right now we're just narrow minded and we're seeing the short term effect.

P. WAS THE FREE TRADE AGREEMENT A STEP TOWARDS MORE INTERNATIONAL TRADE OR IS IT JUST SOMETHING THAT BRIAN MULRONEY WANTED TO DO FOR RONALD REAGAN?

I think that what happened in the United States during the Reagan years forced Canada to be a part of the free trade agreement maybe before Canada was ready. With the United States becoming more isolationist, Canada saw it as the only way to become more competitive and

have access to the United States market, having access to a 250 million market by just driving across the 49th parallel is a major incentive. I see it as the first step as part of a global thing but also in relation to what is happening in Europe.

But it's hard to tell who's owning what these days. Doesn't Japan own a substantial portion of the States, aren't they taking over companies and...

The latest figures are that of the 11 largest banks in the United States, 10 are located in California and 7 of those are owned by the Japanese.

Yeah, so really it's like a big fish being eaten by a bigger fish being eaten by a bigger fish. But I don't think that anybody is going to lose out, I think that what we're going to do is lose a little bit of the free ride that we've had in Canada. The ones that are crying the loudest are the ones that didn't really do anything.

Q. WE'VE TALKED ABOUT A LOT OF DIFFERENT ISSUES TONIGHT IN TERMS OF TRADE, INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND FREE TRADE AND EVERY ONCE IN A WHILE PEOPLE HAVE BEEN SAYING THEY DON'T REALLY KNOW THAT MUCH ABOUT IT. WHAT KIND OF INFORMATION DO YOU NEED ON THESE TOPICS AND WHERE DO YOU EXPECT TO GET IT, IN WHAT FORM?

We want the truth, and we're not really getting it, you don't get it through the newspapers and you don't get it through the politicians. I don't know how you do it really, but no one really knows what's really happening with free trade. I think I know what's happening deep down but not factually.

P. WHOSE INFORMATION ON THAT WOULD YOU TRUST?

I don't know, that's the problem.

In this room I trust Bernie because he's actually involved in trade.

Yeah, trust the people that are actually doing it.

P. SHOULD THERE BE STUFF FROM STATISTICS CANADA, A PAMPHLET PUT OUT ON TRADE AND IMPORTS AND EXPORTS, ARE THEY A GOOD RELIABLE SOURCE FOR STUFF LIKE THAT?

Well I'll tell you, I think that Mr. Mulroney should talk to the nation and tell us just exactly what is happening with free trade and to back up everything he says right then and there. Not just say something but back it up with figures and then have a couple of other people that are in the industry saying, "Yes, that's right Mr. Mulroney, we're doing this." It's got to come from the top, nobody knows what's happening with free trade.

P. BUT WOULD YOU TRUST IT MORE IF IT CAME FROM STATISTICS CANADA OR FROM EXTERNAL AFFAIRS OR FROM BUSINESS?

No, I wouldn't trust it because how do you know it's true?

I would trust more the people that are directly involved and that are affected by it. They don't really have anything to lie about. I couldn't trust the politicians because they have ways of showing different things.

P. DOES EXTERNAL AFFAIRS HAVE A ROLE IN ALL OF THIS?

External Affairs is too much - somebody has a finger on them telling them what to do.

I would like if some independent firm could research this topic and make the information available but who would pay them to do it? If the government did it, would make them suspect. Ideally I would like to be able to get this information from my MP, have it gathered from all the MP's and then make a sheet available but from what you say nobody would trust that information. I used to think the CBC was a reliable source, that they presented a broad range of views, but maybe it's the budget cuts, they're getting narrower.

Q. ANY FINAL COMMENTS?

(End)

Trade Focus Groups - Toronto
April 17, 1990

INTRODUCTIONS:

Nell, I'm a social worker with seniors. I work here in Toronto although I'm originally from the West. I'm single but I live with a family.

Hubert, I'm an immigrant to Canada. I've been here some twenty odd years. I'm an independent operator. I'm married and I've got a couple of kids who have kids. I'm here for a certain reason, to express my opinion about the Free Trade Agreement.

Axa, I'm an administrator. I'm from Scandinavia. I like to do all sorts of things: sew; design clothes...

Schovn, I'm an ability therapist health care professional. I live with my son. My daughter goes to school in London, Ontario. I work for myself visiting clients. I hold clinics three days out of the week where patients that can move can come to me...apart from reading and looking after my son that's all I do. I was originally from Australia but I've been here for 23 years.

Dorothy, I'm retired after working for about 39 years. I was born in Cabbagetown, Toronto and I've lived in Toronto all my life. I'm married, I have one daughter and I'm a new grandparent. We're real film buffs and I like to read. My husband is retired too, we're both enjoying our retirement very much.

Lynn, I'm an assistant to a purchasing agent. I'm engaged to be married in July. I spend a lot of my time at work.

Q. WHAT ARE THE KEY ISSUES THAT YOU FACE TODAY IN CANADA, IN YOUR REGION AND IN TERMS OF YOURSELVES?

Taxation.

The GST.

The taxes and the environment.

Restrictions in all senses. When I came to this country, you worked hard and you were rewarded. Today the harder you work, the less you get out of it. There are so many restrictions here it seems that this country is run by the bank. The bank is controlled by the government and the government is controlled by the bank, that's where almost all the people are getting stuck.

I think the taxes too, they're not fair. I don't see why we should have to pay tax on everything. I don't know much about it but what I do, I don't like.

The prices of apartments. Tearing down affordable housing to put up condominiums.

My perspective working with older people is that these people are voiceless and the government doesn't seem to care about them. I mean, these people pay taxes all their lives, I think they deserve to be looked after. They're getting it at all ends, the rents are so high for these elderly people, if you want to live in style when you get older it's going to cost you \$3000 a month.

Q. WHAT DO YOU THINK THE KEY ISSUES ARE GOING TO BE IN THE NEXT TWO OR THREE YEARS?

I think the key issue is who can get the most votes so they can stay in power regardless of the cost, regardless of the people who are left out.

I think that we're in a very serious position here in Canada, especially now they're talking about a trilateral agreement with Mexico. When they started talking about free trade, how can a country 1/10th of the population of the United States have a hope in hell of getting anything out of it. Now they're talking about bringing in Mexico, taking in their cheap labour. Our resources and the United States' resources are going to be flying but I don't know where they're going to be.

I was just thinking about what you were saying, the break up of Canada.

That whole thing is manufactured. Meech Lake thing is a diversionary thing to take our minds off free trade so we won't act on the GST. They keep us paralyzed with the Meech issue...

Let's be honest about it though, who cares about Quebec.

I don't.

I do.

Not even Quebecers care about Quebec. It's only a handful of politicians who keep everything fully alive, the rest of the people in Quebec don't care.

Well, we're spending millions of dollars on it. When you're spending that much money, you wonder what you're getting out of it.

When there are so many big issues happening and then another issue is brought up, you just don't know where to put your attention, so you divide and conquer.

I think in my community, I'm not prejudiced but I think that it will be infested with black people. We will be the minority, it's just outrageous, this used to be Canada and it wasn't infested with black people. You see more of them now than you do white people, and it's like they look down on you. I think it's just going to get worse and worse, they just keep letting too many people in.

I don't mind that.

I don't mind them coming but I just wish they would come and just assimilate with the rest of Canada...

Like the rest of us did.

...Yeah, instead of bringing all their customs and their...and then they protest this or that...

I agree with you 100 percent. I'm an immigrant and when I came to Canada, the first thing I learned was English. I mean, my English is never going to be perfect but when I came to Canada I didn't say OK I've got to bring my own customs along with me. I came and lived like the Canadians. All the issues we've got here, like with the Sikhs...

I think the immigrants have brought a lot of good things to Canada...

I think so too but they don't know when to stop.

Q. WHERE DO YOU THINK YOU ARE GOING TO BE FINANCIALLY IN THE NEXT TWO TO THREE YEARS? BETTER, WORSE, ABOUT THE SAME?

A lot worse.

I'm trying to make it better but I can't see it getting better.

Well, I just finished my income tax. I got a 4 percent increase and there's less money in the bank this year and food is going up - it's just a progressive thing. Where I work we get 4 percent increases, I'm going downhill so I'm looking at changing jobs. I'm worried, really worried.

I'm retired. I was a freelancer all my life so I have not put a lot of money away for old age. It's really hard so I work, you get the regular and the supplement. It comes to a little over \$800 a month but when you work you don't get the supplement.

P. HOW DO YOU THINK IT'S GOING TO BE FOR CANADA OVER THE NEXT FEW YEARS?

Well, we'll have sold the country. We'll be talking about buying it back maybe.

I think our identity is slipping away. We have something to be proud of.

You see originally we came to this country for a reason, it was a free, young, energetic country. Today it's far from that, it's not free anymore, it's not energetic, there's actually nothing left. The whole country is just ruled by a handful of politicians who play us like a couple of yo-yos.

Q. LET'S THINK ABOUT WHERE WE'RE GOING WITH THE ECONOMY IN THE 1990'S AND THE KINDS OF THINGS THAT MIGHT INFLUENCE IT AND THE KINDS OF IMPACTS THERE MIGHT BE?

We cannot handle it anymore. Talking about free trade, it's one issue but we seem to forget a couple of other things, our structure in Canada is completely different than the American structure. The Americans are free enterprise and Canada is government controlled. With all our social programs, which the Americans don't have, how can we start competing with them. The other thing is that the American economy is geared for 300 million people, our economy is geared for 5 million people. They're going to flood us and millions of jobs are going to be lost. In my area, I'm in the air conditioning/refrigeration business, do you know how many factories we've got left in Canada? Over the last two years we've lost 85 percent, most of them subsidiaries of the Americans.

P. WHERE DO YOU THINK THE ECONOMY ITSELF IS GOING TO HEAD OVER THE NEXT TEN YEARS?

It's already sliding, we can see it now. It's going down so rapidly that I'm actually carrying American dollars in my purse, that's no joke. We had a lesson in 1958 or 1960, I wasn't even in the country at that time. There was no free trade and Canada had 30 farm machinery manufacturers. They opened up free trade between Canada and the U.S. on farm machinery and how many have we got today? None, all those jobs have gone. What have we learned? It's sliding south and all of us will end up having to follow. We're taxed to death. I mean, my girlfriend does the same thing that I do in Missouri and her take home is about 150 percent more than mine. It's unfair that I have to skimp for my kids and their education. If I was even across the border in Buffalo, I would be better off.

We do have a lot of social advantages though. I would hate to get sick in the States.

I don't mind paying for that but I don't want to pay for it over and over.

You see that's one of the reasons we cannot go on a Canada-US free trade system.

Q. WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT THINGS INTERNATIONALLY IN TERMS OF THE ECONOMY, WHAT DO YOU THINK ARE GOING TO BE SOME OF THE ISSUES?

Economic blocs, trading blocs. We've got a trading bloc in Europe and have a centralized trading bloc in Canada, the United States and Mexico. We're going to see other unholy alliances setting up, polarized power and small businesses are not really going to exist. Wars are going to exist but only the ones that are allowed ... there are some scary things that are happening, because the world is being ruled by money. The world is going to be run by big power blocs.

I don't know about internationally but I'm thinking seriously about moving somewhere else. I'll live on my old age pension somewhere else because I don't think it's going to get any better, I think it's going to get worse.

I don't think I'll stay here either. I'll either go south or go back to Australia. I'm just getting taxed out here.

Q. HOW DO WE FEEL ABOUT INTERNATIONAL TRADE?

It's fine as long as we don't get robbed. We have people who want to make us such wonderful targets for trade that they under-sell everything and then we have to over-buy to get anything into the country. Screw the peasants and let's pay out to the kings of the other countries.

I agree 100 percent with Nell. I still have ties with Europe, they smartened up a long time ago. They said, "We've got to open up the borders instead of having a country Germany, we're going to have a province Germany and there's only going to be one country called Europe". I think they're going to take a run on the Americans and the Americans are going to lose. We don't even have to talk about the Canadians because we hang on to the Americans.

P. HOW DO YOU THINK WE'D DO IF THAT SORT OF THING HAPPENS?

Right now we're being stripped of our natural resources and there's not that much replenishing going on. The controls are still pretty slack, we're losing our natural resources, our water, our timber and people are actually being educated against it in the media. I know there is some positive education in the media, the green awareness and whatever but there is a lot of negative attitudes too.

Q. IF I SAID TO YOU THAT CANADA WAS GOING GLOBAL, WHAT WOULD THAT MEAN, WHAT KIND OF IMAGE WOULD THAT CONJURE UP?

People fleeing to all corners of the earth to get away from us.

How can we go global when we can't clean our act up in our own country? We can't clean up Quebec and some other small issues that we've got here, how can we go global?

I think we are global right now, with all of the millions and billions we are giving away.

I don't know what to think. Do you mean being as important in the world as other countries? I don't think we ever will be, we're always looked down on. In the United States, they hardly know we exist.

Q. WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT WHEN I SAY INTERNATIONAL TRADE?

Toyota.

Mazda.

Cars.

Japan.

Germany. Those are the big power brokers, Germany will be big when the two Germanys come together.

Q. WHEN WE TRADE, WHAT COMES TO MIND, DO WE TRADE WITH ALL KINDS OF COUNTRIES AND PEOPLE?

Profits and losses.

An honest days work for an honest days pay.

That's what it used to be.

There's only one problem here, you've got to work seven days to get one day's pay and then the government is getting you from the top and the bottom. I think that has got to be stopped. Government spending has got to be stopped, that's what it comes down to. Canadians are not too lazy to work. You talk to people today and they say they've got to work until 8 o'clock. They say, "Are you kidding, I'm not going to make 3 hours overtime and then give it all over to Ottawa."

When you say trade I think of fair play. If I give you something of one value, you give me something of lesser value then that's not trade. It's not fair.

Q. WHAT DO WE IMPORT AND EXPORT?

We export raw materials and we import ...

Everything else.

...at 300 percent profit to them we import it as a finished product. It just bleeds out of this country.

P. CAN YOU THINK OF A FEW THINGS SPECIFICALLY THAT WE EXPORT?

All our iron ore, all our raw materials. We're even now talking about exporting Tamagami and then we're buying back shakes and shingles. We import a lot of cars. Why not go across the border and buy a car in Buffalo? It's \$15,000 for a car and the same car here is \$24,000. It's ludicrous, it doesn't make sense. We have to bring in foot wear now because all of our Canadian foot wear plants have closed. We have to import clothing because most of the Canadian clothing plants can't operate competitively. We bring in all our food for the winter.

Our big exports are oil, lumber and grain.

And water too, that's a big one.

That's right we're tearing up part of BC and altering the whole landscape and destroying wildlife.

Do you think Canadian workers are demanding too much? They want high pay, all the benefits, pension plans and sick pay. I think a lot of Americans are not demanding that and that's why a lot of the factories are leaving Canada. They can get labour down in the United States and they do not have to pay all the benefits.

It's suicide to start up a manufacturing business in Canada.

But you need the higher income to live.

But then there's big business, the money that the government gives to big business is ridiculous, the fact that they pay so little of their share of taxes.

Some of them don't pay taxes at all.

Q. I WANT TO PICK UP ON SOMETHING THAT DOROTHY SAID ABOUT WAGES AND WORKING AND THE KIND OF CONDITIONS WE'RE COMPETING AGAINST WITH OTHER PEOPLE IN TRADING. DO THOSE THINGS MAKE A DIFFERENCE, DO YOU THINK OVER THE NEXT PERIOD OF TIME WE'RE GOING TO SEE THOSE THINGS CHANGE?

I think it deteriorates more. You go back 20 years and the Americans had to put \$1.17 on the table to buy a Canadian dollar but at that time we didn't pay 87 cents to the dollar on taxes. We paid 40-45% less, this was a free enterprise country. If you worked hard you gained a lot. Then it started changing and every year they nipped a little bit more and then the governments came in and said, "Oh, it's getting tough, we've got to raise the interest."

I feel just as bad about it.

Q. DO YOU THINK THAT TRADE IS GOING TO AFFECT US AT ALL, EVERYBODY FEELS BAD IN THE ROOM, WHAT SORTS OF THINGS CAN WE DO OVER THE NEXT PERIOD OF TIME TO MAKE IT BETTER?

We can't impeach as they can in the States, otherwise I think that Mulroney would have.

P. WHAT CAN WE DO?

What can we do? We had two MP's last week who said, "We don't go for the GST." Did you see what happened to them? They kicked them out of the caucus.

It's come down to every man for himself. I have to look after my family and that's it. You feel so helpless there is nothing you can do. We can't stop them from Tamagami. We can't stop them from free trade. We can't stop them from the GST so you crawl into your shell and slam the door and damn well hope that they...

Yeah, but how many marches, how many protests...

Yeah, but they're not listening.

They can do anything they want because they have a tremendous majority. They can just run rough shod over everybody.

They tell us about the goods and services tax for a few days then they say they don't have any more time and they run it through. I mean, where are we going?

P. WHERE DO YOU THINK WE ARE GOING?

Not very far.

I think we're going far on a long, fast slide.

Q. A WHILE AGO WE WERE TALKING ABOUT THE DIFFERENT, WHAT WAS HAPPENING ON THE INTERNATIONAL SCENE AND THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY GETTING TOGETHER. THERE SEEMS TO BE SOME INCREASED TRADING GOING ON, WHAT DO YOU THINK OUR POLICY SHOULD BE IF FREE TRADE WAS BAD AND TOOK AWAY ALL OUR JOBS. WHAT DO YOU THINK CANADA SHOULD DO FOR THE NEXT TEN YEARS, DO YOU THINK CANADA SHOULD WORK ON BEING SELF-SUFFICIENT AND CLOSING IT'S BORDERS UP AND NOT IMPORTING OR EXPORTING ANYTHING AND JUST MAKE EVERYTHING FOR OURSELVES OR SHOULD WE WORK ON GETTING INTO THE INTERNATIONAL TRADING GAME AND WORK ON BEING A STRONGER TRADER?

We don't have the skills or the expertise, that's being proven by the free trade talks. We don't have the skills or the expertise, look at Japan, they closed ranks and then started some careful importing and exporting and now they're an economic power house...

P. WE'D NEED MORE SKILLS AND MORE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT TO BE ABLE TO DO THAT?

In order to do that, yes. I mean look at Japan, a country that doesn't even have it's own natural resources. We need to get the expertise and the economic backbone to do anything...to do that we need a strong central government, I think it's too late now.

Yeah, I think it is too.

P. DOROTHY WHAT DIRECTION WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE THE COUNTRY GO IN THE NEXT TEN YEARS?

I just don't like this agreement with the United States. I don't like being a part of OAS with the South American countries. Then they come up with this Mexican thing. I think that if we just had free trade with the United States it would be fine, but I think this was in the books all the time and we were never told about it.

P. ARE YOU SAYING THAT WE SHOULD BE MORE AND MORE PROTECTIONIST AND LESS AND LESS TRADING?

No, I'm not saying that. I'm saying I think we could have done it on our own.

I would agree.

If we had gone a different route a few years ago, I can remember thinking when I was growing up, this is going to be the country of the next century. Now we've just sold ourselves right down the river.

I think we can do it though, there's this thing about learned helplessness. We really don't know how to negotiate business deals so we give them the money to buy our companies like the big pulp mill in Saskatchewan. They gave them the money to buy it then they gave it to them at a reduced rate and then they said they didn't have to pay taxes on it. It was the people that let them do that.

I think what we have to do is look at what we've got that other people want. We've got grain, there's lots of countries in the world that want grain and there's lots of starving countries in

the world. We could sign agreements, we dump some of it now and that is wasteful, it makes Canada look bad and people here know that too, besides that it's starving our farmers. We've got to assess what we've got and what the world wants. Canada can play a really big role but we've under played ourselves. No, we shouldn't be isolationist, I think we have the expertise to go ahead.

Q. WHAT OTHER SORTS OF THINGS DO WE HAVE TO DO?

We have to assess ourselves and our strengths.

P. WHO DO YOU THINK SHOULD DO THAT?

An economist who's not an American. They have no respect for us.

Q. WHAT SORTS OF THINGS DO WE HAVE TO DO OVER THE NEXT PERIOD OF TIME WHEN YOU TALK ABOUT BEING INTERNATIONAL AND DOING THINGS LIKE THAT, WHAT DO WE HAVE TO DO?

I think education is going to be a very, very big part. Education is a big, big lack in Canada.

P. WHAT KIND OF EDUCATION?

In any field, right now they keep talking about high tech. The whole world doesn't run on high tech, we still need women to make dresses, to make shoes...

P. SO YOU MEAN JOB TRAINING AND THINGS LIKE THAT?

Everything. I think the basic schooling system should change from the base up. I don't see why kids have to go for 13 years to school and learn less than European kids who have been in school for six years.

I agree with you.

Umm hmm.

Yeah, because the Australian school system is the same as the British. The school system here is just a joke.

Maybe they should be more encouraged into other trades sooner instead of everybody wanting to be a professional or a computer operator or...

A carpenter can earn as much as a professional...

Oh, I know. They can't find brick layers to build houses...

Q. A LOT OF THE STUFF WE'VE TALKED ABOUT TONIGHT TALKS ABOUT COMPETITION AND BEING MORE COMPETITIVE, WHEN YOU TALK ABOUT JOB TRAINING AND RESEARCH I HEAR THAT THERE ARE SOME BASIC THINGS THAT WE NEED CAN WE COMPETE INTERNATIONALLY?

Not at the moment.

We don't have the morals for it. The Canadian moral is six hours a day five days a week, let's go up north with two 24's and a 40oz'er, the hell with the rest of the world. That's not the way the rest of the world thinks.

P. THE WORK ETHIC?

The work ethic and everything, we've got to change and it starts in grade one.

I agree with you.

P. WHAT OTHER THINGS DO WE NEED TO DO, A LOT OF PEOPLE TALK ABOUT COMPETITION BUT DO WE DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT?

Competition is such a good thing but when it comes down to it you've got one winner and a bunch of losers. That's what you get when you have competition. I think when you're talking trade and competition, the word fair should go in between, fair competition, fair trade not free trade.

P. WHAT DOES THE WORD COMPETITIVE MEAN TO YOU?

It means a wheeler, a winner, and a bunch of people that are runners up. We will always, with this mentality, be the runners up. We don't have the political will because we don't have the political leadership. We don't have the knowledge to vote for somebody that's just giving us a slick, we vote for the people that give us the slickest line.

P. DO YOU THINK WE'D BE LOSERS IN EVERY SECTOR OF THE ECONOMY THAT WE ENTER IN TO?

Not if we exported snow and ice.

P. IN NEW YORK THEY'RE PRETTY ALARMED BY HOW WELL OUR REAL ESTATE AND INVESTMENT AGENTS DO?

They're just Canadian guys using American money to buy and sell American real estate.

It's not working to our benefit, it's not coming into your pocket or my pocket unless they build. In which case, it's all being controlled out of the States even though they are in the Canadian name.

P. DO YOU THINK THERE ARE SOME THINGS THAT WE COULD BE THINKING ABOUT IN THE NEXT TEN YEARS?

A person with no sense of history is bound to make the same stupid mistakes all over again.

Q. IF I TURN TO YOU TOMORROW AND SAY HERE IS A GROUP OF PEOPLE WHO CAN CHANGE THINGS IN CANADA, I'VE JUST APPOINTED YOU BIG FANCY TRADE JOBS WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO FOR THE NEXT TEN YEARS?

Change the mentality.

Lower the prices of everything to start with. It's so crazy, you can't even go to the gas station to fill up your tank. Lower the prices and take away some of the taxes.

My plan is to make the taxes more fair and the government should put their money in places that it's needed instead of bailing out big companies.

I would put money into the education system right at the grass roots, turn this education system around and get these kids literate by the time they are five years old. They start school too late, their ideas are too firmly set.

I suppose I would find out what we could export. I would get some experts to do some research about what we have in Canada and what we could trade.

I agree over there. Change the schooling system then take the government and put them on a big boat and throw them into the Atlantic. Then put in a new government that can do with 30 percent of the people they've got now and get them working.

Q.SO IF WE DO ALL THAT IN TEN YEARS ARE WE GOING TO GET OUT OF THIS SITUATION?

I think we've done what we said. The Conservatives in the last election said they were going to encourage small business, I think that would be a good thing...

But they haven't done it, they've stifled small business.

P. DO YOU THINK WE'RE PREPARED FOR COMPETITIVENESS?

Where I come from, we're farmers from way back to the civil war days, of course we're prepared for it, it's in our blood and it's in our bones. We can do it as well as the States but we have to believe in ourselves. We have to attract people that believe in what Canadians can do.

Q. IF WE WERE TO HAVE A GREATER FOCUS ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND WE WERE DOING THAT RIGHT NOW, WHAT KIND OF IMPACT WOULD THAT MEAN AND WHAT DO YOU THINK WE'D HAVE TO DO ABOUT IT?

Put Brian on the boat.

I think that if we're going to concentrate on our resources and work them properly we are already 75 percent home. Why are we shipping over to Japan? They are going to ship us the steel back, why? Are we too stupid to put a couple of smelters up here?

P. SO YOU'RE SAYING THAT THE PLACE TO START LOOKING FOR DEVELOPING INDUSTRY AND TRADE IS CLOSE TO THE NATURAL RESOURCES THAT WE ALREADY HAVE?

Right. Take the natural resources and make them work for this country.

It has to be managed very carefully though because with the climate the way it is we're not going to have any natural resources left. It's like the person who hasn't got any friends and he thinks he can buy his friends. We give things away in the hope that we will get a crumb or two back in recognition. We've got to lose that mentality before we can do anything.

I agree with everyone but I just don't think we have a chance against the United States. We have to become more independent, we have to build our own factories. I think we shouldn't be so greedy too, I'm going back to my childhood again, we didn't have fruits and vegetables in the winter, we don't need to import all that stuff. I'm just thinking do we really have to import so much from the United States?

P. I THINK YOU'VE GOT A GOOD POINT THERE, MAYBE WE ARE CAPABLE OF DOING A LOT BUT MAYBE WE HAVE TO DO SOME THINGS TO DO IT BETTER.

I think we have to sacrifice something. I think we are too spoiled.

P. WHAT DO YOU THINK WE SHOULD SACRIFICE?

Well, that's a good question.

I think she's right. It's not simple. I think we have to ... there's a difference between our needs and our wants.

I think we're in a very unfortunate position as far as television goes. I think we are about the only country in the world that is so influenced by another country's television. We see so much of the wealthy people in the States that it's disappointing.

Q. WHO DO YOU THINK OVER THE NEXT PERIOD OF TIME CAN PLAY THE MOST POSITIVE ROLE IF WE WERE TO BECOME MORE INTERNATIONALLY COMPETITIVE BUSINESS, GOVERNMENT, INDIVIDUAL WORKERS, ACADEMICS?

It's a package, you can't blame any one group. It's a package of everything.

We have to work together.

The whole attitude has got to change, they've got to start working hand in hand.

You can't educate yourself when you are trying to do it. We have to take the time, call it isolationist if you like, but we are politically behind other nations. We're economically naive and as a trading partner we're just a gem, everyone wants to trade with us, we give things away. We've got to isolate ourselves, look at our faults and then look at where it can be fixed. It's got to be us, the peasants if you will, we have to live under whatever decisions are made and therefore, we should be making the decisions.

Q. WHEN YOU LOOK AT THE GOVERNMENT NOW, SAY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT OR THE PROVINCES, IS THERE A PLAN, ARE THERE PIECES IN PLACE FOR INTERNATIONAL TRADE, DO YOU SEE A STRATEGY?

Not to our benefit.

P. IS THE GST, THE CHANGES IN UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE OR ANY OF THOSE THINGS RELATED TO MAKING US MORE COMPETITIVE?

Let's go back to the old system. In Russia they've got a good system, if you don't want to work you don't have to eat. I agree with that philosophy but when you get in your 60's, you have worked for 50 years, it's time that you sit down now, you've earned it.

What about the people that skip the border for eight months and come back for four months just so that they can pay their OHIP...

P. SO OUR SOCIAL PROGRAMS ARE TOO GOOD WE SHOULD CUT THEM BACK?

We should put them in the right place.

I think you have to streamline them, I don't think you have to cut them.

The administrative waste is beyond belief...

P. AND HOW DOES THIS RELATE BACK TO INTERNATIONAL TRADE?

If we've got more money and less taxes we're on an economically viable footing where we can possibly have some impact with free trade. We can't right now, there's too much internal mess.

This is one of the things the United States doesn't like about Canada. They say that we have

an unfair advantage.

P. WOULD THERE HAVE BEEN A BETTER COUNTRY FOR US TO DO FREE TRADE WITH? SHOULD WE HAVE HAD FREE TRADE WITH JAPAN INSTEAD?

They always had isolationist policies, they just sat back and learned. I don't see what's so bad about doing that. You can't go from grade 3 to grade 13 and then skip into the second year of a humanities program in university, that's what we've tried to do. We haven't taken those steps, and that is the problem.

P. SO YOU'RE SAYING YOU THINK WE SHOULD BE ISOLATED FOR A WHILE BEFORE WE BECOME TRADERS?

That's right. Our priorities have to be very firmly established and the knowledge of how to pursue them has to be firmly established. We're open to abuse.

One thing we found out when we started dealing with the States is that they have a lot of protectionist policies. They had a lot of those in place before we even entered into the agreement and there's others that they put in place after they entered into free trade.

P. ARE THERE COUNTRIES THAT WE WOULD BE SAFER WITH, WOULD WE BE SAFER TRADING WITH THE ECONOMIC COMMUNITY OF EUROPE...

...we were over 40 percent dependent on the States for our trade prior to free trade. This was the dumbest thing that we could have done.

Q. WHY IS THE GOVERNMENT MOVING TOWARDS AN INCREASED FOCUS ON TRADE?

I think there's some personal motives in there. I think somebody is getting rich behind the scenes. Who cares about Canadians when you're 50 and you've got 50 billion dollars in the bank. You can go with that money around the whole world and establish yourself.

P. SO YOU THINK IT'S FOR PERSONAL MOTIVES. DO ANY OF YOU THINK IT'S BEING DONE JUST IN RESPONSE TO THE CHANGING WORLD SITUATION?

No, if that were the case they should start by cleaning up their own mess within the country.

I'm sure they see the European countries forming a trade bloc. If we don't form a trade bloc then we're going to be left out. I think one thing that hasn't been properly looked at is that there is one law in the States that has never been taken off the books. I think that this could be one of the motives in the States to enter into free trade with Canada and Mexico, and that's manifest destiny. They're getting us damn cheap, aren't they.

P. WHAT COUNTRY WOULD HAVE BEEN BETTER TO FORM A TRADE BLOC WITH?

That's something we should have looked at a little more carefully. Why is it so important that we be a member of a bloc, period. There have been trading blocs throughout history, if you look at the middle class, there isn't one of them that has ever lasted.

Q. IF YOU WANTED TO GET SOME INFORMATION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE, WHAT KIND OF INFORMATION WOULD YOU WANT AND WHERE WOULD YOU THINK YOU SHOULD GET IT?

Anybody who knows what the hell they are talking about. I don't know who that is because I probably would have gone to them already.

P. DOES ANYBODY REALLY KNOW WHAT THEY'RE TALKING ABOUT WHEN IT COMES TO THIS? WHO WOULD YOU TRUST?

I would trust more than one.

I don't trust the government, that's for sure. Who else are you supposed to trust if you can't even trust your own government?

P. HOW ABOUT BUSINESS PEOPLE?

No, they're just like everybody else, trying to make money.

They're all on the big welfare state, take with our government, the big ones.

I would say the small independent business person where the boss is still running around, and does an honest days work for an honest days pay.

Q. TONIGHT WE TALKED ABOUT TRADE, COMPETITIVENESS AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE, ANY CLOSING THOUGHTS?

I learned lots here.

I think we first have to put the proper schooling system in place, get proper work ethics. When we get that in place, let's start talking about trade.

You can't build a house on a shaky foundation or it will collapse.

I agree. I certainly think we went the wrong route many years ago by not building up our own businesses, by selling out to the United States in so many ways. I don't know how we can make it right. I'm very depressed about the future.

I was reminded here that the whole thing is about competition and the government is always saying we can't compete. They're letting people go belly up and not helping them yet they want to get involved in free trade. I think it's just one big lie, I think we're being lied to hook, line, and sinker. I think we can compete, we've got the resources and we've got the smarts, we've just got to believe in ourselves.

Too naive and unsophisticated internationally and globally in the marketplace. We've got to learn to do it within ourselves first.

We can build our economy but not compete against the States, that's a different thing.

P. WHO CAN WE COMPETE AGAINST?

Other things like...

(End)

Trade Focus Groups - Vancouver
April 19, 1990

INTRODUCTIONS:

Don, I'm a substitute teacher. I also work part time at the post office. I read a lot and I like to go for long walks. I moved to Vancouver two years ago so I don't know the city very well.

Michael, I work for Employment and Immigration. I've been here 19 years and my hobbies are skiing, reading, travelling and that's about it.

Russ, I'm a student taking a typing course. I've been trying to get work for the past three years and have not been too lucky with it so I'm changing my career goals. My hobbies are swimming and music.

Barbara, I'm a secretary. I have two children and my husband is Mr. Mom. I garden and have fun with the kids. I enjoy working, I work for an architect group which I find very interesting. I've been in Vancouver I guess for about 25 years, I'm from back east and this is home now.

Teresa, I've lived in Vancouver most of my life. I work for Employment and Immigration also but for Collections. I deal with UIC fraud mostly. I enjoy rock climbing, skiing, hiking and a variety of outdoor activities. I also play the piano.

Cory, I'm a student at UBC studying international relations. I am just finishing finals right now. When I'm not studying I'm outside playing tennis. I play the saxophone in a band and that's pretty much all there is.

Robert, I'm certainly the most ancient here. I'm a retired lawyer and I am interested in international affairs. I follow the cable news network, Newsworld and channel 9 on TV. I'm trying to find a new career because in retirement I find that it's hard to find something useful and constructive to do. It's deadly sitting home. Another thing you find when you are retired is that your pension income is fixed but inflation keeps going up.

Paul, I'm a manager of a manufacturing facility. I'm a native of Vancouver, I don't know if there's any other natives here. I like the outdoors particularly fishing.

Laurie, I'm also a native born Vancouverite. I work with ICDC as a programmer/analyst, that's my second full blown career. The first was way back when I graduated from UBC in chemical engineering. More recently I took computer systems technology at BCIT. I enjoy curling and golf which keeps me busy year round plus I have a wife and three daughters.

Pat, I'm a native daughter of Vancouver. I'm a widow and retired. I've lived most of my life in Vancouver but have lived in Ontario and Quebec. I golf and I am interested in international affairs.

Laura, I'm a receptionist at a travel agency. I was born in Montreal but I've been here 11 years. In my spare time I work as a volunteer. I work at a youth detention centre and I help feed poor people on Graham Street.

Q. WHEN YOU THINK OF YOUR HOMES, YOUR FAMILIES, YOUR JOBS, YOUR COMMUNITY, VANCOUVER, WHAT ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT ECONOMIC ISSUES YOU'LL BE FACING IN THE NEXT TWO TO THREE YEARS?

Housing, I would say that housing is a major problem.

P. FOR YOU OR IN THE COMMUNITY?

In the community, I would say.

It is for me personally. I bought real estate at Whistler years ago, in '81 before the crash, with the high prices, high interest rates so we lost our investment. Being part of that group, I haven't recovered or bought at the right time. Now at this high level of housing, with the GST coming up that will make it worse for me as a single person. I would say that housing per se or buying real estate is out of the question. We're looking at renting, it keeps going up as well.

I just finished paying off a twenty-five year mortgage. I'm just looking down the road making sure that my retirement income doesn't get eaten up too quickly by inflation.

I'm not sure who controls the campus housing market but housing just went up 20 percent.

P. WHAT DO YOU THINK ARE THE ECONOMIC ISSUES FACING VANCOUVER IN THE NEXT COUPLE OF YEARS?

There's a lot of business between Vancouver and Seattle. Vancouver is a big port so how is free trade going to affect us? I'm sure free trade is going to affect exporting and importing.

P. DO YOU THINK IT'S GOING TO BE BETTER OR...

I'm not sure. I haven't heard that much about it.

Well, on a broad scale, the problem facing all of the western hemisphere is the increasing amount of national deficits. How are countries like Canada, the US, Britain and France able to pay them off?

My biggest issue is housing. I live with another girl and we're living in a two bedroom apartment. The place is just ridiculous, it's at the point where we can't afford it.

Q. LOOKING AHEAD TO THE NEXT TWO OR THREE YEARS DO YOU THINK THAT YOU AND YOUR FAMILY WILL BE BETTER OFF FINANCIALLY, WORSE OFF OR ABOUT THE SAME?

I think we're going to be worse off because every time you go shopping you see how much groceries have gone up. For instance, I just bought a few potatoes in a 10 pound bag and you pay over six dollars and you see how much bread and milk have increased. I rent an apartment and they just gave me a \$100 increase, your wages don't go up accordingly.

It really depends on your position today. Personally I think I'll be better off but I'm very concerned that my children will follow behind me. I have a 21 year old daughter paying very high rent. I think that as a country we are in a house of cards and I agree with Robert about what's happening with the huge deficit. The interest rates continue to go up to ensure that foreigners will carry our debt, that's going to put us further in debt. I really think that we're heading for a recession. People have been talking about a recession for some time but I really believe that in '91 we're going to have one.

Do you think it will be good for the country?

The recession, of course not.

Our population is getting older and older, therefore, we are looking at further strain on government for medical costs and things of that nature.

P. DON, WHERE DO YOU THINK THE ECONOMIC FUTURE IS GOING FOR YOUR FAMILY OR FOR VANCOUVER?

Well, for myself it's getting a whole heck of a lot better than last year. But you know I'm in the same boat, I appreciate the fact that the housing prices in Vancouver are obscene, that's kind of a personal thing. I don't think that I'm concerned about the national debt, I sense some really interesting things happening around in that people are starting to become aware of the disparity between the people that do have a lot of money and are very comfortable and those people who don't. The disparity is becoming more noticeable as more and more women and young people are relegated to the service sector jobs and have no way of getting out of those kind of economic binds. I guess the other side are the people who would have professions. I think it will continue to get better for them so for me it's the disparity. I think that as the Canadian government becomes more and more in debt, you have to look at who it's in debt to. It's in debt to large private things so I think we should maybe nationalize things, change who owns what. I'd like to see the disparity change.

Q. PAT, I'M FROM WINNIPEG, I DON'T COME OUT TO THE COAST NEARLY AS OFTEN AS I WOULD LIKE, IF I COME BACK TO VANCOUVER THREE YEARS FROM NOW WHAT WILL I FIND, WILL THE CITY STILL BE GROWING, GROWING, GROWING...?

Yes, I think so. I think it's really like your California of Canada. I think the growth is going to be continuous for quite a long time.

P. WHAT'S DRIVING THE GROWTH, WHAT'S GOING TO BE KEEPING IT GOING?

Climate is part of it.

Also, it's the new influx of money because a lot of people...

From Hong Kong.

If that stopped everything could just go kapupple. But I don't see it going that way because too many people want to live here. I really think Vancouver is going to become an immensely large city. And tourism.

P. TOURISM IS ALSO DRIVING THIS GROWTH?

Yeah, ever since Expo, that has put us on the map. I've been here for 19 years. When I first stepped in Vancouver I was thinking there were no restaurants, no choice, no clothing, no fashion and now I've seen it blooming over the years. The prices have bloomed as well but...

Vancouver used to be at least six months behind Montreal in fashion but it isn't now. I would say they might even be marching toe to toe.

P. SO WE'VE HEARD FROM SOME PEOPLE WHO THINK THAT VANCOUVER IS GOING TO CONTINUE ON AN UPWARD AND IMPROVING ECONOMIC CLINE, ARE THERE PEOPLE AROUND THE TABLE WHO THINK THAT IT MIGHT BE STAYING THE SAME OR GOING IN A DOWNHILL DIRECTION OVER THE NEXT THREE YEARS?

No, keep going up.

I think business-wise it's going to go up. They're considering new types of businesses for British Columbia.

Like what.

Well, I know they talked about putting a car factory out here instead of always having them back east.

It also depends on the next provincial election. I would think that depending on who gets in, it may scare off a lot of people if there are any changes in the way the province is run. It's very business-oriented right now and if there was a change in government I think that maybe we wouldn't see foreign investment.

You mean if the NDP got in.

Well, that's right, we only have two choices.

If they got in, I think they would tip-toe a little bit compared to last time.

I think they'd be a lot more mellow.

They'd have to be.

I disagree. I don't think it will make a bit of difference.

I think that's true because the NDP wouldn't conduct themselves the way they did in the 70's.

I don't think it would make a tiny bit of difference, it doesn't matter who comes into power.

I think it would because in Quebec it did...

A change is always as good as a rest.

Whenever there's a change in policies with the government, investments fluctuate.

That's true but you're not going to notice a big difference like you did seven years ago. There's not going to be a drastic change. They're not that far apart anymore.

Well, with the wonderful privatization of the Social Credit government, believe me I'm not necessarily an NDP person, but you know they've sold off all the assets of this and we're supposed to congratulate them on that. We almost need to have somebody build some assets for us again so we'll make a come-back.

Q. JUST TO REDIRECT HERE A LITTLE BIT, WHAT IF I LEFT THE COUNTRY FOR THREE YEARS AND THEN I CAME BACK TO CANADA IN 1993, WHAT WILL HAVE HAPPENED ECONOMICALLY IN THE INTERVENING THREE YEARS?

If Meech Lake doesn't succeed, I somehow think it will, there'll be a settlement. If it doesn't and if Quebec separates then I think English-speaking Canada will eventually become part of the United States.

French Canadians will not succeed from Canada, they will not.

I don't think so either but it could happen.

I have two grandsons that are French Canadian, they're bilingual. I have one that was raised in Vancouver, he's not bilingual but he's becoming bilingual. There's nothing wrong with it.

Just to finish what I was saying, a professor at one of the eastern universities thinks that Canada will split up. The Maritimes will become an American state, Quebec will be a separate

country, Ontario will be a separate state and the western provinces will become one state.

Interesting but one man's opinion.

P. TERESA, WHERE DO YOU THINK THE ECONOMY OF CANADA IS GOING TO BE THREE YEARS FROM NOW?

I think that if we can get our deficit in control we will be a lot better off, if we start tightening the reins a little bit. I don't know if the GST is a great way of going about it but spending wildly has to stop. I've managed to balance my budget, I think they should start doing the same. I think we've got some serious problems in the world like over-population. These problems don't have easy answers that lead to economic dilemma but...

P. DOES ANYONE ELSE WANT TO TAKE A CRACK AT AN ECONOMIC FORECAST FOR CANADA THREE YEARS FROM NOW?

Ok, we've already determined that Vancouver is going to be the growth centre. I think Canadians have got to start taking a little more pride in themselves. I think they've got to stop the free handouts, give me, give me, give me. They've got to produce and they've got to fight for their own selves. I think that would help a lot with the deficit, if they would start to fight. After the war we started getting a lot of welfare and a lot of money handed to people, they got lazy and they sat back. They expected a lot to be given to them. I think that once Canadians start to fight for themselves they can get a lot further. I guess I really believe in free enterprise.

P. I APPRECIATE YOUR POINT BARBARA BUT YOU DIDN'T ANSWER MY QUESTION, IN THREE YEARS WILL WE BE BETTER OFF, WORSE OR ABOUT THE SAME?

I think we're going to be forced to be better off. With money coming in from free trade with the States, people are already upset about it, I think it's going to force Canada to produce a good product that's going to be sellable world-wide. I think in this regard, they're going to start saying ok, I have to. You're starting to see a lot more manufacturers producing a good product. I mean, I used to go shopping and people would say buy Canadian, buy Canadian and I'd say why, I don't want second rate merchandise.

I don't think Canadians produce poor merchandise.

Neither do I.

I mean textiles...

No, I think they're the best.

Well, I guess it's just a difference of opinion. Over the last five years, it has gotten a lot better but...

I think our social programs could be criticized for this but we go overboard in dealing with UIC. I see abuse first hand and we've got to start controlling programs much more than we do. I think that would help.

What do you mean by that exactly?

You know, the abuse, the people who are collecting that should not be, that has got to stop.

You mean people who are working on the side and collecting at the same time?

Different scenarios like that. I think it goes back to Barbara's sort of philosophy of having pride and not being the sort of person that wants to do that. Just sitting at home because you can receive a cheque and not actually going out and seeking employment. I think it's better to work for a lower wage and work your way up. I have the feeling that sometimes young people don't have that attitude.

Do you not agree though that the wage should be adequate so a person can put a roof over their head?

Oh, absolutely.

Do you think that our minimum wage does that for everybody?

No, but I see that you can be sponsored through programs. If you have a will to go through the program, it will give you an adequate wage and you can work your way up.

P. I THINK I'D LIKE TO REDIRECT HERE...

I have a comment that's not about that. I was going to say that if you come back in three years the biggest difference that you would see is a stronger dollar because of the influx of money that we've had. Also all the different people that have moved here, they've started up a lot of little businesses that may only have ten employees but it's going to give a boost to our economy. I also think you're going to see a greater variety of goods and merchandise.

P. ANY OTHER COMMENTS ABOUT THE ECONOMIC FUTURE OF THE COUNTRY?

I think we have a big dependency on the national debt. I think that at least half of our tax dollars that go into the federal coffers, go out to pay the national debt off, just to keep even. If we want to bring it down there's going to have to be some drastic cost-cutting. The answer depends on how they head in that direction.

I think there's a good chance that we are going to be in economic dire straits. The government expenditures for programs is in fact less than they take in in taxes. Therefore, the real problem with the debt is the interest on the debt itself, over 35 billion a year. The GST will scratch the surface of that but it's still going to continue to increase unless the government starts to cut back on programs. Somebody talked earlier about having pride in being a Canadian and not having your hand out in certain areas, nobody is going to voluntarily pull their hand back for whatever reason and from whatever program they're on. They're going to have to be forced and the time will be when the government says we really do have to get a handle on this debt. Two or three years down the road they're going to be forced to cut programs.

I don't think it's so much the people with their hand out...

That may not be the right way to say it. There probably aren't a lot of fraudulent claims but I know a lot of people who quit perfectly good jobs, go down to UIC, fabricate a story and collect benefits for 52 weeks.

I think what they have to do is re-evaluate the whole tax situation. I can't say from experience but my feeling is that corporations get away with murder, the money that they save. I know people that are in business, my brother-in-law for instance works as a skipper on a tug, he makes \$70 thousand dollars a year and pays over \$30 thousand dollars in tax. I know another guy who's a businessman and he paid maybe half that and he made double or triple the money that my brother-in-law did.

Q. I'D LIKE TO POSE ANOTHER QUESTION TO THE GROUP IF I MIGHT, LOOKING BEYOND THE CANADIAN BORDER AND INTO THE INTERNATIONAL SCENE, IT'S NOT BEEN STATIC IN THE LAST TWELVE MONTHS, THERE'S BEEN A LOT OF DIFFERENT INTERNATIONAL CHANGES AND DEVELOPMENTS, DO YOU SEE ANYTHING THAT HAS BEEN HAPPENING IN A GLOBAL SENSE HAVING AN IMPACT ON THE CANADIAN ECONOMY?

What I see is the unrest in Eastern Europe, the breakup of the Warsaw Pact, and the rebellion of many of the socialist Soviet Republics. I'm an older man, I was in the air force, and what concerns me particularly is the reunification of East and West Germany. Are we looking to World War 3?

Economically speaking, I think we have to be scared now that Europe is breaking apart. I was there two years ago, my first trip to Europe. Spain has been liberated a few years back from France. They joined the common market so now they're getting stronger, their dollar was equal to ours in 87, and they're starting to produce quality products which they couldn't before. We're going to start seeing that happening in the eastern community. We're stuck in North America here, there was a demand for our products in those countries but as those countries try to become self-sufficient in everything, including agriculture, we're going to be worse off in three years.

P. SO YOU SEE MARKETS DRYING UP OVER THE NEXT FEW YEARS?

Yeah.

I think that's why Canada is trying to adapt now. Canada is changing and they realize that it's not just our goods but services and technology. We're training these other countries that want this technology to develop their countries, I know that's one aspect that's being worked on now.

I agree with Wes. I think there will be new marketing opportunities. The eastern bloc, they're not really players of any significance right now, so if anything it should be a plus.

I think that we're going to have to produce a better product, cheaper, find new ways of marketing or re-thinking our old export/import focus.

Just thinking about Germany and Japan, they came up from the depths of defeat, just laid waste and they're beating us out economically. In the western world, labour and management is always in conflict, fighting each other. The Japanese and German attitude is that labour and management work together.

In Japan, what I've seen on TV is that when you work for big companies, big corporations and even work for a lesser wage, they rent you a suite to live in. Therefore, your wage is comparable with the economic situation and controls prices a little bit, that way the company can make more.

P. DO YOU SEE ANY IMPACT FOR VANCOUVER SPECIFICALLY WITH THE CHANGING WORLD SITUATION, ANY OPPORTUNITIES OR THREATS FOR BUSINESSES SPECIFIC TO THIS REGION?

I think a lot of people are waiting to see what's happening in Hong Kong. I think in '91 when that happens you're going to see a big change. Right now we've got a lot of Asian people coming here, getting their money out. The climate here is good and half of Vancouver seems to be owned by Orientals in one form or another. If Hong Kong settles down and it's going to be ok then a lot of people will stay there. But if it goes into China then I think a lot of people will come here first.

Well, it is going over to China. I don't think it's such a bad thing though. I think that if the Chinese government is smart they will really try to keep the business and investment in Hong Kong, to keep Hong Kong viable. I think that Vancouver, BC or Canada as a whole will still be a producer of raw materials so that China is a market now and will continue to be a market. Even after the Tianamen Square incident and that whole thing we continued to trade quietly.

Yeah, but things got awfully quiet here for about three months.

Yeah, but when you think about it, how long is three months. It's a very short time. Business is business, people will say ok, that was unfortunate but that was last year, let's just go on. I think that when Russia invaded Afghanistan the world was more outraged.

I think you're mistaken because I've talked to one fellow from Hong Kong. He's an accountant. He and his wife and his whole family work in Vancouver because he says the lifestyle is going to change. Even though China has promised that once they take things over they will try to keep things at the status quo, the stability is not there. So a lot of money is being pulled out and Vancouver is becoming a major finance centre. I think that's one of the big changes that is coming.

Q. WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT WHEN PEOPLE TALK ABOUT INTERNATIONAL TRADE?

I think it's fascinating but I don't think Canada has a lot of cards in it's hands because it comes down to our economy again. We just aren't strong enough. Our best bet is to sell out. When it comes down to trading we have natural resources, we can trade that out but eventually we're going to run out. We don't produce enough.

But that is being negotiated. I know Japan, they export more than they import, it's always been that way but now they're changing because of the negotiations that both Canada and the United States have with them. For the first time, Canada, instead of just shipping raw lumber to Japan which we've always done, they're now having finished goods being done in Canada. That's one thing that's going to slowly change.

Q. WHEN YOU LOOK AHEAD INTO THE NINETIES AND YOU THINK ABOUT INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND CANADA WHAT DO YOU THINK ARE THE KEY ISSUES WE'RE GOING TO FACE?

I think that we're going to have to keep pace world-wide in trade. I think we're going to have to produce and use our own resources. For example, I do know that we ship all manners and types of paper all over the world and that's something that could be well developed. Right here, our paper mills have to be shipping somewhere, so it is international trade, isn't it?

When I said that Canada doesn't produce good quality things, I was thinking of certain things in particular. But what does Canada produce?

P. GOOD QUESTION, I WAS GOING TO ASK THAT ONE LATER BUT GO AHEAD?

Textiles.

Paper.

Lumber. All kinds of lumber.

There are a lot of fashion things coming up in Vancouver. We're quite capable of producing leather.

Forestry and mining, so that would give you a good indication of what we produce.

Fishing used to be a viable industry but that's by the wayside now.

If free trade goes through I think we'll be reduced to what we originally produced, wood and water. Why make cars in Canada when you can make them in Detroit?

They don't make them in Detroit either. They make them in Mexico, Singapore and Thailand.

They have a city in Texas called McAllen. It started out with one little factory and the American government came and said you won't have to pay any tax provided that a certain amount of the labour is in the United States. They make all the parts in Mexico and then bring them in and somebody in the States puts the final thing together, that's the labour they require. They started with one factory and now there's about 60. It's about 60 miles from the Mexico-Texas border.

And all the employees are Mexican.

They do that not only because the labour is cheaper but also because they don't have the restrictions on waste materials that they have in the States. The hazardous waste and everything gets released. Mexico is thinking of cracking down now.

Well, I know that. It was about eight years ago, a company looked at coming to Vancouver to build a factory and they couldn't do it. The union troubles, they could not feasibly open a factory here, they wouldn't make any money.

One thing that I think is going to change all across Canada is the way labour and management work together. They're going to have to work together as a team.

That's happening now. It's changing across North America.

Yeah, but it's still...if you notice in Japan like I said, to me they work like a family. When you look in Canada now, I do not see anywhere where the manager is with the employee. He has his own separate office...

I disagree. They may have an office, a base from which they work, but there's all kinds of supervisors and managers that spend the day on the floor with the people...

Fundamentally, in North America and in Europe too, labour and management are at odds the whole time, fighting each other...

Yeah, but unionism is definitely on the decline. There's a better environment out there from my experience.

Q. IF INTERNATIONAL TRADE IS CHANGING AND THE COUNTRIES ARE JOINING MORE AND MORE IN BLOCS WHAT SHOULD CANADA'S ROLE BE IN THE NINETIES? SHOULD WE BE OUT THERE AGGRESSIVELY TRADING OR SHOULD WE BE...WILL WE JUST GET OUR NOSE BLOODIED, SHOULD WE JUST STAY HOME AND BECOME MORE SELF SUFFICIENT? SHOULD WE BE INWARD LOOKING OR OUTWARD LOOKING?

Outward.

Outward. We've got potential markets on the other side of the rim in China and Russia, which is about half the world's population right there. They're just starting to get going. They're just sleeping giants ready for the picking and we have the technology to go over and sell.

Send more people out to do more of it.

Exactly.

Right.

I think East and West Germany aren't a threat because the Europe of the 1990's is a trading bloc. It's going to become even more so with Euro-dollars and stuff like that. I think that Canada could do really well with China, Russia and one we haven't even mentioned, India...

Don't think that the European community doesn't have it's eye on China and Russia...

Oh yeah, but we have things to offer too. I think India and Africa is a market that we just don't consider. I think that if we manage our natural resources wisely we have grain and lumber to sell.

One thing that Canada has and has had for years and years is it's good name around the world. When people think of Americans they get hostile but when they think of Canadians we've got a very good name and...

For selling things?

It's just got a good image, Canada has a really fine image around the world...

I've talked to people and asked, "What is a Canadian?" and most people can't tell you. When you think of an American they say apple pie and all that stuff.

Q. IF WE'RE GEARING UP FOR MORE TRADE IN THE NINETIES IS IT GOING TO BE EASY OR HARD? LET'S NOT TALK ABOUT CANADA LET'S JUST TALK ABOUT THIS REGION BECAUSE IT'S EASIER FOR PEOPLE TO TALK ABOUT, IS IT GOING TO BE EASY OR HARD FOR VANCOUVER TO GET GEARED UP FOR INTERNATIONAL TRADE? WHAT ARE THE THREATS AND WHAT ARE THE OPPORTUNITIES?

It will be easier if Canadians really get self confident. The trouble with Canadians is that we are always playing second fiddle to the United States. The Australians don't, the Australians stand up to the Americans and tell them where to get off. The Americans take us for granted.

What does Canada have to do to make it's name in the market?

We have to educate people and teach them to fit into the world that we want to develop. To make them produce, to teach them to produce, to grow it, make it, produce it. And train them so that they have jobs that take them into those areas.

Q. A LOT OF PEOPLE TALK ABOUT CANADA BECOMING MORE COMPETITIVE IN WORLD MARKETS, WHAT DOES THE WORD COMPETITIVE IN THIS CONTEXT MEAN TO YOUR REGION?

Getting a bigger slice of the pie. To take advantage of opportunities that exist in other areas, open up businesses elsewhere.

Be more aggressive.

Taking a risk.

Specialize in what you're good at and promote that.

They also have to cut back because they can't have a fancy house just because they're in the business. They've got to have a conservative house built and put the money into the business.

I know Canadians with several businesses. For instance, buying steel. The steel companies, there is only one main place now, the others have gone broke, they've sold out, because it's cheaper to buy the steel south of the border and ship it up.

Why?

I don't know why, that's just what he told me.

The reason is probably to do with tariffs and free trade.

And labour costs.

That's what's happening to the wineries, they're shutting down. The vineyards are closing down because you can bring in wine from California by the truck load. No duties and bottle it here cheaper than you can make it here.

Maybe our industry doesn't deserve to survive.

I was reading an article out in the waiting room that suggested that there is a place for the small wineries that produce quality wines.

The cottage wineries are doing great.

There, there, competition, we find out what we're good at producing - small lots of really good varietal wine and we produce those here and sell them to a select market...

P. DOES BECOMING MORE COMPETITIVE HAVE ANY EFFECTS, WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS OF BECOMING MORE COMPETITIVE?

People lose their jobs.

P. IS THAT WHAT YOU THINK OF?

Well, yeah, that's what I see. I see the disparity between rich and poor and stuff...

I'm not sure that it necessarily means that.

If you're more competitive, if you're doing better, why aren't more people employed?

It's also underselling. If you undersell you have to cut costs. If you don't cut down the costs of the raw material, you cut down the costs of labour...

...there could be a hundred products out there all competing for the same market, it's the one with the quality that would most likely be bought, kept and reordered in the long run.

P. FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO AREN'T STUDENTS AND AREN'T RETIRED WOULD BECOMING MORE COMPETITIVE AND AN INCREASED FOCUS ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IMPACT YOU AND YOUR JOB PERSONALLY?

No.

I'm retired. I think Canadians have got to learn to work harder. I was in practice for 35

years, and I noticed every time a holiday came along, like if Thanksgiving was on a Tuesday, all your staff got Monday off. The Americans work on Monday, the same with Christmas, if it falls on a Wednesday your staff all expect Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday off as well.

P. DOES ANYBODY SEE THAT THEIR OWN JOBS WOULD CHANGE IN THE NINETIES IF WE FOCUSED HEAVILY ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE?

Mine would. I work for a corporate travel agency so we're flying people all over the place. ...they'd have to hire more people.

P. WHAT SHOULD WE BE DOING TO BE MORE COMPETITIVE?

Education. I know for myself it wasn't possible to go to university, although I would have liked to. There was no way I could have ever afforded it even if I took out a student loan. I think if it was more approachable people could get an education a lot easier.

I also think the big thing is to give students when they are in high school a goal, an aim towards something. Tell them what jobs are out there and what fields are going to be the future, not jobs that are being phased out. I know I went through a similar type program and the jobs that they tell you about, the figures they give you are not correct because the job market isn't stable. I know a couple of guys that are engineers and stuff for the railroad and they brought engineers from England and Scotland to work here because they couldn't fill the jobs here.

P. SO WE REALLY NEED SPECIFIC TECHNICAL TRAINING IN CERTAIN AREAS

Yeah.

That's the way I feel. We're in the age of instant communication and information and if you haven't got your finger on that pulse, retraining and upgrading constantly, within five years you're gone. You're by the wayside.

That's a good point. It's not just high school and university, it's ongoing. People have to be prepared to change and be open to learn new skills and to take retraining.

I will not allow myself to go one year without taking some kind of course, just for general upgrading or specific information.

P. WHAT OTHER SORTS OF THINGS DO WE WANT TO DO?

We have to become more open minded. I'm thinking of Hong Kong specifically. I moved here two years ago from Edmonton and I heard several racist comments there but here I have never heard more. Sitting on a bus listening to people talk about who their neighbours are and stuff like that, the thing is that as we become more of a world economy, we have to become more accepting and more open. The vision has to be more outward.

We have to learn to work together. I think that Canadians need to find their own identity. I think a lot of people are jealous of the Chinese and Italians and other races because they tend to work together and help each other whereas Canadians tend to forget everyone else.

Canadians have to decide as a country how they want to deal with the rest of the world, whether we want to export products either finished or raw or import more. We have to decide how we are going to deal with the economic market.

P. WHAT WOULD YOU DECIDE IF IT WAS YOUR DECISION?

I would go very nationalistic, sell Canada as a product. Tourism right now is our biggest asset, sell tourism as a product. Keep our products here, manufacture our products here, cut down on foreign investment, that's going to be really big soon. Canada has got to watch out for that, we have to do what the Americans did after the war - keep it Canadian.

P. DO YOU THINK AN INCREASED FOCUS ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE WOULD MEAN MORE FOREIGN INVESTMENT IN CANADA, LESS FOREIGN INVESTMENT OR ARE THEY NOT CONNECTED?

I think there will be more foreign investment in Canada. The market is going to be open, people are going to see what's here and they're going to buy it up. Some people are starting to realize that Canada's got a lot of good things...

Wouldn't it be nice if Canadians figured that out.

I would be nice if Canadians made sure that all their governing leaders, all their prime ministers and premiers and what have you were born in this country or at least educated here.

Like the Bank of BC, we set that up as a Canadian institution. It was bought out by the Bank of Hong Kong, people are going to be misled, they're going to believe it's the Bank of BC...

I don't see how you could be misled. It says right underneath your cheques, the Bank of Hong Kong.

Business people today think that to be competitive they need foreign investment. I don't know if that's true.

When the Bank of BC was sold there was more than one bid on the market. There should be a law or a government policy that says, it can only be sold to a Canadian company.

Like the Expo lands.

Well, that was a big mistake..

But if there were some rules and regulations that kept some of what we own Canadian...There's five branches that the Bank of Hong Kong owns now straight through to Toronto, five of them.

The Bank of Hong Kong is just going to take over Lloyds Bank.

Yeah. It's going to be another branch of the Bank of Hong Kong.

Well, the Bank of BC is just about going down the drain.

Yes, we know that but there was bidding going on and instead of taking the highest bid why don't we keep it...

P. WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT MICHELLE'S IDEA OF HAVING A FOREIGN INVESTMENT REVIEW AGENCY, FIRA, LIKE WE USED TO HAVE, IS THAT A THING OF THE PAST OR IS THAT GOING TO BE A THING OF THE FUTURE?

When the Conservatives came in curiously they completely reversed the FIRA, instead of being a federal government body to control investment in Canada and to keep it Canadian they went almost the other way around. When it was the FIRA it was like pulling teeth to get a US

company to set up in Canada.

Didn't FIRA stifle growth?

Yeah, but it kept it Canadian.

Is that important?

Well, that's what we're here to discuss, isn't it?

I don't know.

P. I WANT TO KNOW, IS IT IMPORTANT OR NOT, DO WE GO FOR CANADIAN OWNERSHIP OR...

It is important to restrain a little bit. We're talking banks here, we're talking banks that dominate the country. We're talking about a bank that is here today and tomorrow may be gobbling up another bank. Since the Royal Bank runs the country with the inflation rates and everything, I think I'd be scared.

I think the thing you have to look at as well is do you want people saying that Vancouver has become a major financial centre. When you talk about the VSE, people think it's a joke. They say this is just Mickey Mouse, and this is what has to be worked on. Everyone goes by the Toronto or New York stock exchange.

I think there should be regulations.

If you look around especially in Vancouver what is a Canadian, half the Canadians on my street are Chinese.

So they're Canadian. Some of them were born here. My husband, he was born here and he's a Canadian.

But what is a Canadian, what is it?

Foreign investment, like the bank takeovers. They're from Hong Kong, they're not Canadians yet, they will be because now they have...

So it's ok once they're Canadian citizens.

P. I THINK WE'RE CONFUSING IMMIGRATION AND WHERE THE PROFITS OF THE INVESTMENTS GO...

When a foreign company comes in and invests money don't you think that Canadians actually get some of the profit?

P. I DON'T KNOW, WHAT DO YOU THINK?

We're talking about jobs, we're talking about taxes, regardless of who owns it. Does it really matter who owns it with regards to which company is investing in our country. If Canadians are not prepared to make that investment, and that has always been the problem that we rely on the States and other countries to put up factories and plants. Of course, Canadians are benefitting.

I think that foreign investment on the whole is a good thing but there has to be a balance. We've got to keep our own identity and if our country is purchased, we lose that.

I don't think that companies coming in here and setting up shop are taking away from our identity.

It depends at what level you are talking about.

What is the Canadian identity? You keep talking about this Canadian identity, what is it?

It's the government policy...

I think that a lot of people just think about the money coming in and as long as it comes here and is profitable, pays the taxes and all that sort of thing. Broadly speaking, modern Canada is French and English speaking. When you talk about the immigration of individuals as well as the coming in of companies buying out companies. If the Chinese became the major political group in the country, they'd take over the government, it's as simple as that.

What would be so terrible about that?

Well, the people who are in control and run things get the benefits.

I just think that as long as our governing force is Canadian then international trade doesn't make a difference.

Q. WHAT KINDS OF PRODUCTS FROM THIS REGION SHOULD WE BE FOCUSING ON AND WHICH MARKETS SHOULD WE BE LOOKING AT?

Simply stated the things we know and do best: technology; forestry; mining...

That's something that's got to change too. We have to stop cutting down our trees and shipping them off somewhere. We have to start doing something with them, a secondary industry and then ship those products.

P. SO WHAT PRODUCTS, WHAT MARKETS?

Tourism to the richer countries of the world.

Health care, we have a lot of technology to go out there and help the developing countries.

But they don't have any money to pay for it.

Well, they will have to get the technology from someplace.

We can reproduce our textiles into goods, fashion goods. We can develop the market on the west coast.

Develop our science and research. If we can educate our people, if we can have the top scientists and the top ideas then pretty soon people will come to us with money and they'll ask us for our opinion.

Who are you going to sell it to?

Everybody is going to want it.

Yeah, and if we have the facilities here then our scientists won't have to go running down to the States to find research facilities. They will be encouraged to stay here.

Everyone I talk to knows about the Canada Arm. When I watched the launch and saw the Arm go out, I felt a little sense of pride even though I had nothing to do with it. It's Canadian.

What about the camera that can be put under water from Richmond. They are getting demand from overseas now because it was the first ever developed and it's been patented...quality product again.

Q. ...WHAT IS GOING TO BE THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT AND OF BUSINESS IN IMPLEMENTING OUR PLANS, WHO DOES WHAT?

The government already has that in effect...innovations, anybody with a unique idea can go to the government to get a grant to help develop it. It has to be approved, meet certain criteria and has to be self-sufficient within a given amount of years. That has been around for a few years and I think you will see more money being pumped through that channel to generate more unique things that are truly Canadian.

The government should be able to liaison between the people with the product. They should be able to see where there might be a market and make the contacts.

They're doing that with Russia right now. There was a contingent of businessmen who went there with some minister and they were going to tell the Russians what products they can sell - to promote Canadian products.

I think this probably all ties in with market targeting--finding out where the markets are for the products that we're good at producing.

I think an important role that the government will play is guiding the younger people into the job fields. The role of business will be to take these people and train them for the operations of the business. You look in the paper and they want somebody who's twenty years old with fifteen years experience, they should be willing to train people.

There is something right now given by economic services and it's job futures in the nineties. It's showing the trends, where people are going, what students should go in to. There's also the labour market services that go to the companies and discuss the retraining of their employees because it's no longer viable to follow something...go there for plant closure of the big mines and retrain them...so something is being done already.

P. WHAT OTHER THINGS ARE BEING DONE RIGHT NOW, WHAT OTHER GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES?

Isn't the Minister of Trade taking, or isn't it an open-ended invitation for all manufacturers to go on a one time tour of the country. I think we need more of that, we have to approach every manufacturing firm and apprise them of what they need...you know help every business while they can.

Trade shows, I guess.

Yeah, that's becoming more of a factor now in Canada.

Who hosted the environment conference?

P. ARE THEY SUBSIDIZING THINGS?

Yes.

P. WHAT KINDS OF THINGS?

A lot of money is being put into training, retraining.

Q. DO YOU SEE ANY LINK BETWEEN FREE TRADE AND THE GOVERNMENT GEARING UP FOR INTERNATIONAL TRADE OR ARE THOSE THINGS SEPARATE IN YOUR MIND?

They have to combine eventually if they aren't now.

I don't see any benefits so far, just from what I've seen on the news and that.

P. WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT INTERNATIONAL TRADE DO YOU THINK OF THAT AS SEPARATE FROM FREE TRADE OR IS THAT COMBINED?

They're linked.

P. HOW COME NOBODY SAID IT WHEN I ASKED ABOUT IT OPEN ENDED, THAT MAKES ME THINK THAT THEY'RE NOT?

Well, if you're going to become more competitive to penetrate American markets then that competitiveness should allow you to penetrate other markets.

I just figured you knew.

Q. WHAT ABOUT THE CHANGES THAT THEY MADE TO UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE, DO YOU THINK THAT'S RELATED TO TRADING OR NOT?

That hasn't passed yet. We got a memo at work today saying that it still hasn't passed through the Senate. It may just die.

P. IS THAT LINKED IN YOUR MIND TO TRADE OR DOES THAT SEEM TO BE SOMETHING VERY DIFFERENT?

I wouldn't have thought about it but it's trying to focus the labour which has got a lot to do with free trade.

Q. WHAT ABOUT THE GST, RELATED OR UNRELATED TO GETTING READY FOR INTERNATIONAL TRADE?

Related.

Very related.

Because it affects the costs of our merchandise. The manufacturers' taxes go down to 7% from 13%. We pay more taxes for services like haircuts and that. So that will lower the cost of our goods.

Initially, it should be a clear benefit to trade.

Don't you think they're heading towards no income tax. We'll pay tax on every ruddy thing we use?

P. BEFORE YOU WALKED INTO THIS ROOM DID YOU THINK OF GST AS LINKED TO TRADE OR SEPARATE?

Linked.

Oh, yeah, linked.

No, I thought it was separate.

I think of it as separate.

I think it's leading to the elimination of income tax. It has nothing to do with trade.

Q. WHAT DO YOU THINK WOULD BE THE MOTIVATING REASON FOR THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO BE INCREASING IT'S FOCUS ON TRADING?

They're hoping to export more than they import.

They're looking to be able to compete in the world-wide market.

We're a world-wide community, you've got to be good at it. The political nature, we have a Conservative government, the largest majority in Canadian history. The battle cry of the Tories from 1776 until now was no truck or trade to the Yankees and all of a sudden they've gone for free trade. Personally, I approve of free trade but I'm amazed the Conservatives thought of it.

P. WHY DID THEY DO IT?

That's a good question. I think in Mulroney you've got a leader, who I would say is a liberal. I think John Turner is conservative, that's the way I look at it. Mulroney has got that liberal outlook, he was a labour lawyer and always used to negotiate settlements. This is the way he looks across the border.

I see it as three markets. There's going to be Japan, Hong Kong and the entire seaboard, then there's going to be the European community and then North America. I think Canada opened to free trade with the Americans so that we were not bought out right away. We can have someone in our corner that can help fight with us and...

P. SO IT'S LIKE WE ARE MAKING A BLOC OF OUR OWN?

Exactly.

I don't think the federal government wants to be subsidizing any or many industries to make them competitive. They want them to be competitive on their own, not with subsidies from our tax money.

I think the government's focus on free enterprise doesn't necessarily mean that businesses should be on their own. It thinks that businesses as a whole are good for the country. I think that it thinks...the people that stand to gain the most from free trade, the most from world trade, are a few people who are already extremely wealthy. We as individuals stand to get through the next week, to put food on the table. We talk about how we have to limit our expectations and we're sort of trying to get around limiting our expectations while a few people make a great deal of money, and that's just the way it is. I know that I moralize about it and I don't like it but that is the way it is. I can't see any other way. So those people, the government, the Conservatives and the Social Credit government have always been seen as people who really, really want business and think of business more than individuals. They think of business more than social welfare or social legislation. For me, this was really interesting to think of, to orient myself to thinking of the GST as something reducing the business or manufacturing tax, making the product more competitive so that MacMillan-Blodell

can sell more, Ford Canada can sell more, etc. It's not going to make it better for me, it's going to make it better for the people who own Ford Canada and MacMillan-Blodell.

And for the people that work for them because they'll have continued employment.

...enough food on the table or to pay their rent.

...With or without free trade, if those companies aren't healthy, making a good profit, giving a good return to the shareholders then they go down the tubes...

Yeah, but I'm not a shareholder...

Well, why not?

Why not? Because I don't have the money.

No, but in the long run it will be good for the people. In the short run, the companies are going to benefit...in the long run the people will benefit.

Isn't Canada one of the largest countries, land wise, in the world.

Yes.

We have a population explosion in this world. Isn't it inevitable that we're going to have a greater population? Don't you think that we need some way of feeding these people? Don't you think that we have to develop our trade? We don't have a choice.

That's right.

Yeah.

Q. WHEN I MENTION THE TERM GLOBALIZATION, WHAT COMES TO YOUR MIND?

World-wide.

The whole picture of what a country represents, the global image that we represent.

Breaking down barriers, making us all partners in the world, common market.

Smaller world.

Q. WHAT IF I SAY THAT CANADA IS GOING GLOBAL? WHAT IMAGES COME TO MIND?

World-wide.

P. IS IT TRADE SPECIFIC OR COULD IT BE ANYTHING?

I think it's to be social and political...

Well, you can interpret it in different ways. I don't like the term myself.

P. WHY?

We're going global, something is missing, it's not specific enough. It's very generic, therefore, they will say what do they mean by that. Maybe they are using the term so that people can

ask, what do you mean by that, and then we explain to them we are doing this and that. I don't know about the term though if it's going to be used in a marketing plan.

Because it's generic, doesn't everybody relate to it fairly quickly then?

Do you think of generic as being a good product?

If they were to say that Canada is going global and then flash some pictures of INCO...

You see that's the problem, each one of us has a different idea about what it means. I think it means something about tourism, that they are trying to promote in Canada.

Q. WHAT DO YOU THINK OF WHEN I SAY PACIFIC RIM?

All the way around the Pacific Ocean.

Australia, New Zealand, Japan, China, Chile...

I always think of Asia...

Korea, Thailand and all those countries.

I'm relating it to the coast of North America. But when I think of Pacific Rim, it's more of the other side.

Q. WHAT ABOUT WHEN I SAY EUROPE 1992, WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

Olympics.

The common market.

The common market is what I was thinking.

Common currency.

Q. WHAT ABOUT WHEN I SAY MTN? DOES THAT MEAN ANYTHING?

Mountain, I don't know.

I usually think of telephones.

Q. HOW ABOUT URUGUAY ROUND?

...that's with trade. It's the most recently finished round of world negotiation type stuff...

What does MTN stand for?

P. I HAVE NO IDEA, IT'S JUST ON MY SHEET OF QUESTIONS TO ASK. WHAT ABOUT EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY, WHAT COMES TO MIND?

The common market.

Isn't it the ten countries that have the common market?

P. IS COMMON MARKET AND EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY EXACTLY INTERCHANGEABLE?

Yes.

I think so.

No, they're not...

P. WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE, ARE THERE SOME COUNTRIES THAT ARE IN ONE AND NOT IN THE OTHER?

Yes.

Yes.

What is good about people who are from a country in the common market - they can go to another country and work without a work permit. Also, the labour is interchangeable.

Q. AS YOU ALL KNOW THE FREE TRADE AGREEMENT HAS BEEN IN EFFECT SINCE THE BEGINNING OF 1989, WHAT DO YOU THINK OF IT SO FAR?

The only thing I've seen it affect is on the wine business. Other than that I'd say who knows.

Friends of mine that deal across the border are very unhappy because things are half the price down there. Where's the free trade?

...we're associating lay offs with free trade. Shirley Carr, a couple of months ago, was talking about the increasing detrimental effects of free trade. My friend's husband lost his job manufacturing doors because the company moved to the States so they wouldn't have to deal with the union anymore.

Is that tariffs or is that just the cost of labour?

My friend suggested that it was easier to move across the border and bring products back and manufacture them cheaper because of free trade.

P. SO IN YOUR MIND IT'S LINKED?

Oh, yeah.

I think one of the biggest things in the news that I've heard about is the fishing industry - how they think that all the fish are going to end up going across the border to be canned.

Q. SINCE THE FREE TRADE AGREEMENT HAS BEEN IN PLACE, DO YOU THINK THAT JOBS IN CANADA HAVE BEEN INCREASING OR DECREASING? OR STAYING THE SAME? OR NOT RELATED AT ALL?

Increasing in the service sector...the way it's going just a whole economic trend.

I've got no idea.

A decline in manufacturing, but I think that is only initially. Once we're more familiar with the free trade agreement it will increase again.

I think we tend to hear about the losses. We don't hear about the gains.

Q. DO YOU THINK THAT THE FREE TRADE AGREEMENT HAS HAD ANY EFFECT ON THE POWERS OF THE PROVINCIAL OR FEDERAL GOVERNMENT?

Not yet.

I don't see anything yet.

Not enough for the government to want to do anything.

I think we're in a lull before the storm.

Don't forget that the Free Trade Agreement has been given ten years before all tariffs are gone. 70 percent of all trade between the U.S. and Canada had no tariffs to begin with so we're only talking about 30 percent more.

Q. WHAT ARE GOING TO BE THE DIRECT IMPACTS OF FREE TRADE ON THE VANCOUVER REGION?

It should be a plus. Because of the lack of manufacturing base, there should be opportunities for certain areas in BC to compete across the land.

As I understand it, before free trade the only reason there was any manufacturing in Canada was because of the tariffs, take the automobile industry for example.

Q. A LOT OF PEOPLE SAY THEY DON'T KNOW THAT MUCH ABOUT THE FREE TRADE AGREEMENT AND THE IMPACTS THAT IT'S HAD, DO YOU THINK THAT INFORMATION IS LACKING? WHAT KIND OF INFORMATION IS LACKING AND IF YOU WANTED TO KNOW MORE ABOUT FREE TRADE WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

I think the information is lacking specifics. Over a ten year period, tariffs are going to be phased out but they don't tell you which ones and when...I don't understand exactly how things are going to continue.

I think information is lacking incredibly because they don't know what is going to happen. I think that they're just hoping that something good is going to come out of this.

I think the people that stand to gain from free trade are going to gain a lot and a majority of the people aren't going to gain. The government has a vested interest to cloud the issue, to make it vague and inject as much hope as possible.

Q. IF YOU WERE LOOKING FOR INFORMATION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE OR FREE TRADE, WHAT SOURCES OF INFORMATION WOULD YOU TRUST?

I wouldn't trust the one produced by our government. They're going to put in the figures and facts that they want to support their idea.

I disagree with that. I would trust them.

The media thrives on reporting negative news.

I'd like to have the universities produce a book of facts on free trade and the GST.

The professors aren't neutral either.

P. WHAT ABOUT BUSINESS, WHAT ABOUT THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE?

No.

I think so.

They could reflect what has been good for them.

P. WHAT ABOUT INDEPENDENT RESEARCH...

The Fraser Institute.

Statistics Canada.

The Fraser Institute is not unbiased.

No, it isn't.

The Fraser Institute is very right wing, very pro-business.

P. SO YOU'RE TELLING ME YOU'RE GOING TO PICK UP TWO OR THREE OF MY PAMPHLETS AND BELIEVE 50 PERCENT OF EACH ONE AND THEN KIND OF ARRIVE AT YOUR OWN CONCLUSION?

Yeah, I think you have to form your own ideas.

Ten years ago, if I got asked for a quarter during the day, it was really rare. Now I don't get ten minutes on the street when I'm not asked for something. I see line-ups for free food, I see food banks.

You can't blame that on business.

Q. DO YOU HAVE ANY FINAL COMMENTS ABOUT THE THINGS THAT WE'VE TALKED ABOUT TONIGHT?

I wish I had known beforehand because then I would have been more careful and critical in my reading.

(End)

Focus Groups - Vancouver
April 19, 1990

INTRODUCTIONS:

Thomas, I'm from Scandanavia originally. I ended up in Canada about fifteen years ago. I custom make camera equipment for press photographers and photo journalists. I used to be one myself. I've been married for 23 years, no kids and one cat. I've lived in Vancouver from '75 to '82 and then in Paris, Toronto, Australia and now back here.

Terry, I've lived in Vancouver for almost 17 years. I came from England. I work in local government administration. I enjoy classical music, opera. I like travel, I just got back from Romania.

Cindy, I am a kindergarden teacher but I'm at home right now with a 14 month old baby and another one on the way in September. My hobbies are classical piano, sewing. I'm very domestic, I like gardening. I grew up in the interior of BC and haven't lived anywhere else. My husband is a student right now so we're living on the bare necessities. I probably should be working but I enjoy being at home too much.

Betty, I'm married to an ex-commercial airline pilot. I have two sons, 24 and 21, one just recently married. I work for a chain store near Vancouver. I've been there for 36 years. I've been married for 30. I enjoy sewing, gardening, walking...I have my mother-in-law living with me who's 81 years old and I look after her.

Sonia, I work at the airport. I don't plan to get married too soon. I like music, I wouldn't mind travelling more.

Darryl, I'm a school teacher, I teach languages. I have two kids, both of them married, one of them lives in Texas. I do a lot of tennis and walking.

Monty, I'm a musician, I've worked professionally for about five years. I've lived in the east end of Vancouver for about the same number of years. I like to play with other musicians. We play country, irish jigs, originals and all kinds of stuff. I play a six string acoustic guitar.

Diane, I've lived here all my life except when I went to Alberta to take psychiatric nursing. I'm hopelessly single, no cats, no kids, working on the kids thing. I like to walk a lot and hike, stay in youth hostels and that kind of stuff.

Frank, I've been retired for eight years. I've been a steam engineer and an automotive mechanic. Married for 46 years, at the moment we have four grandchildren. My hobby is singing with the glee club. I sang with them for over twenty years and was the tenor soloist. Four years ago I had to have an operation on my throat and never got my voice back again. I love to golf, I'm a pretty fair pool player and I love swimming.

Q. WHEN YOU THINK OF YOUR HOMES, YOUR FAMILIES, YOUR JOBS, THE VANCOUVER REGION - AT ANY ONE OF THOSE LEVELS - WHAT FOR YOU ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT ECONOMIC ISSUES WHICH YOU WILL BE FACING IN THE NEXT TWO OR THREE YEARS?

GST, house taxes, consumer purchases in order to survive, medicare, more homes for the elderly, education.

The competition facing the BC industry from Japan, the common market in Europe. I don't think that BC has the _____ to handle it.

My biggest concern is job security, interest rates, housing and the GST. I went through that when I was in England, that was one of the reasons why I left.

I'm on the verge of a change in my life, I'm going to retire. My wife has a good job and we've had a reasonable income of late but I think it's rather unknown what's facing us. We don't have a lot of savings but both of us plan on retiring so I guess my chief concern is the uncertainty of the situation in our lives. Certainly GST, interest rates and all those things will affect our standard of living.

The issue that concerns me is that with a lower income, you're going to have to adjust. With everything else going up, is it feasible to retire at this point or not?

I can relate to your problem or the worries that you're having because I was forced by my husband to take an early retirement. It wasn't expected because he had a massive heart attack, he's had five since. He's a candidate for a heart transplant. We have two kids, they both started working at a very early age but maybe eight or nine years ago things weren't so bad as they are now and the immigration wasn't as bad. I noticed at that time that the average young teenager could go out and get a job with maybe one application, now you may have to put in ten or twelve before you can get a job...

I don't know about that. I know two friends who work in student employment agencies and they have ten times more jobs than students to fill them. It's just that they don't want to work for less than ten to twelve dollars an hour. Our standard of living is so high that they want to have the income that goes with it, but there are many, many, many jobs out there for students.

Yeah, there are many jobs but if they want to continue their schooling and having to pay for it and not being able to get the grants they would like to get...

Well, my husband is a full time student. I just got out of school two years ago and we've been living on student loans for the last four years while he's continuing his degree. If you have the marks, if you have the determination to seek those out, I think our government has got an excellent, excellent program for students. We live in subsidized housing, we have a beautiful home, we have everything we need, the essentials. I find it very disturbing when I hear people say they can't afford to go to school.

P. CINDY WHAT ARE YOUR TOP OF THE MIND ISSUES?

In the next year or two when my husband finishes his degree in education, a masters in education, I believe there will be a job market for him.

Q. JUST THINKING ABOUT YOUR OWN FINANCIAL SITUATION OVER THE NEXT FEW YEARS DO YOU EXPECT TO BE BETTER OFF, WORSE OFF OR ABOUT THE SAME AS YOU ARE TODAY?

If I stay here it's going to get worse. I was born and raised in West Vancouver. I'm living in a little dump with cockroaches and my rent goes up \$100 every year. The actual taxes on the building have gone down but they still bring in all these people. Every other suite has people living in there half price or something because they're workmen, they don't care, it's a heritage building so they don't care.

I hope it will go up but I know it depends on the initiative, motivation and things like that. I'd like to go to school but then again you know how expensive that is, hopefully it's getting better.

In my case, I feel fairly optimistic about it. I'm a one man operation and if I make it then I feel there is a market for it. I'm the only one in the world that makes this specific product right now, I have no competition. I'm back logged for 1990, if I make everything in the next three months that I need to make in 1990, I'm still going to be short of time. It took me seven years to develop some of the things I'm doing and those costs I can't recoup. I think that over the next three or four years, the next two years to put it pretty bluntly are going to be stinkers because we have the interest rates, we have the GST. We have no secondary industry, there seems to be no interest by the government for putting in a good secondary processing industry, they like to cut down the trees, dig up the minerals. The investors in western Canada don't look forward.

Q. WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN IN VANCOUVER OVER THE NEXT TWO OR THREE YEARS?

I think what has happened to property in Toronto is going to happen here. I don't think it can continue to go up as it has, it's gone up all out of proportion.

Vancouver always had that. I lived here in 1981. I bought a house for \$50,000 in 1975 and in 1981 somebody offered me \$300,000. I sold it in 1986 for \$150,000.

Tonight in the paper it mentioned the prime rate, over 14% and the interest rate has gone up a couple of points too. How can that be? How can people borrow a couple of hundred thousand dollars to buy a house if their payments are going to be around \$3,000 a month?

We don't we live in subsidized housing until we're thirty.

When your husband becomes a teacher though you'll probably aspire to a home somewhere...

Yes, but ideally we'd like to save for it. I don't want to be in debt until I'm fifty...

But realistically, do you think that will happen?

Well, if we budget ourselves properly...

P. WHERE DO YOU THINK VANCOUVER IS GOING TO GO IN THE NEXT THREE YEARS?

I think we're going to find that the average person that resides in BC, right in the city limits, the older senior citizens that are in their own houses are going to be the ones to leave. They won't be able to afford to keep their houses because of higher taxes and being on a fixed income. What they'll do is they'll probably migrate to maybe the interior and outside the city limits. You will have younger people that have good jobs coming into the city, they will be able to afford to live in the city.

The economy will slow down because if you always have to pay 40 percent for housing that means you are not going to buy this or that. You're not going to spend money on culture, on books, on movies, all of that is going to cut back. It's going to become a very boring place.

I just wanted to say something to Betty because we live in the same neighbourhood. If you walk around it's very obvious that it's becoming an older community, for instance they're closing schools in West Vancouver because young people are not moving there. The people who are in a privileged position right now are those people in the retired group that bought a house perhaps thirty years ago.

The thing I'm concerned about is that we are going to have another recession. It looks like history is repeating itself. It looks like we are going through a 1980-81 type cycle again. I

think that is my biggest fear that we get into that... I made some good money in the last property boom in the 80's and I've put that money to work since. I hope I don't see it wiped out.

Do you accept it as an anti-inflationary measure, the rising prime rate and that?

That's the excuse. I think it works up to a point but I think the signs have been there for a long time. It's just not working. I think that it's just been so counterproductive that we are now on our way to a recession.

We are in a recession, if you sit down and look at the figures...

I've been trying to be optimistic but I think we probably are.

The rates are not being set for Canada but for central Canada. It's insane, we bought a house for \$80,000 in downtown Toronto and six months later we decided the hell with Toronto. I went to my real estate broker and said we're selling the house. I said, "Do you want to put up a sign?" and he said, "Hell no, just stay at home". We got five offers in four hours, sight unseen. This lady came and gave us a cheque for double what we paid in six months. I said this is totally insane, I didn't turn down the offer but no economy can stand this. My wife is an economist by trade and we talk about it all the time...every thing is happening in Toronto, the rest of Canada is suffering. Now we are paying the price. Wait, six months from now the Torontonians are going to need subsidies to handle their losses in real estate, just wait, they're going to be subsidized.

What about our position on the Pacific Rim? Do you think there's going to be a flight of capital from Hong Kong?

If you had capital in Hong Kong, would you move it to Vancouver?

Probably...

But wouldn't you rather move it to Los Angeles...

I think a natural place for investment would be BC.

The only thing you can invest in here is real estate. There's no companies to invest in here. The problem with real estate is that it is my investment into something. It doesn't create a job, it doesn't create business. I grew up in Sweden, a society which up until ten years ago, 90 percent of the population lived in rented apartments and only 10 percent in houses. They don't invest in real estate, they buy stock, they go travelling, they start companies, so they never worry about it.

Q. WHAT ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT CHALLENGES THAT THE CANADIAN ECONOMY IS GOING TO FACE IN THE 1990'S?

Keeping up with other countries in terms of attracting investments and things like that.

Learning to reuse our natural resources. I think there's going to be a dramatic change in how we use our forests and our mining. All of these things have to be really, really, re-evaluated.

One of the greatest problems is going to be getting rid of the national debt. That scares the pants right off of me because in another year or two years Canada is going to realize that they can't go any further. Right now the government is trying to raise taxes all over the place just to catch up on the interest. They're robbing Peter to pay Paul and we're getting nowhere.

We're going to have to learn to reuse our resources financially as well. We can't keep finding more and more income, we have to find new ways to put our money into the country. It's more efficient and more economical. They just keep taking more from our pockets in order to give out evenly to a certain extent. You see something that says made in Canada and it costs more. Take diapers, flannel diapers, the ones from Canada cost more and they are comparable. Are you really going to pay more, I mean we all talk about it but do we really...

They mentioned diapers in the _____, well there's going to be quite a hefty tax on plastic diapers.

I'm thinking more about social programs where some have an overabundance of finances and other social programs, depending on what you deem to be more essential, have had nothing. I think it's very uneven...

Yeah, but that's an internal problem. I think Canada's big problem is that we haven't faced up to what's happening in Europe right now. I go back twice a year. In Paris, they speak English to you and this is totally unheard of, they don't do that and now they do. They have 500 million people, they are highly trained, they are extremely motivated, the technological background that makes Japan seem backwards and they have set themselves. The US and Canada in particular are standing with their hands in their pockets.

P. WHAT DO YOU THINK THE IMPACT WILL BE OF THE SCENARIO THAT TOM HAS JUST PAINTED ON THE CANADIAN ECONOMY AND ON THIS REGION?

There won't be any more investment here, people just won't invest.

Not only locally but nationally, the investments will just drop off.

I think Canada is in great danger of being left behind. I think that's one of the reasons that free trade was pushed as strongly as it was. I think they are trying to counter the big economic trading blocs.

P. WHAT WILL THE CONCRETE IMPACT BE RIGHT IN YOUR NECK OF THE WOODS?

I think maybe we're underestimating the economic power of the United States. I think we've tied ourselves to the States. I think another economic union is coming with Mexico. They're talking about that now. I think that if you have a bloc in Europe, the world is going to end up in different blocs that are sort of incestuous. The answer for Canada is a North American free trade zone as a counter to Europe because Europe is also, particularly with eastern Europe opened...

Eastern Europe will be the Taiwan of Europe. Cheap labour, cheap machines to make the primary products to supply western Europe.

You read about the appalling ecological problems of Poland and Hungary, the Danube is a sewer...

Since free trade has been brought in, do you find that there have been a lot of businesses moving their businesses and their manufacturing plants to the States?

Yes.

Of course.

In turn, it has left the Canadians without jobs...

Maybe that's just in the short term, I wonder about the long term.

But in the long term with the GST, they say that there will be more moving down there.

I can't argue with you.

Think of the...you say you need springs for your cameras and you can buy them cheaper down there. Maybe if you went down there and started manufacturing those things yourself...

My point is that I make a product and I sell 1 percent in Canada and the rest is exported. I would get taxed here with the GST and I will have to raise my prices on the stuff I export. If I rent 400 square feet down in Seattle for \$100 a month, my tax base is different. I pay 27 percent income tax, I get all kinds of breaks on it down there. I'm going to be down there one week out of the month, that's it.

Don't you think that we can learn by our mistakes. I hate to think that this is all just doom and gloom. Isn't there some positive outlook that says we can see where we are heading and make some alterations so that we're not heading downhill.

Q. WE'VE GOT THIS CHANGING GLOBAL ECONOMY, WE'VE GOT THESE TRADING BLOCS, WE'VE GOT MORE COMPETITION GOING ON, WHAT ROLE SHOULD CANADA PLAY, WHAT KIND OF RELATIONSHIP SHOULD WE HAVE, SHOULD WE BE CONCENTRATING ON TRADING WITH THE STATES, SHOULD WE BE TRYING TO BE MORE SELF-SUFFICIENT OR SHOULD WE BE GETTING RIGHT OUT ON THE INTERNATIONAL TRADING FIELD?

We should get out and start dealing with other countries not just the States. We've been tied to their apron strings for years, maybe this is why we are where we are today.

We have to be self-sufficient.

Instead of sitting back and saying lets take a look and see, we should take a stab at something, but something small. For example, the lady that started the diaper business in the West End, start Canadian size not U.S. size.

We keep thinking in terms of economic growth. It just really scares me when people are starting to lose sight of preserving what we have and changing the utilization of what we've got. I'm willing to be a little bit poorer if I still have a beautiful Vancouver for the next 100 years. I've always been poor and I'm willing to be poor as long as I don't have to worry about whether I'm going to be making another \$20,000 next year. As long as people are caring, that's a big issue. I really don't care if we move forward as long as we're not moving backward.

Well, I've _____ that the only thing pertinent is change.

Well, that's fine. I think we should change. It's how we're doing things, not just competing the way everything has been going in the past but changing within, how we're doing everything. If that means that we're going to be set back because we're not clear cutting for the next five years then I think that might be a sacrifice. Personally I'm willing to make it, but I don't think that the economic community is willing to make that...

We could all sit here and blame the government but it falls back on us. We should be voicing our opinions more, too many of us sit back and don't say anything and as a result of it, we've got what we've got.

Q. WHAT DOES THIS REGION NEED TO DO TO GET READY FOR INTERNATIONAL TRADE?

Calling people from Hong Kong, calling people from Europe and even getting American investors in here. I agree with you to an extent that we should not have a colossal rural area built up here with new steel mills. What we need is people to come in and say that this is a good place to set up a secondary industry, this is less polluting than a primary industry.

Sustainable growth.

Yes, sustainable growth and for God's sake don't copy. Have someone come up with an original idea, don't do something that they're already doing in England or the States because then you're in competition, do something that no one else is doing.

It's funny you should say that because I think that we could use recycling paper as an industry. All our paper is going out of BC...

P. WHAT ELSE DO WE NEED TO DO IN THIS REGION TO GET READY FOR INTERNATIONAL TRADE?

When you were talking about something original and not copying like in the entertainment industry for instance, we copy the Americans. If something sells in America then we do it here and then it's just a watered down version. I think we should do something original. We don't take chances but I think it's getting better.

I think you should sit up and take a look in the mirror and say I'm a Canadian. I've got as many brains up in my bonnet here as anybody else so let's use them, let's not sit back and let somebody tell us what we should or should not be doing.

Do you think that if we taught our kids in school to speak Japanese and Mandarin that it would have some good effect?

I don't know if it would be a direct benefit, it certainly wouldn't be a loss.

Well, that's one of the arguments. They're beginning to teach Japanese and Mandarin in some high schools and one of the arguments is that there is this enormous market in China, and Japan for the English language. We always send businessmen abroad expecting that they're going to speak English to us and of course they do but...

But aren't there going to be Asian people coming into Canada and setting their allegiance to Canada? They'll be working towards building a Canadian economy for Canadians.

I think so, this pertains to the whole issue of muticulturalism.

I think it's a good idea to teach young people any language that we associate with economically.

Q. WILL IT BE AN EASY OR DIFFICULT TRANSITION TO MAKE FOR CANADA?

The most difficult thing they've ever done, but we've got to do it if we're going to stay Canadian.

Our standard of living is going to have to go down.

It's got to go down, we've been living far beyond our means nationally.

If we treated our credit cards the way the government treats our economy, the bank would have called in our credit cards a long time ago.

P. IT'S GOING TO BE A DIFFICULT CHANGE FOR OUR WHOLE STANDARD OF LIVING TO BE ABLE TO TRADE MORE IN INTERNATIONAL MARKETS, WHAT SPECIFIC EFFECTS WOULD YOU SEE IN THIS TRANSITION PROCESS?

Changing the role of trade unions in the economy.

Less major purchasing.

Higher energy prices.

More investment in Canadian made products instead of foreign made products.

Yeah, but nobody would invest in a product unless it's worth the money. I'm a Canadian citizen, I selected a Canadian citizenship. If I go out and look at two tools and one is \$100 more or less and if it's made in Taiwan, if it's a better product then I don't care. I'd buy the better product. If you can't compete, if you can't stand the heat get out of the kitchen.

P. SO COMPETING FOR YOU IS PRODUCING A QUALITY PRODUCT?

Competing for me is making a product as well as I physically can. If somebody else comes up, I can't even patent my product, it's copyrighted not patented so anybody can make it. If somebody else comes up and makes a better one and can sell it cheaper than me, I know I'm beat.

How many people look at a product before they buy it to see where it's made?

I do.

Like crazy.

If it's a Canadian made product you tend to buy it despite the price?

No, if I can afford it, I will go for the better quality.

Some articles are definitely worth putting in the extra money for extra quality. However, some things you can get away with second rate quality.

If I were to do some product like yours, like bullet proof cameras, if that's what you call it, you would import plexi-glass or whatever it is from all over the world to see which is the best...

Actually the material I am working with right now is Alcan aluminum. They make the best stuff but the tools to cut it come from the States...

But you find that all over the world, anybody who manufactures, the tools come from somewhere else. In Norway, where you expect to get Norwegian sardines, you'll probably get Portuguese sardines and that's just the reality of economics.

In Sweden, the top car to drive is a Porsche.

Q. A LOT OF PEOPLE TALK ABOUT CANADA BECOMING MORE COMPETITIVE IN WORLD MARKETS. WHAT DOES THE WORD COMPETITIVE MEAN TO YOU?

Aggressive.

They're going to be able to attract other countries' investments.

A standard, keeping our standard up so that if you're buying Canadian it's going to be as good as anything made internationally.

Producing a quality product at a competitive price.

P. IF I SAY THAT CANADA IS GOING TO BECOME MORE COMPETITIVE DOES IT HAVE ANY NEGATIVE CONNOTATIONS FOR ANYONE AROUND THE TABLE?

Yes, it means that we would have to compete price wise and we don't want to lower the price because as somebody brought up unions, unions demand a set price. It goes up every year and nobody will take an increase and that means they wouldn't even buy our product.

That's the problem with free trade too. If we want to stay competitive and they can produce the same article in the States because they don't have the same social programs that we have, they can produce exactly the same article for a lot less...that's where people are going to buy.

Yeah, but if we're going to have free trade and somebody in the States can produce the same product for less then why not quit producing the product.

I think that's exactly what's going to happen.

The idea is to divide up the nations. The Americans can make this better and we can make that better.

Well, what do we make better?

That arm, the Canadian arm...

Oh, no, you don't have to get to that, telecommunications...

We do submarines quite well..

Not nuclear ones..

Nobody is talking about how we can market our beauty, I think that is a very major...I think that's something we really have to manage.

We can't all be guides...

Freshwater.

Our safety, that's something we can market. Thank God, we don't have so many guns.

Tourism is a big item. I think some of the high tech industries.

I would think something to do with electronics. I mean everywhere you go, anywhere there's a Radio Shack, you see all those parts and they're all made in Taiwan.

Yeah, but you couldn't do that in Canada. Nobody would work for \$1.50 and hour.

Q. ...HOW TO MAKE THIS REGION MORE COMPETITIVE FOR TRADING OPPORTUNITIES, WHAT DO WE DO?

I would say branch out more into the foreign countries.

...rather than try and compete with other countries, develop something that we do very, very well, perhaps in the electronics field. I've got great confidence in the genius of Canadians that we can develop something that is quite unique and go ahead and become the major producer.

Wouldn't it be better instead of sending lumber to Japan to be loading the plywood instead of buying it back? The pulp and paper industry here, I know it is a high polluting industry but we should be developing the recycling of paper, the de-inking process and start producing the unbleached toilet paper. It's like running into sandpaper, but start producing it and selling it. Have the industries in BC say to the world that people want unbleached household paper.

I really see the trend going in that direction. I see my friends buying this stuff but I don't believe it, it's all too uniform a colour, the paper plates and that, I think it's dye added.

You are suspicious.

Q. WHAT CONSEQUENCES SHOULD WE PREPARE THIS REGION FOR IF WE'RE GOING TO MAKE IT MORE PREPARED FOR INTERNATIONAL TRADE?

The first thing they have to realize very seriously is the reduction in their level of living. Their standard of living has got to come down, we're about the highest in the world and it's costing us.

The highest energy users in the world.

I think that is happening already with my age group because we are already unable to afford housing. We are unable to compete so to a certain extent that is happening already.

Q. WHEN WE GET OUR PLAN WORKED OUT WHAT IS GOING TO BE THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT AND WHAT IS GOING TO BE THE ROLE OF BUSINESS OR OTHER ORGANIZATIONS IN IMPLEMENTING IT? WHO DOES WHAT?

The government has got to give incentives. It's got to give tax breaks to encourage investment and to stimulate new jobs. I think they have to take a more active role than they have done so far. I just don't seem to see the evidence that they are anticipating. The way things are going in the world as we were talking earlier in the European common market, you just don't hear very much talk about what Canada is doing to prepare for that and what it's doing to stop the drift of investments south.

Do you think in the political realm that there has to be more recognition of the inequalities in the geographical regions of the country?

Oh, yeah.

Some kind of development..

In the political sphere, we need to redistribute the representation in Parliament or change the Senate because we seem to be getting screwed constantly in the West. There is a consciousness even a political party devoted to making this change. We're kind of a geographical monstrosity.

P. DO YOU GUYS FEEL THIS IN VANCOUVER TOO?

Oh, very much so.

I do.

Very, very much.

Yeah.

We're so far from the centre of Canada.

The only time they'll kick through anything is if somebody from here really screams...that's because they don't want any political embarrassment.

I think that's part of the Meech Lake problem, it's not anti-french or anything like that, it's just that it's central Canada...

We have a certain disadvantage built in as far as our power structure. We have a government based on one province, Quebec. It's certainly not going to pay much attention to us when they're handing out contracts, there's so much evidence of that.

P. WE'RE STRAYING A LITTLE BIT FROM MY QUESTION, THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT AND BUSINESS?

We're looking at the political aspect and I think we're addressing it.

If we're going to have foreign investment, we have to provide a base of trained operators, workers...here in Canada. I'm not talking skilled labour but the infrastructure for setting up industry here. Nobody is going to come in here and set up a manufacturing plant if he can't hire anybody to run it. The vocational educational system really hasn't changed, something like BCIT would have to be upgraded and open the area for investment. I haven't really talked to a lot of people who are wanting to invest in Canada but most of them say that the workers and the paper work is horrendous.

Q. DOES MORE INTERNATIONAL TRADE NECESSARILY MEAN MORE FOREIGN INVESTMENT?

I would say they are unrelated.

Unrelated. There is a certain connection there but not 100 percent ~~so~~.

Q. IN YOUR OPINION IS FOREIGN INVESTMENT A GOOD THING OR A BAD THING?

Good thing.

Good.

Good.

I think it's a good thing.

I don't like it at all. People from other countries who haven't lived here, who haven't paid their dues, they're not the first citizen choice, they should not be able to buy land here. I don't like what _____ did with the Medical/Dental building. I didn't go out and picket but I think they should only be allowed to lease, a 99 year lease like what they use in Hong Kong. I don't think they should come in and just buy ~~just~~ because they've got the money.

I think it's a free country and whoever can afford it can take advantage of it. We've got a big country and a lot of resources available.

I don't think that is using it best. I don't see why we have to get bigger. Taxes go up, why don't we just control it and not be so greedy.

If we're going to rebuff them out of here, they're going to do the same thing to us when we want to go somewhere else.

Don't butt them out, just allow them to lease it.

The vision we get of a foreign investor immediately is an Asian. I think that is false...

Q. IF CANADA WAS TO GO WITH AN INCREASED FOCUS ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN THE 90'S WOULD IT IMPACT THE PEOPLE AROUND THE TABLE WHO ARE WORKING? WOULD IT IMPACT YOUR JOB?

No, not unless it affected the amount that the government was putting into the education system.

I think it would because there would probably be a shortage of food for one thing. Farmers are going bankrupt, we're already importing most of our fruit from the States so we'd be paying top prices for everything that we're getting.

It would open up markets and give me a lot more competition. As long as I keep a one year back order, I don't worry about customers.

We're all inter-connected though, obviously I'm a school teacher and I would have to answer yes that it certainly does. If you said specifically, I could go into a little discussion of that but I think we're all inter-connected.

Q. WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT AN INCREASED FOCUS ON INTERNATIONAL COMPETITIVENESS IN TRADE DO YOU THINK THAT ANY LEVEL OF GOVERNMENT CURRENTLY HAS A STRATEGY OR A PLAN IN PLACE THAT THEY ARE WORKING ON TO ACHIEVE THIS, DO YOU SEE ANY EVIDENCE OF ANY CHANGES ALREADY...?

Not really, there's a lot of talk going on.

There are regional development offices that I know are trying to promote the greater Vancouver region internationally but that backfired because each municipality wants to act on their own. I think that the municipalities are working on plans but it's at the provincial and federal levels that are not getting support.

Are they going out or are they waiting for people to come here?

No, they are going out and digging up business.

P. DOES ANYBODY SEE ANY OTHER MOVES BY THE PROVINCIAL OR FEDERAL GOVERNMENT PREPARING CANADA FOR INTERNATIONAL TRADING?

I don't see anything. I would like to see a step by step outline of what is going on politically by each party in my country. Find out what they stand for and where are we going.

Q. DO YOU SEE A LINKAGE BETWEEN THE FREE TRADE INITIATIVE AND INTERNATIONAL TRADING AS BEING A PART OF A PLAN OR A STRATEGY OR DO YOU SEE THEM AS SEPARATE?

It's linked.

I don't know.

I see them as very separate.

They're practically contradictory.

Yeah, actually that's a good term.

I can't see them together.

I think that if we are going to tie ourselves to the United States as a bloc, a bloc by definition means that you are exclusive and that's what we appear to be doing. I realize that Mr. Vander Zalm recently went to Europe and we send trade missions all over the world. I think those are good but I don't personally see very much growing out of them but maybe I'm not in a position to see a lot of things that are happening.

The whole purpose of Expo was to sell BC.

It did, it sold the site.

Q. WHAT ABOUT THE PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE ACT DO YOU SEE THAT AS A SEPARATE THING OR A LINKED THING?

Linked.

That's linked.

Linked.

Linked to free trade.

P. TO INTERNATIONAL TRADE THOUGH, I MEAN.

International trade, I don't know.

P. YOU THINK IT'S LINKED TO FREE TRADE THOUGH?

Yeah.

How competitive can we be if we have too many social benefits.?

Q. DO YOU SEE ANY RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES?

We shot ourselves in the foot with that stupid program set up by the federal government. A lot of companies said they were doing research and development then they got a lot of money and took off with it. Now the government is shying away from that. A fair bit of money got taken by con artists.

Q. IS THE GST IN ANY WAY LINKED TO INTERNATIONAL TRADE?

I would think it's linked.

I don't know. I think there may be a link but I'm not sure.

Getting us in the mind set for more taxes on different things.

Basically, they're two entirely separate things but I do see a link by applying the GST. They're increasing the price of goods here and that's out in left field.

P. SO YOU THINK IT'S MAKING US LESS COMPETITIVE BECAUSE THINGS WILL COST MORE?

Absolutely.

It does make us less competitive except in export. You don't pay the GST on things that you export, you still have to pay the money up front but it's better to pay 7 percent up front than 13 1/2 percent.

If you go to the States and buy something that's made there and bring it across the border, the duty and the federal taxes on it is a lot less than if you buy something that's been manufactured in Japan and then try and bring it across the border. In essence, it will work somewhat like that if it comes from other countries...

It's not that big of a difference.

Oh, it is quite a bit if you look at different things. Car parts, carpets, perfumes, even perfume that's made in France, and you try and bring it across the border, it's amazing the amount of duty you have to pay opposed to if it's made in the States.

Canada suffers from another problem in that we pay very high prices for certain products where there is no rhyme or reason. In my trade I buy photographic papers, I can buy it here in town for \$1.25 a sheet and I can go down to Los Angeles and buy exactly the same product, same box for 45 cents a sheet, made in Japan, so why should I pay a Canadian middleman. By the time I get it in here it's costing me 70 cents a sheet, taxes, duty paid, everything. Why should I pay a Canadian middleman 55 cents for phoning Japan and having them send him 50 boxes to Vancouver.

This is where I think the GST will be connected to international trading. There will be one tax imposed for everybody, for all foreign countries as well as Canadians and they will all pay one tax instead of various ones in different stages.

It will take out a lot of distributors in Canada.

Q. WHAT DO YOU THINK ARE THE MOTIVES FOR THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO INCREASE IT'S FOCUS ON INTERNATIONAL TRADING?

Survival.

I feel that they have finally realized that they can't be tied to just one country. This is what they are doing in fact if they don't branch out with international trade. Free trade with the States isn't enough to survive.

Q. WHEN I SAY THE WORD GLOBALIZATION, WHAT DOES IT EVOKE?

Terror.

World wide.

It would depend on the area that you are looking at. I think there's a lot of positive things and a lot of negative connotations with it.

P. WHAT ARE SOME OF EACH?

It depends on power control and power structure. It would frighten me to see the kind of power and how it would affect the people in control of the globe. On the other hand, we would all hopefully be working toward the same goal, but knowing the nature of people, I don't think that will ever happen. If that ever happened, I think you would just end up with a lot of chaos and probably war.

That is a negative aspect but a positive aspect would be the realization that if we destroy the Amazon rain forest...we're all part of the global village as it were...

Yes, I agree with aspects like that but when I think globalization, I think global government, global economy, global everything. I don't think we can do it in all aspects.

There are certain international agencies that are very much aware of the defoliation of the environment and are taking measures to try and counteract it.

P. FRANK, WHAT DOES THAT WORD MEAN TO YOU, GLOBALIZATION?

One nation, one group of people.

Q. WHAT IF I SAY CANADA IS GOING GLOBAL? WHAT IMAGE COMES TO MIND?

Mainly economic.

Canada's economy tying in more with other economies around the world.

It's not being isolated or insular.

Expanding.

The last thing Canada has to do is expand, it's the second largest country in the world. To me it means that we are growing up and actually coming to the realization that we can do something on our own.

Q. WHAT DO YOU THINK OF WHEN I SAY PACIFIC RIM?

Foreign investment.

P. WHAT COUNTRIES DO YOU THINK OF?

International banking.

Canada, Mexico...

Canada, the US, Asia.

I think of Hong Kong, Singapore, Korea, Taiwan, Australia, New Zealand, Indonesia.

Latin America is part of the Pacific Rim too.

I don't think of Latin America. The focus is mainly on Asia.

I never thought of Australia and New Zealand as being major trade countries.

Q. WHAT DO YOU THINK OF WHEN I SAY EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY?

Common market.

The big guy.

P. DO YOU VIEW THOSE TWO TERMS AS INTERCHANGEABLE?

I was brought up to think of the common market first.

P. IS THAT THE OLD TERM?

Yeah. Then it was the EEC and now it is EC. The next thing it's going to be is UE.

Europe united.

Q. WHAT DO YOU THINK OF WHEN I SAY EUROPE 1992?

United Europe.

The same thing.

Common currency. It will be the most powerful region in the world.

I have a bet that on the eve of 1992 I can pay somebody in Euro-dollars.

Q. WHAT DO YOU THINK OF WHEN I SAY MTN?

No.

Q. WHAT ABOUT THE PHRASE URUGUAY ROUND?

Monetary fund. MTN. Isn't that what it is?

P. I HAVE NO IDEA.

The Uruguay Round was settling some of the problems of Central America. An attempt made by the president of Peru actually.

Q. THE FREE TRADE AGREEMENT, IT'S BEEN IN EFFECT SINCE THE BEGINNING OF 1989, WHAT DO YOU THINK OF IT?

It's only partially in effect.

It saved my father's mill.

It saved it.

He got his job back immediately after it happened because it's a co-American/Canadian company. Because of the free trade agreement they were able to continue the mill and it saved probably 500 jobs.

I don't like it at all. I think it has cost a lot of people their jobs. One particular company here in BC actually moved just across the border to Ferndale, El Solder. How many people were put out of a job there?

About 500.

That's right and they couldn't go across the line and work.

Yeah, but there were 500 jobs saved somewhere else.

Yeah, but that's just one company. General Motors in Oshawa, Ontario, closed down their plant and moved to the States. How many people were laid off there, I think it was 2500.

It was up pretty high, I know that.

There was a cannery back east where people were laid off. I think it's been a decline in jobs for Canadians, a lot of businesses have moved. Just a stones throw across the border but they knew that the GST was coming in, they knew exactly where they would be if they continued to remain in Canada. Consequently when we spoke of the GST earlier as being tied into free trade, yes, it is tied in there very much so and that's why a lot of businesses are leaving Canada.

Well, we shouldn't say that free trade caused it. We're doing something wrong here.

That's right.

If we can't be competitive, get out of the damn kitchen. I think free trade is a hoax, it hasn't worked because it's neither free nor is it trade.

It's only started though. We've got another nine years to go. I don't think people have even realized that it's there yet.

Look at the common market, they go in four years, they go from full duties to zilch. We should do that, we shouldn't drag it out for ten years. It's like having somebody slowly sticking a needle into you, it might be better to take one solid punch and then say no border line-ups. If you want to move to the States, just move across.

But you're talking about Canada being with the States now.

But if you look at Europe, this is what is happening now. They don't even have customs any more. They have a traffic light between Germany and France.

There is a confidence between Germany and France that those people are not going to lose their culture. My own feeling is that we are going to lose our Canadian identity.

Do we have one?

Yes, I think so.

If it can't survive across the border then is the damned thing worth fighting for?

Maybe it's like Quebec, maybe we have to take heroic measures to protect ourselves.

I think Quebec should separate and join the common market.

I'm a sixth generation Canadian and to me the Canadian identity is just as strong if not stronger than it has ever been. We just don't go shouting it.

I agree with Tom if you have to build a fence around your country to protect your culture, there's something wrong.

I think we are going to retain our identity no matter what happens. When you look at the Americans, people in South Carolina are vastly different from the people in Texas who are vastly different from Iowa. People retain their identity no matter where they are.

Q. WE'VE TALKED A LOT ABOUT FREE TRADE, WE'VE TALKED A LOT ABOUT INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND I WANT TO TALK JUST REALLY QUICKLY ABOUT COMMUNICATIONS, DO YOU FEEL THAT YOU ARE GETTING ENOUGH INFORMATION ABOUT TRADING, FREE TRADE, INTERNATIONAL TRADE?

No, nowhere near.

P. WHAT'S LACKING, WHAT DO YOU WANT TO KNOW THAT YOU DON'T KNOW?

Information, they don't have it.

Little blurbs on TV like those things on AIDS all the time. I know more about AIDS than anything.

I think that we get information through political eyes. If you're a Tory you're bound to support free trade and Meech Lake. It's very difficult to wade through all the information from people who have a political axe to grind.

They should present the information in a concise form written report in a language that anybody can read and understand.

But if the government puts things on paper or any kind of media blitz then they're accused of wasting tax payers' money.

Well, put it on recycled paper.

We do. I think it's up to the individual to inform himself or herself.

John Turner described it best during the federal election. I learned more about free trade, and then any questions that were left vague in my mind I went down to the library and looked them up.

That's right, it's all available, everybody wants to be spoon fed.

People are not necessarily willing to take the time to do that. I want each party to tell me what they think and then I can compare them.

I want somebody who's an independent.

P. WHO THE UNIVERSITIES, RESEARCH BUREAUS?

Maybe a research bureau, not government appointed but an independently funded organization.

Something like Angus Reid for instance, why don't they write something up and send it out. Put it on the market for \$1.20.

I want one concise book that I can sit down and read and then a phone number I can call with an expert voice so I can say, "I want to find out about this, tell me."

I'm a housewife, I stay at home. What am I going to do with this information except make a vote every four years.

That's what you do.

And then you are armed with that information, you can inform other people.

Q. ANY FINAL COMMENTS THAT ANYBODY WOULD LIKE TO MAKE?

It's up to the individual families to protect the Canadian Identity, not wait for the government to tell us what to do.

This is the first time I've participated in something like this and I've learned a lot just sitting here and listening.

(End)

Focus Group - St. John
April 19, 1990

Introductions:

Maggie, I work for a health care agency. I'm a personnel manager there. I'm originally from Scotland and I've been living in Canada for the last 18 years. I'm a single parent raising three children.

Don, I'm retired from the railway. I worked for them for 36 years and I felt I was too young so I went to work for a smaller outfit here in St. John. I'm married and have two daughters, one married and one in university.

Roy, I've worked in the steel fabricating industry for over 30 years. Six children, they're all grown, all married. The last six or seven years, my wife and I have been into foster care, we look after a couple of crippled children.

David, married 26 years, two children. My daughter is 25, she's graduating from university next week, her second degree, no job. I have a son he's 19, he's in university. I run a convenience store. It's a good life but it's a hard life. I sometimes think that I'd be better off working for somebody else but life's been good to me.

Karen, I'm in the Bachelor of Science program at the university majoring in biology. After that I want to go to medical school.

Dave, I'm single _____, I'm interested in martial arts, that's one of my hobbies.

Eve, I retired in 1988. I've raised four children but they're all gone from home now. I worked when they were older, I did stenographic work for about 17 years.

Bill, I'm a mill worker. Last time I checked I had a job there, we're on strike right now. I have a wife and two children. My oldest is 18 and he's in military college, my daughter is 15 and she's in high school. We're doing great.

Rosemary, I'm a house wife, a mother of three. The three were born before the third year was up. I manage a 12 unit apartment building.

Q. I WANT TO OPEN THE DISCUSSION TONIGHT TALKING A LITTLE BIT ABOUT THE ECONOMY, I WANT TO ASK YOU WHERE YOU THINK IT'S GOING AND THINKING ABOUT THE NEXT TWO TO THREE YEARS WHETHER YOU THINK THAT YOU'RE GOING TO BE BETTER OFF, WORSE OFF OR JUST YOUR GENERAL THOUGHTS ON THE ECONOMY?

Gee, I hope we're not worse off. Everything seems to be sort of topsy turvy at the moment, it must cost the young people today getting married and raising kids a lot of money. They need so much more than I did but I don't really think it could get too much more expensive than it is right now. I know you need two in a family that work today to hold things together and the kids all want what all the other kids have...

It really doesn't look too good. I wouldn't want to be in some of these peoples' age brackets today, raising a family. Luckily mine are all grown up and have gone. I have grandchildren. Thank God, the house and the car is paid for. I'm on a fixed income. I'm on a disability pension so if it takes another bad jump, the economy, it's going to start to hurt. Luckily so far I'm able to keep my head above water. That's about it.

P. DO YOU THINK IT MIGHT GET ANY WORSE?

I can't see it getting any better in the near future.

The biggest thing that's hitting the middle bracket people is the political situation. It's doing nothing for them at all. It seems to be helping the poor and helping the rich. I don't think you're going to see any change in the economy until you see some change in the federal government. We've got to do something about our leader and some of his very close henchmen. I think if you took a poll at this table anyone with any knowledge would certainly not concur with Mr. Wilson and his taxation. We're the only country in the world that taxes people who endeavour to save, you are taxed on your savings. I think the taxes in Canada are just absolutely atrocious.

I think things are going to get worse. I'm really scared for the children. Look at the education that they have here, it just seems to go on forever and ever and at the end there seems to be nothing for them. There's no jobs available anymore, there's too much emphasis on money. People just seem to get...coming from Britain, I have to look at their education system compared to here. Look at the tax regulations, unlike a lot of single parents we are fortunate enough that my husband contributes to the family that he's left behind. But we are liable to pay the income tax on the money which I find very unfair because the government taxes the same money twice.

It's going to get worse before it gets better. If it keeps going the same way, the next five years is going to be hell. I don't think there's a chance for young people today let alone five years from now. You see a lot of them graduate from high school, put in all that time and energy and when they're finished they're lost. They have nothing to do and they look back and say "12 years, 13 years for what, I'm out of a job anyway." Their life has little or no direction when they finish school.

Q. LET'S TALK A LITTLE BIT ABOUT THE REGION HERE, I HEAR YOU SAYING THAT THINGS ARE NOT EXACTLY GOING TO GET BETTER OVER THE NEXT COUPLE OF YEARS IN TERMS OF THE ECONOMY, WHAT ABOUT THIS REGION SPECIFICALLY DO YOU THINK IT'S GOING TO GET BETTER OR WORSE?

Better, I woke up this morning and heard that we're going to be part of the United States.

I wouldn't really count on that.

I heard one economist say, "What makes the Maritimes think that they want us." I look at it the other way around, what makes them think that we want them. We're Canadians, we don't want to become Americans.

Yeah, but there's a bunch of people in the middle between us and the rest of Canada that don't want to become Americans or Canadians.

The worst part about the Maritimes is our location, geographically we're in trouble. It's going to have an enormous economic impact on the Maritimes if Quebec separates.

The GST coming in is a nightmare for a businessman, it really is. I've talked to the GST people on the phone, there's a free hotline to call, you might as well talk to that lamp shade up there to get an answer. I haven't heard but I expect that the interest rate went up half a point today so in the next two years if you want to borrow money for a business you're going to pay a minimum of 17 1/2 percent. Between the GST and the deficit, I see the doom and gloom. My children have to pay for the rest of their lives for the deficit that we built. The politicians are doing nothing about it except increasing it and that frustrates me to no end. I don't think the politicians are facing the issues on the economy and I think the economy is doing it's own thing, nobody is directing it. It doesn't matter Liberal, Conservative or

whatever you are, federal, provincial, nobody is doing anything about it. The other thing about the economy not getting good is productivity, I don't feel that we're getting productivity out of employees. It doesn't matter if you're union or non-union, I see it everywhere. I talk to union people making 50 or 60 thousand dollars a year and they'll sit there and tell you that they work two hours a day and get paid for eight or twelve. That kind of attitude is hurting this country, it's making things more expensive.

Q. LET'S THINK AHEAD A LITTLE BIT INTO THE NINETIES, YOU BROUGHT UP PRODUCTIVITY, WHEN WE TALK ABOUT PRODUCTIVITY, WHAT DO WE ACTUALLY MEAN?

I think we want a fair return for the money. As a business person when you pay an employee you want a fair return. When you finish your eight hours of work you should feel that you've done eight hours of work and have done your job well. I don't think there's a lot of that with young people.

When you're 25 years old and getting \$5.50 an hour it's pretty hard to work eight hours and concentrate the whole time on what your employer wants.

It doesn't matter how much you get paid you should take pride in your work. Maybe \$5.50 isn't a fair wage, I agree but you should leave your eight hours feeling you've done your damndest. I think the unions are protecting a lot of people too, I'm not knocking them but am I right? Is the union protecting people on the job that don't carry their weight?

That's what they're there for.

That just goes against my grain.

Not for that reason that you've just stated but they're there to protect people.

Against unfair labour practices. But for the guy that's not carrying his weight you'd still be protecting him as much as the guy that puts in his eight hours.

How do you separate it.

You don't make an attempt to.

That can only go on for so long though.

You see that's hurting our economy productivity wise.

I can't really say about productivity. I've only had summer jobs between school. I don't think productivity has to do with the downfall of the country. The thing is the economy and the government and bilingualism. They put a lot of money into bilingualism and why? I heard just lately that the money in teachers' pension funds is all gone. The government used it all, they're not going to have a pension within the next 25 years.

I agree with several of the points that have been made so far. I can see that unions have their place but it's not fair that you can have two guys working their butts off and one guy sitting back and not working and he gets to take his whole pay cheque home. There should be something that can be done about that. As far as the economy is concerned, I think with the GST coming and bilingualism it has certainly hurt New Brunswick. Now there is a teacher that is being paid to teach 11 students in the french school up in _____ and there is no way on this earth that the New Brunswick government would pay an english teacher to teach 11 students. They'd bus them elsewhere, get them into other classes, but with this french school they've got this teacher with 11 students. I don't think that's right.

Q. I WANT YOU TO THINK INTERNATIONALLY NOW, I WANT YOU TO TELL ME IF YOU THINK THAT THINGS ARE GOING TO BE BETTER FOR CANADA IN THE NEXT TEN YEARS OR WHAT YOU SEE INTERNATIONALLY WHEN IT COMES TO DIFFERENT ECONOMIES?

I was home four years ago and this is a rich country compared to Britain. However, I can see things going down hill here too. It just depends on which province, every province is different.

I heard last night that Japan is buying up a lot of things in the States, in New York. I wonder if they'll be turning to Canada next.

I think you're right because the Japanese as we know, their productivity is so much better than ours.

It's cheaper to buy.

Well yes, because the people that go to work for the day give more for their hours. They've built up a base now where they can sell and undercut anybody on price.

I was reading an article on the Orientals and Japan in particular and the industries that they set up after the war. Germany is another one, who won the war, Japan and Germany. I'm not sure if I remember but the Japanese work harder, not only are they brought up from day one to do so but the way the companies were set up after the war was that you own shares in the company you work for. You are paid so many dollars and so many shares so you work harder to produce so that you can get more interest on your shares.

P. SO THE JAPANESE WORK HARDER THAN WE DO, DOES ANYBODY ELSE WORK HARDER?

All of the Asians.

And the Eastern Europeans.

P. WHAT'S CAUSING ALL THESE CHANGES INTERNATIONALLY? DO YOU THINK WE'RE PREPARED FOR THOSE KIND OF CHANGES? WHAT DOES THAT KIND OF CHANGE PRODUCE FOR US?

From what I know, if we don't get a grip on the one mile limit we're going to see people along this coast go under. We're depleting our fishing, more cut backs and more plants have closed in the last two years. That's all you hear in the news.

Everyone in this room owns a Japanese television.

We don't have any choice though.

We did have a choice at one time. We didn't put out a quality product at the proper price.

I have a Japanese car and the reason I bought it was because it's the cheapest car on the market.

It wasn't a Japanese then.

It was a Hyundai.

That's Korean.

Well, basically the same. A foreign product, it was cheaper and there was a greater selection.

Our retailers are doing that, they're bringing it in from the foreign countries because we'll buy it because it's cheaper.

That's also your lack of information too.

I checked out every place in this city...

And that's the best deal you could come up with?

That's the best deal.

It's also one of the best cars too.

I just have a mental block about buying a Japanese car. I just feel that I am putting auto workers in Canada out of work. They're a better quality car I understand from the people that drive them, I've never driven one...

Q. DO YOU THINK WE'RE COMPETITIVE?

No, we're not.

Not when it comes to automobiles.

We should advertise, "Buy Canadian" like they advertise in the U.S.A.

What products exactly are Canadian? There's so much influence from the Americans and foreign companies and with free trade I think it's going to hurt. I don't really know all that much about it but from what you hear it's not going to be that great for the Canadians.

I would agree with that. I think that the Americans gain on the Free Trade Agreement.

Yeah.

I have no question in my mind.

Q. YOU MENTIONED CANADIAN PRODUCTS, WHAT KIND OF CANADIAN PRODUCTS DO WE HAVE? IF WE WERE GOING TO BE EXPORTING THINGS WHAT WOULD THEY BE?

Nuclear reactors.

Lumber.

Looking at technology and science and things like that.

One of our greatest exports in St. John is liquor. Moosehead beer is one of the biggest market promotions in the States. It's a big seller in the States.

I think it's like McDonalds. It's a quirk, basically what's the difference between a McDonald's hamburger and the next one. They basically all taste the same.

Excuse me, there's an awful difference between Canadian and U.S. beer.

I know but I think it's just the Moosehead, they clicked.

We export power, hydro.

All we're doing is raping our own landscape to supply the Americans.

Isn't that what free enterprise is about though? We have to sell it to somebody, we can't use it all.

Why produce it if we can't use it.

Because we need money to pay off debts.

P. WHAT OTHER THINGS DO YOU THINK CANADA CAN EXPORT?

Grain.

Used to be big in the grain but the Americans have taken over.

Our medical technology is a lot better.

I think it's really hard for Canada to be big in exporting now because of the transportation system. It doesn't go anywhere near sea ports.

But also the Europeans are subsidizing. What is being produced in Europe is being subsidized.

Yeah, but they still can't produce enough to feed themselves. The Americans and the Canadians are still the bread basket.

The Americans have reduced the price of wheat because there's an overabundance which didn't help the Canadian farmer at all.

Q. I'M GOING TO THROW A TERM OUT ON THE TABLE AND I WANT YOU TO TELL ME THE FIRST THING THAT COMES TO MIND, GOING GLOBAL?

Marketing world-wide.

Sort of like free trade everywhere.

We're going to have to deal with the rest of the world someday. They're going to look at us and say, "Look they've got all that land and one person for every twelve square miles." We can't just sit here and say it's a pretty country, the world is going to change in the next twenty years, when you say global.

There is a plan in Europe that is going to incorporate free trade between all the countries, they're working towards that. Which is similar to what the U.S. is trying to get with us, only global. Eventually we'll all have to pull together, it's like the environment if we don't start looking at everybody, if we don't all get together as one we're going to eventually ...

Free trade will be the end of us. Our productivity is so low, there are hundreds of nations in the world that we can't compete with.

P. WHY CAN'T WE COMPETE WITH THEM?

They have a people oriented production system and low labour costs. It just doesn't work that

way with us.

P. DO WE HAVE ANYTHING THAT WE CAN COMPETE WITH INTERNATIONALLY?

I don't know unless it's technology.

Well technology, certainly medical technology in cancer and that...

Some of the best minds in the medical field, no doubt about that.

P. WE'RE TALKING ABOUT INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND I MENTIONED THE PHRASE GOING GLOBAL, WHAT DOES THAT MEAN TO YOU?

I think that would be hard, you have too many objectives from everybody else ...the States want to come in and everybody's up against it. Why not give it a try, what do you really have to lose? I always find people are very quick to say, "Stop, why not try something."

P. WHEN YOU SAY THE AMERICANS ARE COMING IN WHAT DO YOU MEAN? TO MANUFACTURE, TO SET UP BUSINESSES?

Well, yeah.

Part of our problem is that we have the natural resources that the rest of the world just doesn't have in the quantity that we have. I think that we are sort of frittering them away politically and I think it comes back again to government not being in charge. I don't necessarily say that it's the party that's in power now. I don't think the Liberals were a lot different when they were in power...

P. CORRECT ME IF I'M WRONG BUT I'M HEARING THAT THERE ARE SOME THINGS THAT WE CAN EXPORT, THE ECONOMY IS SLIDING AWAY, I HEAR WE'VE GOT TO DO THINGS BECAUSE THERE ARE OTHER GROUPS OUT THERE LIKE JAPAN AND INDIA AND EUROPE WHO ARE DOING THINGS, SHOULD WE JUST MAKE EVERYTHING AT HOME AND SELL IT TO EACH OTHER AND JUST GET OUT OF THE INTERNATIONAL TRADE MARKET?

No.

No. We can produce a lot more than we can sell to a country with 25 million people. If we only produced what we can use in this country, we're going to need a really big dole.

Comparing export to import, our export is really so much higher. We're on the low end of the stick when it comes to import whereas the Americans are on the top side. They have far greater potential to import and export than we do. Our export right now is far more important to us than what we import from the States. The States will approach our government and say, "We want to sell rubber boots in your country," "You want to sell rubber boots and we want to export cars." They come to a deal, but they manufacture so much more down there and we want more products, more variety.

When you speak about us exporting more than we import, you're talking about raw materials, aren't you?

If we could produce more finished products in this country at a competitive price, a product that the rest of the world would buy then everything would go up again. The economy would go up because we've got the raw materials to work with.

Yeah, but we don't have the amount of population to process it.

We could have more people but the ones that are in Canada are so against changing our immigration policy to let more people in.

That's not the problem with immigration. People are afraid their taxes are going to go up to support these people on social assistance. You have somebody coming from Japan with lots of bucks and they're in right away.

I think that the immigrants in this country work harder than we do.

Are those people willing to work for the country or are they coming to the country just to better themselves?

They come to this country to better themselves.

There's so many foreigners, especially Orientals, that come here and educate themselves. Get government grants and become doctors and lawyers but they're doing it for themselves.

I don't understand how they import people like that when we've got so much unemployment. That makes people angry.

We have a lot of people in this country that don't want to work.

Yeah, that's true but that's a hard thing to see, isn't it? You have unemployed people and yet people will come in from another country and work those jobs, that's sad.

It is.

Q. WHEN YOU SAY CANADA IS DOING POORLY OR WELL IN IT'S EXPORTING, WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

Well, you have to have a healthy balance between what you import and what you export. That's the gauge. When you get that healthy balance, you are producing a hell of a lot more goods and services.

P. ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT THE GROSS NATIONAL PRODUCT?

Yeah. It's your balance of trade.

With your balance of trade am I correct in assuming that the economy is much higher when your exports are much greater than your imports. Because we're selling more so therefore to build up our economy in the next ten years, we've got to increase our exports. And to do that I think what we've got to do is look around the world, at Japan for instance, and whatever their trick is, learn from their lesson. Look at the Japanese yen and the German mark, these are up because the people are working. There's something wrong with our unemployment situation. For one thing, it's very severe, particularly in the Atlantic provinces, there's nothing here to offer the young people.

Getting back to the economy, it goes a lot deeper than exporting goods. Why don't we export goods? Because our banking system. You were saying about interest rates, you can't get a loan to start up a store with those interest rates, so you're not buying the store. You're not putting people to work, you're not making a plant and exporting those bicycles down to Boston. Another thing is the education of people, we've got to make our kids smarter. Technology breeds technology, so it's not just how much we aren't putting out of the country, it's why can't we put it out of the country.

I think that's a good point when you said technology breeds technology.

Don't you think the same thing could apply with regard to education or any high intellectual aspect. Look what president Bush was doing, he put a challenge to the people of the United States making their students the number one students within the next ten years. That was in the news recently.

Q. A LOT OF PEOPLE TALK ABOUT INTERNATIONAL COMPETITIVENESS, WHEN YOU THINK OF COMPETITIVENESS, WHAT DO YOU THINK OF?

Well, I think Maggie brought up a very good example of that when she mentioned cars. We can't compete internationally with our manufactured products where we are. We've got to make our car every bit as good as the Japanese car or the Korean car for the same amount of money. If they can sell a Hyundai XL for \$8,000, why can't we manufacture a comparable car, Ford Escort, I've had both...

P. WHY CAN'T WE?

Because our people want too damn much, it isn't the minimum wage...

P. ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT UNIONS OR WHAT?

That's probably one thing.

One point that I'd like to make and I think that people had better catch on to it pretty quick is the fact that companies today are coming out and saying, "We've lost 8 million dollars last year." The government and the general public don't realize how they come about that figure - when they brought down their budget they were going to make 15 million that year and they only made 7 million, and that's how they come about their loss. The government feels sorry for them and starts pumping money back into them. It's the same thing with cars, there's an enormous profit on cars, you just can't imagine...

Are you saying that they don't lose money but they're not profiting as much as they thought they would?

Exactly.

We have to increase productivity and or reduce labour costs to make our products more competitive internationally.

P. DOES THAT MEAN THAT WE HAVE TO MAKE SACRIFICES TO BE MORE COMPETITIVE? DOES EVERYBODY AGREE THAT WE HAVE TO BE MORE COMPETITIVE?

Yes.

Yes.

P. ARE WE COMPETITIVE?

No.

Not now.

Not enough.

Well, we've given two examples, cars, TVs and VCRs.

P. WHAT'S THE CAUSE OF NOT BEING COMPETITIVE?

Because they're cheaper and if you take apples and apples and compare them, Japanese apples are better than ours. The question I ask myself is "Why?" I think the answer is a combination of what this gentleman has said, the company is crucifying the government and the employees are crucifying the government too, which sort of deflects against the fact that he's a union man. The employees are asking for too much and some of them are lying about it. The owner of the company is lying too, I think that if you start a company you should either swim or sink.

You're talking about free enterprise.

Exactly.

I think that the question is too general.

P. OK, WHY DON'T YOU DESCRIBE TO ME OTHER WORDS THAT MEAN COMPETITIVE?

I hear that we are and then I hear that we are not. Are we popular around the world?

P. DOES THAT MATTER?

Yes, it does.

P. WHAT ARE OTHER WORDS FOR COMPETITIVE?

Well, I think you can bring the car into that again. Ten years ago you couldn't sell a car coming out of Russia because it was a communist country. It wasn't popular so therefore it was not competitive.

Q. WHEN PEOPLE SAY THAT WE HAVE TO BE MORE COMPETITIVE DO YOU THINK THAT YOU ARE GOING TO BE AFFECTED PERSONALLY AND HOW?

If we're not competitive we're not going to export. If we're not going to export, the economy is going to be the reverse of what we want it to be.

You have to work harder to be competitive.

So you need an aggressiveness at some level.

Yeah, a lot of these other countries have that aggressiveness...

That's right.

...Canada doesn't.

We're complacent.

P. DO PEOPLE AGREE, DISAGREE?

I think the opinion I've heard a lot, myself included, is what can we really do with the economy? No matter what comes about the government has got the final say, the GST, nobody wants it but they're still bringing it in.

P. AGGRESSIVENESS HAS COME OUT AND COMPETITIVENESS, BUT HOW WOULD WE GET TO THAT STAGE, WHAT DO WE NEED THAT OTHER COUNTRIES HAVE?

I think we've got to have togetherness which unfortunately we don't have in our country right now. We've got to have pride.

We've got a living standard that is so much higher than some other countries that we don't want to get any better. We don't look at ourselves as wanting to get better. We don't have the desire to be better.

Q. LET'S GO AROUND THE TABLE NOW, YOU ARE THE CAPTAINS, YOU ARE IN CHARGE OF THIS COUNTRY, THINK TEN YEARS FROM NOW IF YOU HAD IT IN YOUR POWER TO MAKE US MORE COMPETITIVE INTERNATIONALLY, NAME ME A FEW THINGS THAT YOU WOULD DO?

I would totally rescind anything with regard to bilingualism in each and every province in Canada.

Make the corporations pay taxes. It's always the middleman that gets stuck with them and the corporations walk away free. I think they should change the taxation level and revise the whole thing.

And that's going to do what? Make the government richer and the companies poorer? How can we be progressing like that?

The GST is seven percent, everyone is going to have to pay, they say we need it because of the national debt...implement this seven percent of every purchase made in Canada until the national debt is paid and then it can be dropped.

The biggest thing I think is working together. There's too many different people with too many different opinions.

I think one of the really big answers to a lot of our problems is immigration. We need to put an awful lot more people in this country, selective immigration.

If we don't do it voluntarily it's going to happen anyway.

Hasn't it already happened?

No, no. I mean people are going to aggressively come and take over this country. They see the second largest country in the world with all these resources and we've got to start getting them out. We've got to start producing something that the rest of the world wants.

I think you are going about it the wrong way. How are we projecting ourselves to the world? If it were up to me I'd be educating the world about what we have to offer. I think Canada is probably not promoted as to what we have to export.

I think there's a lot of promotion going on all over the world for Canada's exports.

Well, what can we do to make that better.

We have to produce more to start with. We have to produce more and we have to produce better.

You just made me think of the Red Rose tea ad, only in Canada.

Q. ALL OF A SUDDEN WE SAY THERE'S GOING TO BE A FOCUS ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE, WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO US, WHAT DO WE HAVE TO DO?

Maybe we have to send delegates out to educate people about what we have here.

Q. I WANT TO FOCUS ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE, WE'VE SAID A LOT OF THINGS ABOUT IT SO FAR, I HAVEN'T HEARD THE WORDS RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT, I HAVEN'T HEARD JOB TRAINING, WHY HAVEN'T I HEARD THOSE THINGS?

Well, you did to a degree from this gentleman over here. He said that we should increase our immigration selectively. And I agree with him 100 percent and in doing that, people will see the raw materials and they will say, "Look we can produce this or we can produce that" and then we will start to produce more and then we will start to teach more. I think one will follow the other and as we produce more and teach more I think we will export more. As we export more, our economy will be better.

I'm sitting here thinking that at the end of the two hours you're going to tell us who the client is. The way the questions are directed to us, the client can only be one person and if the client is only one person then I think that you're not doing your job because you're nipping in the minds of some of us here. If the client is who I think it is, you're nipping one of the things that they should know that you won't let them know.

P. I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT I WON'T LET THEM KNOW?

If your client is the federal government, you've been told to cut out anything with the language issue.

P. NO IN FACT I WON'T TELL YOU WHO THE CLIENT IS UNTIL THE END OF THIS AND SECONDLY...

Well then, about the economy I think other countries are looking at us and they're not going to buy from us or they're not going to invest their money in us because they see an unsettled atmosphere...the core of it is language.

That's right we are a divided country...

And I think that affects the economy.

Q. OK, ALL YOUR POINTS ARE REALLY VALID AND I JUST WANT TO SAY THAT I'M NOT TOLD TO CUT ANYTHING OUT BUT I WANT TO BRING THIS RIGHT BACK TO IF WE WERE TO HAVE AN INCREASE ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE WHAT ARE THE THINGS THAT WE WOULD HAVE TO DO TO COMPETE AND TO BE INVOLVED IN THE WORLD MARKET?

That depends on what kind of market you are talking about. If you're talking about natural resources that's a certain thing.

Are you talking about learning all the languages...

P. DOES THAT HELP, I DON'T KNOW I'M NOT TRYING TO DIRECT THE CONVERSATION...

If we are trading world-wide, people have to know multiple languages.

Are we developed technologically to produce the things that the rest of the world wants? Do we have the technology? I don't think we're working on it.

I think Canada has the brains, we need more population.

Exactly...

Can I get back to immigration a bit because I am an immigrant. When I left Scotland, we came over here because it offered an awful lot more to us. I come from a ship building family, ship building is one of the main trades of Scotland and when our young lads leave school in Britain at 15 they go into an apprenticeship training course where they learn to be a welder or a plumber. At the age of 21 they have a trade, I could never understand why Canada has to go to Britain to find workers. Why can't they start here in Canada with their own children, train them and give them the jobs?

We're doing that at the dry dock right now. We're putting workers into the dry dock from Europe.

Why can't they do it with the kids here?

Because they say they don't have the skilled work force here.

But why can't they train the people here that are unemployed?

One thing that might help answer your question is our work here is very unsteady and unpredictable. We don't have a 20 year period where the dry dock goes at a boom. If we did we could probably implement long term planning and have some of the things that Scotland does. We are building six frigates right now and once that's through there will probably be a skeleton crew at the dry dock for another 10 years.

But if you had the productivity here, other countries would know that there were workers here to do the work.

If the Canadian government wasn't buying the ships nobody else in the world would be buying them. They couldn't afford to. For what we're paying those workers out there and their productivity, you could not sell one of those boats and make a profit on it.

I can see what you're saying that you may not have that work forever but if you have the people with the ability to do it then...

Oh, yeah, the possibility of getting more work is better.

In other words you could use it as part of your advertising campaign, we do have the technology.

If I was a young person coming out of high school and faced with the possibility of becoming a welder for instance, seeing welders working for five years and being unemployed for five years and leaving the country to work, my ambition to be a welder would be fairly limited.

I read a statistic that in ten years 60-70 percent of the jobs will require higher education beyond high school. Along with that was the statistic for people dropping out of high school and the statistic wasn't balanced out.

We're doing something wrong in this country with educating our children. The amount of illiterates in this country, we should be ashamed of ourselves. We have people coming out of high school today who can't read or write. In a country as small as ours having so many illiterates is going to hurt your productivity and your whole concept.

Q. GOING BACK TO THE WHOLE PRODUCTIVITY THING, IN TERMS OF MAKING CANADA MORE PRODUCTIVE OR MORE COMPETITIVE, WHO DO YOU THINK IS GOING TO HAVE THE MORE POSITIVE INFLUENCE, DO YOU THINK IT'S GOING TO BE GOVERNMENT, DO YOU THINK IT'S GOING TO BE BUSINESS, ACADEMICS, INDIVIDUAL WORKERS?

I think it's the people in the work force now that are going to have more to say about it because it's affecting them. The kids that are coming out of high school, universities and technical school you'd think they're going to have something to say because it's really going to affect their future.

The biggest influence that draws anybody to anything is money. If we are going to stop exporting raw materials and start making things out of them to export, then you are going to have to put a lot of money into it because people are not going to work for minimum wage to improve the country.

I think we have to become specialists in everything so they believe the best place to get it is in Canada. They know more in Canada.

P. WHO'S GOING TO HELP US GET THERE. DOES THAT START WITH THE GOVERNMENT?

If we've got to depend on the government to do that, it's kind of scary because I don't think you can depend on the government for a lot.

If I were starting a business tomorrow, I would make it a team concept where the more you put in the more you reap. The employees are involved in owning and running the company, like you said, money talks. If they see a chance to make more money for an hours work then they're not going to be in such a hurry to leave at five o'clock. This is where productivity comes into a lot of things, it's simply that extra hour. To start off in the morning it would take you longer to make the same amount of product than it would working an extra hour because you are already into the movement of whatever the job may be. You're going to make twice as much.

I happen to know a lot of what you're talking about because I worked for _____ for three and a half years and I started out loading their trailers, I ended up running their number 1 line, I went through their whole plant and I went from \$5.50 an hour to the top foreman which is \$10.20 an hour. Three and a half years of very hard work, but if you're a union employee making \$17.00 an hour and your boss comes to you and says, "Do you want to stay that extra hour," what for, you've already got \$400 in your pocket...

I'm not talking about union employees, you've got to keep the team concept...

We're also talking productivity and larger companies are largely unionized...our resources are.

Q. IF WE WERE TO BE MORE INVOLVED IN INTERNATIONAL TRADE WHAT ROLE WOULD YOU SEE FOR UNIONS, THE ROLE FOR BUSINESS, THE ROLE FOR GOVERNMENT AND IF THERE'S GOING TO BE AN INCREASED FOCUS ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN THE NEXT TEN YEARS WHAT ROLES DO YOU THINK THOSE PEOPLE SHOULD PLAY?

More research and development is what you're going to need actually.

P. WHAT ROLE SHOULD BUSINESS PLAY IN THAT? SHOULD THEY PLAY A ROLE?

Equal profit sharing, looking after the employees...

I think it's not going to be government because regardless of which government is in, it's going to be the people telling the government what to do. To a large extent the people are told by money. The only way that they're going to be able to be competitive world-wide is to look at the companies which are the team concept. I think the large companies here, regardless of what they manufacture have got to keep the team aspect. The team aspect will be a marriage, and hopefully, a happy marriage between union and owner.

Profit sharing.

You were saying about subsidizing the larger companies to produce so that they can export. What about the companies that they subsidize so that they can set up for a few years and the workers work and you're making a good living and then the company says oh, we're bankrupt and they close down. They don't repay the government and that's it, that takes a big piece of the economy right there.

P. THAT'S AN INTERESTING POINT BECAUSE PEOPLE TALK ABOUT FOREIGN INVESTMENT...

No, because things like that don't work.

P. IS THAT GOOD OR BAD? FOREIGN INVESTMENT?

I think it can be good as long as it's controlled.

I think it's like immigration, I think you have to watch it awfully carefully.

There's a _____ company in from Sweden setting up in town here. They've got some sort of government deal.

Are we going the wrong way by having these foreign people coming in and offering them the money to set up. We seem to be doing too much...

We should offer it to our own...

It's not that they're foreigners, it's just that...

It's the technology from Sweden..

We're importing technology that we need but we don't have. The government is saying to these people, "Ok, you come in and set up and we'll give you \$20,000 for every job you produce" and these people are sitting over in some board room saying "Ok, we'll produce 400 jobs that will give us 60 million dollars". They don't really care because they haven't invested any money.

Q. WHAT DO YOU THINK THE MOTIVATING REASON WOULD BE IF THE GOVERNMENT FOCUSES ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE?

Money.

Money.

The economy.

They might do it as an outreach program to help underprivileged countries. That to me would be the only two aspects that they really should consider. A lot of people really thought very

ill of our dear Mr. Mulroney when he left close to 180 billion to the people of the Caribbean. 99 percent of the people in the Caribbean are poorer than you can think of the poorest poor and the only reason they're living at all there is because they are living like Adam and Eve. But I am a strong believer of charity begins at home.

Q. THERE ARE A BUNCH OF GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS THAT WE'VE HEARD ABOUT TONIGHT LIKE THE GST, I HEARD AT THE BEGINNING OF THE EVENING THAT THE GOVERNMENT DOESN'T HAVE A STRATEGY, IT DOESN'T HAVE A PLAN?

I don't think they research enough.

They have a plan, it's to get as much money from Canadians as they can.

Don't you think a lot of those people take the political jobs for the big money. They're in there for a few years and they retire rich.

It's true they wouldn't have any _____ or the lower class because they've never lived it.

I agree with that, it's hard for somebody who's never had hard times to realize what hard times really are.

Q. DO YOU SEE THE FREE TRADE AGREEMENT AS BEING CONNECTED TO INTERNATIONAL TRADE OR ARE THEY REALLY DIFFERENT?

Yeah, I can see it.

We can't survive without international trade. If we just produce enough to satisfy our own needs, there's a lot going to waste.

There'd be a lot of people not working.

We've got to sit straight with all the countries as well. If we want to just export and not let them import, then they're not going to allow us to export.

Look at the Japanese market, the base that they have over there that we can sell to, is how many thousand times greater than our own. I can only buy one television and there's 24 million people in the country and over there you're dealing with 200 million people that need televisions and they're all buying them from their own people.

Japanese society is very protectionist.

We have to live internationally. We can't live on what we are doing amongst ourselves.

Free trade is going to hurt a minimum of people. I think that the majority can only benefit by it.

In Canada, you mean?

In Canada. Between Canada and the United States, the majority can only benefit from it. By buying a cheaper product that's imported from the United States.

No, I think that it will encourage more American investment in this country.

And do what?

Set up plants here and ship it back to the States.

Yeah, but what it's doing is closing plants down here. They had to operate under protectionism, now they don't have to operate. With free trade, they close down here and they ship in from their plant in the States.

Yeah.

As far as the average man on the street he's going to see very little change. Big business is where free trade is going to have the most impact.

P. SO AM I HEARING THAT FREE TRADE IS GOOD?

For the vast majority I think, yes.

I don't think so from what I can see now. In British Columbia, the United States were allowed to fish before but they had to take the fish to the Canadian factories for processing and now they're allowed to take them back to their own place. A Canadian plant just closed down so there's more Canadians unemployed. That's happening right across the country. Now, I think you're going to see more of it.

Don't blame that on free trade. The Europeans have been fishing in our waters for generations and processing it..

No, not just the United States. Mr. Mulroney let France have \$500,000 dollars to make up their deficit because they didn't get their fish quotas, to me I think we should be looking after Canadians first.

Free trade should make us more competitive. For example, in this province everybody at this table except you pays 14 cents a dozen for eggs to the egg marketing board..

Do we need an egg marketing board? Do we need a milk marketing board?

We certainly do not. But what I'm saying is that free trade in this province is not going to make your eggs or your milk cheaper because they are restricted. Those products are exempted. Right now you can go across the border and buy milk and chicken for half the price, but those products are not allowed into this country. Even with the free trade agreement they're going to protect these marketing boards. These marketing boards are paying a lot of people's salaries but they're not doing anything to bring the price of the product down.

Q. IF YOU WANTED TO LEARN MORE ABOUT TRADE, WHERE WOULD YOU LOOK? WHERE WOULD BE THE CREDIBILITY?

Trade and Commerce Department.

P. WOULD YOU BELIEVE IT?

Who keeps records other than government with regards to trade? There's a lot of merit in what you say, how much of it are you going to believe?

Q. WHY DON'T WE SUM UP, ANY LAST COMMENTS?

In a lot of ways I think we're our own worst enemies. How many of us go across the border to buy for Christmas instead of patronizing our own stores here?

I think everybody here is pretty bad but the government is worse.

She talked about people crossing the border, that has a lot to do with competitiveness.

That's because of the free trade structure within their own country. They don't have any marketing boards or anything. Up here you can only have at the most 2500 chickens. But that is mostly to protect our farmers.

It was to protect our farmers but it did not protect the chicken farmers. There's no more chicken farmers. It made the consumer pay a lot more for the product.

So are you saying to have updated boards with updated ideas?

No, no, get rid of the boards.

We definitely need a return to free enterprise, something that we haven't had in years. These marketing boards are a prime example.

My feeling is that Canada needs more strength, they're too laid back, they have to get tougher. The biggest thing is the government, you can't fight them, they're there and that's it. To get the strength I think it comes from the people.

I think the government and the people are going to have to get together because our economy is not going to get better, it's only going to get worse, or it's going to get a lot worse before it does get better.

I hear some awfully angry people here tonight, I'm surprised really. I mean I am fed up with conditions in Canada as anybody else but everybody is getting into francophone bashing and...

(End)

Trade Focus Groups - St. John
April 19, 1990

Introductions:

Danny, I'm a machinist. I've lived in St. John most of my life.

Jim, I'm an environmental service worker for St. John regional hospital. I've lived in St. John for 23 years. I'm 23 years old and I enjoy my work.

Anita, I have three kids...(sound level too low)

Donna, I'm happily married and have a seven year old son. I'm a freelance title searcher. I've lived in St. John all my life.

Gail, I'm the principal of an elementary school. I enjoy working with children in the field of education very much.

Abe, I'm retired now, I have been for five years. Before that I worked for the provincial government as chairman of the film classification board. I've lived in this area all my life. I'm married for the second time. My first wife died in 1982. I have four children of my own and three from my second wife. That's seven that we have between us and eleven grandchildren. I really enjoy life.

Gordon, I'm an Anglican cleric, this is a new vocation for me. I'm a recent resident to the area. My son is seven months old.

Pat, I'm a full time student. I've lived in St. John all my life. I work part time at a spring shop on the west side.

Mark, I'm happily married with a two year old son. I've lived here all my life. I'm a graduate of engineering from the University of New Brunswick.

Harold, two kids. I've lived in St. John all my life. I've enjoyed it. I've done a lot of sports and went to school here. About 14 years ago, I had a stroke when I was 22 so I'm disabled now. I'm looking for work. I plan to attend community college in the fall, if everything goes right.

Fraser, I have five children and five grandchildren. I manage a restaurant equipment company. I've lived all over the Maritimes in my life but I've been in St. John for the past 22 years.

Q. I WANT TO TALK A LITTLE BIT ABOUT THE ECONOMY TONIGHT AND I WANT TO START BY ASKING WHERE YOU THINK YOU ARE TODAY AND WHERE YOU THINK THINGS ARE GOING TO BE TWO TO THREE YEARS FROM NOW? ARE THEY GOING TO BE BETTER, WORSE OR ABOUT THE SAME?

Well, where I work they're losing a lot of business. They're starting to lay off quite a bit. I don't know if that's a sign of things slowing down or what.

I really have a sense that, I can't answer that question, there's just so many variables out there. In terms of this country, there is some political instability, and some economic instability. There's also the reality that the United States and Mexico have entered into some trade negotiations that they didn't discuss with Canada beforehand...that could dramatically change the Free Trade Agreement if it becomes a bloc that includes the United States, Mexico and Canada. The variables in Western Europe are dramatic with the changes in Eastern Europe. In terms of the Orient, which is a big power bloc economically, there's a lot of variables at

play there. There's just so many variables right now that it's just so difficult to get a handle on what it means, with the exception of the big players that are getting bigger which squeezes out individuals. Although I don't know what it means, my guess is that for a large number of people around the world it might be worse over the next few years.

Well, this year in my business I'm probably 30 percent ahead of last year. I have a lot more on the books between now and September, God knows what's going to happen after that. I know I can see it tightening up in a lot of the areas, people are a little more cautious spending their dollars.

As you can tell the roads in St. John aren't the greatest, right about now once the roads are thawed and the potholes are there, it's usually our busiest time of the year. People just don't want to spend that little bit of money to do the little bit of work that has to be done on their cars. So if that's a sort of indication, I'd say people are wary about what's going to happen in the future. They're holding back what money they do have.

I look at the young people and they seem to think that because they have two employed parents they can go out and buy these big homes. They want everything all at once and it amazes me that they feel they're going to be able to afford this. I have two university students in my family and paying for them and trying to get them through their education. It scares me because I wonder where their jobs are going to be this summer. Right now my son has no word of a job, last year he did, he knew where he was going. I don't know if they're going to be able to return to university if they don't have the money and their scholarships. It costs so much when they live away from home. It annoys me when I read in the paper that the government has given money, to the Caribbean for colleges and secondary education.

I see how many people are losing their homes. You've got two people working and they have to work. The mortgage rates are crazy, I can see a real problem.

Don't you think people want too high a standard of living?

They jump in and want it all.

When they first get married, they get it all.

I think things are tightening up. There's more bankruptcies this year than before, far more and they're coming more and more every month. Things are tightening up all across the country. I think we're in for, I won't say a depression but I think things are going to slow down.

The interest rates took another jump again today.

P. WHY IS THIS HAPPENING?

We've overspent, we've lived too high. We've got to pay for it.

Look at the way they're bringing up their children, they've all gone preppie. It's just ridiculous they want \$100 sneakers and this is what they're growing up with. They believe that..that's the way it is.

Well, the way the advertising is on radio and on TV for the children to buy certain things, it's absolutely ridiculous. Some of these games they get on there are anywhere from \$100-125 a game. We were lucky to get a jigsaw puzzle in my day.

I think the thing is that the nation, every municipality, every community are all over extended.

Companies have done the same. Companies have been depending on government money and government money is tightening up...

Where I work at I'm the bottom guy so to speak, I find that the people that are a little higher up seem to have no problems with giving themselves raises, money or stuff like that. When it comes to the people a little farther down the ladder, it seems we have to fight a lot more just to get the cost of living. It makes it a lot harder for the common person to just live. It's even more difficult if you're the only wage-earner in the house.

It certainly does make it difficult if you're the only income. You just can't keep up with a two income family. I am a one income family and I've worked hard. I don't go out and go to clubs or go drinking. I don't have that much liquor in my home, only once in a blue moon, maybe at Christmas time or things like that. I don't have the extra money today that I used to have to spend. I've gone back to university to increase my wage earnings but it's still not enough. I'm just barely making it and my mortgage payment is far less than I would ever get an apartment for...

That's your average person that does do the spending. They don't do a lot but you get a lot of people that do spend limited amounts of money. If those average people can't afford to spend money, you're going to rely on exporting goods from our land or whatever.

Q. WHEN YOU LOOK AT THE 1990'S WHAT ARE SOME OF THE KEY ISSUES THAT WE ARE GOING TO HAVE TO FACE AND WHAT ARE SOME OF THE CHANGES THAT YOU THINK WE MIGHT HAVE TO MAKE?

I think the consensus at the table here is that there is going to have to be some sort of belt tightening by all parties. Every level of government is in a debt situation and the people are the same way. The companies have realized that and a lot of that boils down to negotiations with unions and things like that. The companies can't afford to pay big dollars. I think things are very unclear and very uncertain, I wouldn't be surprised to see a lot of quick changes and a lot of reversals too. I don't think it's something that we're going to be able to plan for. I think it's just going to be something that we're going to have to live with and wait and see what happens.

I look at it this way. I've got three boys, one's fourteen and it won't be long before he's going to want to go to university. He wants to study science and it's going to be tough. It's either going to be too hard to meet the costs of university or once he achieves his goal there probably won't be a job available. Everything is so high that I might even have to go back to work, that probably wouldn't help because babysitters are so high.

The more you make the more they take.

I agree that everything is in excess and that has to stop, no matter where it is. Families, business, government, especially government. I see the young people of the future being able to change this, with the knowledge and the technology available to them. If they are taught right, they should be able to take over this and change it in the long term. In the short term I don't know, that's up for grabs.

P. IS TEN YEARS THE SHORT TERM?

Very short, yeah.

Ten years is a long way off, a lot could happen in ten years.

There's some inherent assumptions that the systems that are in place are natural. The monetary system is a created system, it's not a natural system. There's also the way we use language inherently. We throw around the term standard of living as if there's some relation between that and the quality of life. Also in today's system we have a situation where money is power whereas generations ago land used to be power. Those persons with money, exercise power. To bring about dramatic and radical changes it's very, very difficult because those persons with power would feel jeopardized and therefore they would utilize their power to ensure that certain changes don't take place. If you try to be evolutionary and try to work things out, that becomes a bit of a problem because of the time factor. I guess one of my concerns in terms of time, over the next ten or fifteen years or less, are some of the environmental issues, the realities in terms of dollars and in terms of human energy. It's going to take a lot to change some of the problems that I see as inherent. Canadians per capita throw away more garbage than anybody else. There are a lot of problems and a lot of them are inherent in the values which we as a society want to adhere to and assumptions that certain systems are God given and or natural.

I think it's true that we believe that the standard of living is related to the quality of life. Maybe that's the problem that we are too monetary, putting too much value on money rather than the other standards of life. I also agree that we are not taking enough care in our environment but we are starting to try and change things but maybe we've tried too late. Maybe we've waited too long and still we go so far and then they let the cases drop it's just like the _____ here in St. John, how many times have we heard that they're going to clean up the pollution? Six months down the road and then we hear that it's going to be another eight months...I think we shouldn't allow this and maybe that last fine that they got will start to make them want to clear up things.

Ten thousand dollars doesn't hurt them.

It's like a five dollar parking ticket to you.

Q. SOMEBODY SAID THAT THERE'S LOTS OF INTERNATIONAL CHANGES GOING ON, WHEN YOU LOOK AT THE ECONOMY DO YOU THINK THAT THOSE INTERNATIONAL CHANGES ARE GOING TO AFFECT US?

Certainly they are, they're affecting us already because all the immigrants are coming here. We're having more people coming because they think we have a better way of life so that's going to hurt overcrowding. I don't know whether it's going to hurt but it's going to make changes.

It will affect us in a general sense. The average Canadian has a standard of living such that he is isolated from that. Most people hardly know how many immigrants are in St. John or New Brunswick or where they live.

That's because they go to British Columbia and Montreal and...

Well, there's lots of people here too. This is a port...

We live in a global economy in which large corporations are now in place. They clearly make decisions based on bottom lines so for them to move capital and/or fixed goods to a new market place for new labour is something they can do quite easily. They don't require this market in the same way. Irving is a case in point, when they became international their concerns changed therefore, the net income to the province changed. It became a net outflow, they were more concerned about offshore than they were in New Brunswick so...you know, it's just phenomenal when you look at the changes that have occurred in the last 25 years. Seven of the world's ten largest banks are Japanese, one is German, only two in North America. Those kinds of changes are dramatic. 25 years ago you wouldn't have made a statement like

that. They're not so concerned about whether a company manufactures a product in this location or manufactures it in that location. What they're concerned about is who's going to do it most effectively and cheapest. Therefore, you've got companies in England that fax stuff to companies in Taiwan to do their typing for them and they fax it back to England cheaper than they can hire a secretarial service.

P. IS THAT KIND OF STUFF GOING TO AFFECT US, THAT'S INTERNATIONAL STUFF, WHAT ARE WE TALKING ABOUT WHEN WE'RE TALKING ABOUT THIS COUNTRY?

It will affect us maybe not this year but down the line it will.

I think you have to look at the long term. The trouble we got into with our environment is not planning in the long term. The short term thing is that I can dump this here and nobody will ever see it and now you take a look at it and there it is.

Take a look at our fishing industry and what has happened to that in the last year especially on the East coast, we went from the top to the bottom.

Q. WHAT DO YOU THINK OF WHEN I SAY GOING GLOBAL?

Going world-wide.

Diversification.

Taking a vacation.

Going global, I think of the Financial Post or the Globe and Mail using global in terms of market place, in terms of strategies. It's not something I hear as much in the political world or other areas as much as in the economic world.

Competition would be one too, just increasing the players in the game.

A lot of the larger companies are just eating up the smaller companies.

Q. WHY WOULD COMPETITION BE GOOD?

I think it will be good because the people that can do the job better and cheaper will be able to relay that to the consumer. It will certainly hurt various countries and various regions but I think over all it will help equalize things.

P. DO YOU AGREE WITH THAT?

Yeah.

Q. AM I HEARING THAT IF WE OPEN UP AND HAVE BUSINESS COMPETING ON A GLOBAL BASIS THAT WE'RE GOING TO HAVE SOME THINGS HAPPEN? IS IT GOOD, IS IT BAD?

It'll force people to cut the fat and increase their productivity.

In my business, I can buy equipment in the Orient and pay all the taxes cheaper than I can buy it here in Canada. For one I think they are much more efficient, their productivity is a lot higher, their dollar value of their wage is probably not as high but their product is just as good.

Their product may be just as good but with our standard of living, we need more in the dollar sense. Our dollar doesn't go as far as in South African countries, in China or Japan so it would concern me opening up trade...letting Taiwan or Japan take over or let them get all the business if they can produce it cheaper. How are we going to live in our hardships when we have to live in the cold weather. A lot of those countries don't have to deal with the snow and the cold. In fact just last week a man from Africa was at the university doing some studies. He remembers when he was in school and reading about snow and ice and he said he had no concept of that. What was the point of that in his education because to him that didn't mean anything. We've got to live with the snow and the ice.

There's also the assumption that there's competition. I think that companies have reached a point in time where buy out and elimination of competition is the place to go. Very few companies practice laissez faire economy, very, very few. The point is that they can control and manipulate the market place because they're there to make a profit. They're there to make a profit and whatever I can do that's "legal" is ok. We don't have competition at a certain level because once you get to a certain size there's no more competition. You eliminate it because that's how you become bigger. The concept is to become bigger not necessarily to become more efficient. We talk about the number of ways that we are cutting the fat but we also have to look at the number of difficulties inherent in certain industries that weren't there before. There's now a phenomenon that they're starting to deal with in Japanese business where a lot of middle management are starting to have severe and serious health problems and dying on the job because these 60 hour work weeks are starting to catch up to them. The same kind of pressures are being transported to other locations. There isn't competition in the sense that I can do this product or business or whatever better than the other company. We're going to fight it out, I'm going to take him on, I'm going to beat him and I'm going to wipe him out. I'm going to be the only guy around.

One of the problems that we have in the market is most of the working people today are not willing to give a days work for a days pay. It's the gimme society, gimme this and gimme that. I have to have my coffee breaks and all this. I think we're competing against other nationalities that don't have the same thing. They're there to do a days work. They're not asking for the same thing. I know we've got some strikes going on here and I've been involved in labour movements for many years. When I was younger and we needed them, they were great. Heaven help us if we hadn't have had them, but I think they went a little too far. We can't compete anymore.

• Yes, I don't think we have the same work ethics today.

Not that we used to have. An awful lot of times if something is made in Canada you've got to take a good look at it to see if it's made well. They just flop it out and slosh it out. There's no pride in the work.

But that's not dramatically different from the attitude of a lot of companies because the concern is the bottom line. My concern is not my product, my concern is my bottom line. Therefore, if I am an employee for the same company, my concern is not my work, my concern is my pay cheque.

Irving is saying, maybe right or wrong, at the tissue plant down there that if he has to meet the demands, you exasperate him, he can't sell the Kleenex on the market anymore, he can't compete.

A lot of those men are on strike because of the union. A lot of those men would have settled.

That may be true or not true but you have to look at it from another perspective. It could be that in the long run they get what they want, but this time next year they may not have a job.

Yeah, that's right.

Q. A LOT OF PEOPLE SAY THAT WE NEED TO BE MORE COMPETITIVE IN INTERNATIONAL MARKETS AND JOBS, DO YOU AGREE WITH THAT OR ARE THERE OTHER IDEAS ABOUT THAT?

If free trade comes soon, we're going to have to be competitive.

P. DO YOU THINK WE HAVE TO BE MORE COMPETITIVE?

I think so. The problem we're having in St. John and the Maritimes is that the money we are spending is going out of the Maritimes, either into central Canada, the States, China, or Japan. We're not keeping the money where we can use it. If we were to have competition on the basis of companies in a smaller area, like in the Maritimes or New Brunswick, certain companies could compete and bring the prices down. We would be spending our money and it would be staying within the Maritimes, that would help the economy. I don't know if that would help the global economy but if it were to open up into a global type situation a lot of the communities in the Maritimes would be really affected because all of their money would be spent and shipped out.

If we can make a product as well or maybe better than Japan, we cannot put it out cheaper because their labour costs are nothing.

That's not accurate anymore. Japan goes offshore because their labour is too expensive. They produce in the Philippines and Taiwan because the Japanese market place is becoming so expensive. There's a concept there that I can build the same mouse trap better, cheaper, faster. Why build that mouse trap at all? Why not be a market specialist? Why can't I go in a whole new area that no one else is in? Why do I have to go head to head with somebody in the market place that's already packed?

Diversify.

I think we need to look at our strengths for each area and try to build on those instead of working with our weaknesses. Why not put our weaknesses aside and just work with the strengths in each area of the country? I don't feel we're getting the leadership from Ottawa to help us find these. They're not listening to the people that are in the communities and in the areas.

P. THAT'S INTERESTING, WHAT DO YOU THINK WE CAN DO WELL HERE?

Well, we live by the sea so I think we have to look towards the sea and ...

This is also a great tourist place. We have a fishing industry here but we also have a beautiful little community, not necessarily just St. John but around the area.

We have a great opportunity for the tourist industry here. The tourist industry could be great but we have nothing really to keep them...

Or to entertain them or get their interest, there's just nothing.

I think we have lots to keep their interest but we're not developing it. We're not using what we have.

We have those Chipman Hill buildings up there by City Hall. Why don't we have them open for the tourists? People would like to go in and just see what they're doing.

Q. WHEN WE HAVE TOURISM, WE IMPORT PEOPLE, WHAT OTHER SORTS OF THINGS CAN WE DO TO EXPORT, ARE THERE THINGS THAT THIS REGION OR THIS COUNTRY IS GOOD AT EXPORTING?

Brains.

Pulp.

Are you speaking of Canada as a whole?

P. CANADA AS A WHOLE AND THIS REGION?

I think that our friendliness is our first asset...being friendly, mannerly and wanting people to come.

As far as exporting, you have pulp and paper, and fish. Then again you have the fisheries coming over from France that are taking all the fish away from our fishermen which is making it hard for us to export. The two main sources that we have to export are lumber and fish. Our fish is being hurt and we're soon going to run out of lumber.

We're very short sighted in a lot of ways. I could be wrong but I was in Newfoundland just last year and one case in point is the big Japanese boats that are waiting offshore. The capon has to come in to the shore to spawn and produce but before they get to shore the Japanese are catching them and selling the roe, the very thing that's going to make them continue to produce. That's all they want is the roe. What's going to happen ten years from now? I think we're short sighted. We've got to be prepared to tighten our belts. Everybody goes to the government when they want something but now the government has such a big deficit that they've had to bring in the GST to deal with it and now everybody is up in arms. I think we have to be realistic, they've got to get the money somewhere.

Are they taking it from everyone?

No.

Yeah, you were talking earlier about the high costs of going to university. Now they're taxing our books which, for the first term alone I spent over \$400 and that was without tax so it's going to be harder for the younger people to go anywhere to get an education. Where is that going to leave us?

There's certain young people in university that I sympathize with and there's some that I don't.

P. WHAT ARE SOME OTHER THINGS THAT WE EXPORT?

Mining.

Power.

Telecommunications is one area in which we have some expertise world-wide.

I think we're still exporting grain.

Oh, absolutely.

Potatoes.

Sugar.

Forest products to some degree. I think some car parts are still going to the US and locomotive parts are still going to some of the South African countries. Rail apparently from Sydney.

Potash.

Vegetables, like fiddleheads.

Yes, blueberries.

Q. DO YOU THINK THAT THE THINGS THAT WE EXPORT FROM CANADA COMPETE EFFECTIVELY WITH DIFFERENT COUNTRIES?

That would depend on what you were talking about as far as the product goes. In some situations I'm sure they would compete but the price of labour is cheaper elsewhere...

Q. SO SHOULD WE JUST CLOSE UP THE BORDERS AND NOT EXPORT ANYTHING AND JUST COMPETE INTERNALLY?

No.

You can't do that with the balance of trade and the amount of debt. We have international banks and what not. We can't close it down because a lot of it on paper is owned by other people that don't live in this country.

We've got a government that's forgiving loans. What are they doing for us, they're forgiving loans...

They're sending drugs up here.

I don't think there's any stop to it but we're going to have to be a little smarter. We do a good job exporting, we export a lot of our raw materials but we don't really get involved in the actual manufacturing aspect of it. We can sell our paper to a lot of companies down south for newspaper print but we can't compete with selling that same print down south. I think we should try to utilize our resources better internally.

I don't know whether you heard it last week or not but somebody was making kitty litter with paper. Companies are taking the paper down to the States are bringing the paper back and selling it at \$40 a tonne and they just can't compete with them.

Q. WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THE WORD COMPETE?

Well, they're selling the paper at \$40 a tonne. I forget what was the exact price that they had to pay to get the paper here, but it was almost double.

P. ARE THERE OTHER WORDS FOR COMPETITION?

Well, it makes a product less expensive to buy for the consumer. If the manufacturer can buy his paper cheaper, it all goes down the line and it costs less to buy something.

P. I WANT TO FOCUS NOW ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE, IF WE SAID THERE WAS GOING TO BE AN INCREASED FOCUS ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE OVER THE NEXT TEN YEARS WHAT WOULD THAT MEAN IN TERMS OF THE KIND OF IMPACT IT WOULD HAVE ON US, WOULD IT BE GOOD, WOULD IT BE BAD, IS IT NECESSARY...?

I think that after a while, like with the States, we'll just be another state. Free trade, if that's what you're talking about.

We'll be working for a lesser wage and stuff like that. Our standard of living will go down. We'll have to in order to compete.

Productivity will have to go up and you'll have to get used to the lesser standard of living.

I think that if the government is going to put money into things, they're really going to look at what can we sell to other countries and how much can we sell. They're maybe going to be wiser where they place their money. If you are investing money in your business, you want to know where your markets are going to be.

If we're going to be competitive, we're going to have to get our tariffs down.

That's a very open ended question. What do you mean by international trade? Trade that exists in products or service that already exist? Products and service that we've never engaged in that other markets have or altogether radically different products and services? Products and services for which there is an existing agreement of tariffs or quotas, products for which there exists access to markets, for which there exists ability access markets or products and services for which none of that exists?

Q. IF THIS GROUP HERE WAS GOING TO BE IN CHARGE OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE OVER THE NEXT TEN YEARS, WHAT KIND OF THINGS WOULD WE DO, WHAT KIND OF IMPACTS WOULD WE EXPECT?

John Crosbie is supposed to be delivering a paper at GATT dealing with some dramatic changes which are supposed to be taking place in international trade. To hear that text and how the members of GATT respond would be helpful because if GATT is going to stay in place as it is, that's one thing. If the global market is going to radically change that becomes something else. Do I become more effective at shipping resources, renewable or non-renewable, or do I look for altogether new products and services.

I think Poland is interested with some trade with Canada.

If we get involved in world-wide trade as was mentioned, we have to work for lower wages and what not. That may not be so bad because the goods and services coming back may not cost so much and we won't need as much.

One of our biggest problems is population, we don't have enough people. For example, when you go to Florida you pay half the price for your meals and you get twice as much.

Yeah, but I was in Arizona and the gal in the restaurant was making \$1.05 an hour.

Their goods cost less too, like their clothing.

That's right. They don't have to buy winter clothes, but the other side of the coin is one lady down there told me it cost her \$350 a month for electricity to keep her house cold.

We have a country in Canada larger than the United States with one-tenth of the population.

We're so spread out.

There's no way that this country could ever balance the budget, never. But getting to international trade, if we were to go after some of the markets that we've lost, we could possibly balance the budget. I remember working at the port where there'd be car loads of

cheese, hams, and pigs going in. Now they're getting it from Norway and all that market up there, they're part of the common market. So I don't think we have a hope in Hades of getting back into that market but in France, their government is paying them not to produce stuff. They're land is sitting empty. People are starving in third world countries but they're not going to give it to them because they can't pay. How are we going to trade with them if they can't pay?

They can offer other services that we might want.

Like what?

I don't know.

Babies.

You talked about giving ten million dollars to Jamaica, I don't have any problem with that, it's a very, very poor country. The people will tell you there that there's a hospital and a school, a gift of the government of Canada and that made me feel pretty good because you know they don't have a heck of a lot. I know we need things here but then again I think you have to cast a little _____ upon the water once in a while.

I agree with you in giving, but it's just like in the Middle East. People from here or from Europe went in there for the gas and oil and they caused a lot of problems over there, making them expect more. They were quite happy before.

I read the other day about the head of the Chrysler corporation getting non-unionized labour, that just made me sick, there's nobody worth that kind of money.

Q. DO YOU THINK WE HAVE A PLAN FOR INTERNATIONAL TRADE RIGHT NOW?

We have people, according to John Crosbie, in Boston all the time and overseas that are supposed to be promoting trade. I don't know what's happening or how they're making out but there's a plan, I think there's a plan.

I don't think that there's a concerted effort, an agreed upon concerted effort. There are clearly people involved in it, but it's two different issues. We talk about international trade, say I'm a business person with some product or service that I want to export, do I do that business to business or do I look for some government support in the midst of all that. If I can do it business to business what ever the government is doing it has nothing to do with me. It's two different issues whether it's business to business or business through government.

You're probably going to get a better deal if it's business to business because you know more.

Not necessarily because if there's a lot of tariffs or duties on the other side, I may need government to help me break down some of those walls so I can get into the market place.

I think there's too much waste on the part of the government there getting into some of the programs that I don't think they're even looking at. I think they're just spending dollars and dollars and throwing it away, just pouring it down the drain.

P. LET'S COME BACK TO THE FOCUS ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE, DO YOU THINK THAT THERE IS A STRATEGY BY BUSINESS OR BY THE GOVERNMENT?

Yes, but there's a lot of people going in a lot of different directions. There doesn't seem to be a general consensus on it.

I think some industries are very much engaged in it. The automotive industry is very conscious of international trade.

P. DOES GOVERNMENT HAVE A PLAN?

If it does, it isn't working.

They must have a plan of some sort because of Crosbie's presentation to GATT with some dramatic changes he'd like to see.

Q. WHAT DO YOU THINK THE ROLE OF BUSINESS, GOVERNMENT AND SO ON SHOULD PLAY IN INTERNATIONAL TRADE?

I think if anything...I see an equilibrium coming about in international trade but certainly as a New Brunswicker or as a Canadian, I want to make sure that my interests and the interests of my country are looked out for. And to make sure that it happens I think that we have to ensure that government and business focus on the same type of direction for Canada as a whole. Government and business are going to have to work hand in hand to look out for their common turf, I guess.

P. WHAT DO YOU THINK THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT SHOULD BE?

It should be a guide.

P. I DON'T HEAR THAT THEY'RE DOING THAT VERY WELL FROM YOU PEOPLE.

The problem is that every province is working on their own, their all out for their own...

There's no concerted effort.

I don't think there really is an overall concerted effort by the federal government. I suppose that the federal government is in an awkward position if the provincial governments are in a position to go out and do their own thing anyway. The problem you've got is that if a company has got to be subsidized by government to make a go of it then when they try to sell their product in the States under the new trade barriers, they're penalized for it because they're subsidized.

So it would be better if we had one spokesperson for Canada, not from every individual place?

Yeah, but it won't happen because the provinces won't allow it to happen.

So they have too much power.

But by giving one person the right to speak for everybody, isn't that giving one person too much power?

Well, they've got an impossible task.

Q. ARE WE SCARED ABOUT INTERNATIONAL COMPETITIVENESS? ARE WE SCARED OF THE KIND OF IMPACT IT'S GOING TO HAVE OR DO WE SEE IT AS AN OPPORTUNITY?

I think we could probably open up trades in Russia...

I think there is some fear in the Maritime provinces with the Meech Lake Accord. The threat seems to be whether Quebec is going to leave or if they are going to stay. Are we going to be

one country? You listen to people in the Maritimes and they say I'll join the States before they stay with the rest of Canada. Then you hear all this garbage in the paper about which is best, to keep Newfoundland or Quebec. I think that's the problem right there, we're dividing this country. It seems that every time you look at the newspaper it's looking you right square in the face.

I think in some respects Canadians do feel inferior competing in the world's market place... even around this table there's the idea that we're good, we can produce a good product. We're Canadians and if we are good, we don't tell anybody about it.

So we need the American philosophy that we are...

Not necessarily that philosophy but that idea. I mean, there are areas in which we compete very successfully in the international market. There are areas in which we at times have taken the leadership role but the philosophies and attitudes that we take to the international market place...

Don't you think we are pretty well controlled by the Americans?

No, power is not something that you take from me. Power is something that I give to you, so the Americans haven't taken anything from us.

Well look at our television, where does it come from.

If you want to watch Canadian productions, there's very little. We can't compete.

P. WHAT ARE THE TOOLS WE NEED TO BECOME MORE COMPETITIVE?

A new attitude for one.

We need to believe in ourselves.

We have to change our working attitude.

Have more pride in ourselves.

We need a crisis, something for us all to rally behind.

There's all kinds of job training programs around but are they pointed in the right direction?

Community colleges are never, they're always behind the fact.

Our education system has certainly got to get a lift. There's all kinds of jobs out there for people with the right skills.

And they're cutting back.

You're going to need better training and education, our education...I don't see a lot of things being taught, I don't think there's a lot of training programs really, we need more training programs.

But there's a dramatic difference between training someone and educating them.

You got to be happy in what you're doing.

Your self image is the most important thing that has bearing on your happiness and that in

turn is related to your productivity.

Q. WHAT ROLE IS BUSINESS GOING TO PLAY IN THE FUTURE WHEN WE GO BACK TO INTERNATIONAL TRADE? WHO SHOULD BE TRUSTED OR WHO ACTUALLY WILL HAVE THE MOST POSITIVE INFLUENCE OVER INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND WHAT IT MEANS TO US OVER THE NEXT TEN YEARS?

It should come from everybody as a whole.

I think at this point in time it would be business. If a politician's concern is to be re-elected, their constituents live in this country, a businessman is in international trade for their business and their income. They're interested in international trade, they're not too concerned about whether or not they get re-elected.

The trade delegation that's supposed to be coming to St. John from Japan, who do they represent Japan or businesses in Japan?

Businesses.

Yeah, then I think you're right that businesses have to take the lead.

P. WHY?

I think they've got the know how, I think they've got the reason and I think they're the people best equipped to do it.

Business has the know how but they've also got to have the cooperation from labour.

And government as well.

P. WHAT SHOULD GOVERNMENT'S ROLE BE IN ALL OF THIS?

As I said earlier, I think government and business should work hand in hand. I think if anything they should play a monitoring type role.

I think government's role is to make sure that companies don't get shafted through tariffs and so forth.

I think business has a broader view. I think the political side as you said, is going to be very narrow.

Businesses hire and train graduates for their own particular interest so they know what they are doing.

Yeah, but that doesn't do us any good if they go and buy a company down in the States.

But that's good for the stockholders.

P. IS THAT A WORRY, BUSINESSES MOVING OVER THE BORDER WITH THE FREE TRADE AGREEMENT?

No, not really.

Well, this does happen. It may balance off some, we don't know.

Q. WHAT WOULD BE THE MOTIVATING REASON FOR THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

TO GET INVOLVED IN INTERNATIONAL COMPETITIVENESS AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE?

Unemployment is one thing.

We send food to Africa or India and places like that but look at our soup kitchen lines.

The product or service has a bearing on that, too. With the wheat board or mining industries' concerns about Crown land there is a clear government involvement. Also there's concerns about jobs in a given constituency.

P. WHAT WOULD THE GOVERNMENT'S MOTIVATION BE FOR GETTING INVOLVED IN INTERNATIONAL TRADE?

For some of the members, they are concerned with unemployment and the economy. But for others, getting elected is their only real concern.

I think what would motivate the government is that it's going to bring in more tax dollars and improve the economy. The way to motivate them is lobbying, we all have to get involved and we don't.

Q. YOU SEE SOME OF THE INITIATIVES THAT THE GOVERNMENT IS DOING RIGHT NOW LIKE GST AND UIC, IS THAT CONNECTED WITH TRADE?

Well, the UIC might be.

P. IS THERE ANYTHING THAT YOU CAN THINK OF THAT THE GOVERNMENT IS DOING THAT IS CONNECTED WITH TRADE AT ALL?

Well, there is of course the recent Free Trade Agreement.

P. OK, LET'S TALK ABOUT THAT, DOES THAT DIFFER FROM INTERNATIONAL TRADE?

Free trade is just between Canada and the United States.

I think it's the same. It's just a first step. We'll see how we can do with the Americans and then we'll try the world.

Then we'll try GATT, the common market.

Well, is the common market what we're going to have here through free trade? Isn't that what they have in Europe, a common market?

Yeah.

And we're going to call it free trade.

Well, I don't think Canada has too much to do with the common market...

No, but that's the concept...

Yeah, and now they're going to try and get Mexico on the other end.

P. HAVE YOUR VIEWS CHANGED ON FREE TRADE SINCE IT HAS BEEN IN PLACE?

I think there's still too much bickering going on, too much petty things being brought up in different areas.

What I get out of free trade is that Canada seems to think that they have more to offer than the United States. Therefore, they don't want to put up their goods so easily without getting something in return, that seems to be the whole dilemma here.

You have to ask yourself what's happening when you can go across the border and buy turkey for 69 cents a pound and milk is half the price. How can they do it? Is free trade going to make our farmers go out of business?

There's so much we don't know about free trade.

That's what I was going to say, what is free trade?

What are we getting from it.

We're getting the shaft at this end of it.

The companies that we have here in Canada, they're closing up and going to the States.

...And that's not good or bad, that's just a reality. Sometimes if you go head to head, everybody's assuming you're going to play the same rules...

P. ARE THE EFFECTS OF FREE TRADE LONG TERM OR IS IT TEMPORARY?

I think that eventually it will work out but at the moment we're seeing losses. We're seeing our products and our companies moving some place else and we're not getting anything.

I don't know how you can tell.

Once we get used to it and once we change our attitudes, if we ever change our attitudes.

A lot of the jobs that have been lost have been blamed on it. But they probably would have happened anyway, the economy has had a lot to do with it too.

Once free trade is fully implemented, you'll have to wait to see the effects whether it's good or bad.

P. DO YOU THINK PEOPLE WILL TOLERATE IT THAT LONG?

They don't have a heck of a lot of choice.

P. WHAT DO YOU THINK CAN BE DONE ABOUT IT, ANYTHING?

You could probably change the government. The way it looks right now they have about 16 percent but I don't think any new government is going to change free trade. It's going to stay whoever is there.

If you're talking about certain companies or certain industries that have already moved their facilities south of the border and just transport their goods back to this country, the likelihood of changing the rules and forcing them back is very, very difficult. If they've already made all the expenses to move to a location, to some extent that's not dramatically different than some businesses moving out of Chicago and Detroit down to Alabama because of some other realities. But part of it has to do with businesses just getting smarter too, recognizing what goods and services are ours. Some of the difficulties with that is that it may only be in some

regions. Certain industries that are Quebec based are doing quite well right now but how is that aiding people in Saskatchewan or Nova Scotia.

I think the government needs to do some work in that area...

I think of a company like Bombardier that was already doing well before free trade. What are the spin-off benefits to the whole country?

And maybe not just all...it has to have some negative things too, you know...to be truthful it should show both sides of the coin.

Part of the problem is the regionality of the country. Certain places are going to benefit, but how do you deal with that to make it more equitable?

Q. I WANT TO SUM UP HERE, WHAT HAVE YOU HEARD IN THE DISCUSSION TONIGHT?

I think that basically free trade, international trade is inevitable. It's going to happen, we're just going to have to adapt, be more creative, learn to accept it and use it to our advantage. People are going to be hurt but people are going to be helped too. That's the bottom line, it's just going to happen.

P. I'M GETTING THE IMPRESSION THAT THERE IS A COMPLACENCY HERE AND THAT PEOPLE ARE WILLING TO SIT BACK AND GET HURT IN THE TRANSITION PERIOD, I'VE HEARD THIS IN BOTH GROUPS THAT I'VE SPOKEN WITH, TELL ME IF I'M WRONG IS THERE SOMETHING THAT I'M MISSING OUT OF THIS WHOLE THING?

There's confusion, pessimism but there's also a sense that people are powerless. I've lived all over North America and one of the things I recognize about people living in this part of the world, the Maritimes, is that there's a tendency to feel good about being a Maritimer in a very negative way. People feel glad to live here but wish it would change. I don't want it to change.

I think we are going to go through some rough times with free trade and all that before it balances out. I think I'll live long enough to see it happen, we're going to be kicked down but we're going to come back. We're going to sit back for awhile and then we're going to say, "Damn it all, I'm not going to take this any longer." Then we'll get out and do something about it.

P. DO YOU THINK WE'RE GOING TO BOUNCE BACK?

Yeah.

I'm convinced we will.

P. HOW ARE WE GOING TO DO THAT, I HEARD EARLIER WE'RE GOING TO CHANGE OUR ATTITUDE, THERE'S GOT TO BE MORE PRIDE BUT THERE'S GOT TO BE MORE THAN THAT AND I WONDER WHAT IS IT?

Survival of the fittest.

But survival of the fittest is from a biological or philosophical stand point it's not a statement of individuals. It's a statement of communities or groups, so a lot of it has to do with what we can do. There's a sense that what can you do, what can he do, but it's really what can we do.

Q. I GET A SENSE THAT THERE'S CONFUSION BUT THERE'S A NEED FOR INFORMATION WHERE WOULD YOU LOOK FOR INFORMATION ON THIS AND WHO WOULD YOU TRUST TO GIVE IT TO YOU?

Books.

Most of the information you get is from the media, you don't know whether to trust them or not.

I would like the government to do an evaluation on free trade and show all the pros and cons for all areas in Canada. Why not be open, any change is going to be gradual so why not be working on us gradually. It's going to take ten years for us to accept it.

P. THE OTHER THING THAT'S IMPORTANT THOUGH IS THAT IF I WANT TO GET INFORMATION WHERE DO YOU WANT TO GET IT, DO YOU WANT TO TURN ON YOUR TELEVISION AND WATCH A TWO HOUR SPECIAL OR DO YOU WANT A BROCHURE...?

I think if you had a journal packet that was in simple terms that anybody could understand...

I don't think people would read that. I think it has got to be short and sweet and keep on pushing it and pushing it and pushing it.

P. LET'S SAY YOU HAVE YOUR CHOICE, LET'S GO RIGHT AROUND THE TABLE, WHAT'S THE BEST WAY TO HAVE THIS COMMUNICATED TO YOU?

I'd like to sit in a room with an academic, a business person and an elected official, giving me their presentation and allowing me a question and answer period.

Yeah, a debate kind of format where we get to ask questions too.

That's the way I want it from all sides.

That's a valid point because people's interest will get peaked after they see and hear what's going on. Then they're going to go out and find out what is going on. If they really don't care about it, no matter what you do you're not going to get through to them.

P. IF YOU DON'T HAVE THE CHANCE TO BE IN THE SAME ROOM WITH THEM BUT YOU'RE LOOKING AT THE VEHICLE BY WHICH IT IS DELIVERED TO YOU: TELEVISION; RADIO; BROCHURES AND A COUPLE OF OTHER THINGS, WHAT WOULD YOU CHOOSE?

I would choose them all.

It has to be personal.

It's not the same thing because if they're in Ottawa you don't know who is in the audience and what kind of questions they're asking. You don't even know whether or not your question would be asked.

I don't want them to come and tell me, I want to be able to feed back into it. I've got two university degrees. I've been alive for 43 years I have some abilities. I want you to hear what I have to say and I don't want to have to wait for the ballot box.

I don't want to do a questionnaire. I don't have time for it.

I guess a public forum is what everybody means.

Yeah, I guess so.

I want to be able to ask questions.

P. ARE YOU INTERESTED IN THIS SUBJECT IT'S A VERY COMPLEX ISSUE AND YOU'VE JUST SPENT TWO HOURS TALKING ABOUT IT AND ANSWERING 70 QUESTIONS ABOUT IT?

It is a complex issue because the world today is clearly not the world I was born in. It's not going to be the world my grandchildren are born in. The rapidity of change and the complexity of change is so dramatic that I need to be able to deal with that. I can't deal with that unless there's persons involved. I feel strongly about that.

Q. ANY FINAL COMMENTS?

I believe the interest is there and people do want to know.

There's a need to know.

I think we have to spend more dollars on education. When I grew up there were hundreds of jobs on the railroads, the farms and the woods and things like that, you didn't need a lot of education and you could go out and make a living but that's not true anymore. I think that's one of the things we've got to do to be able to compete, we've got to spend more money on education.

This city has a 25 or 30% illiteracy rate and that's dramatic, that has an impact on our ability to compete.

If we're going to keep up with the rest of the world we've got to get on the ball.

(End)

LIBRE ECHANGE

MERCREDI LE 18 AVRIL, 1990
18H00

(4-723-02)

J'aimerais vous souhaitez la bienvenue. Mon nom est Serge Lavigne et je m'occupe de sondage auprès des consommateurs. Je tiens à vous rassurez tout de suite, je ne vends absolument rien. Soyez pas inquiets. Comme je vous ai dit tout à l'heure, c'est vraiment de la recherche qu'on fait, pas autre chose. Vous allez remarquer d'ailleurs qu'il y a une salle d'observation. On ne cherche pas à la cacher. Il s'agit d'expliquer à quoi elle sert. Elle sert souvent à faire de la traduction simultanée parce que souvent de ces projets là qui sont d'envergure nationale, qui partent de Toronto, passent par Winnipeg, s'en vont à Vancouver, font un petit croche par ici à Montréal et à Québec et comme de raison quand ça arrive ici il y a un petit problème.

Souvent on nous demande les services d'un traducteur ou d'une traductrice qui se mettent une paire d'écouteurs tout simplement, écoutent ce qui se dit en français, le traduisent en anglais, on l'enregistre sur une cassette et on donne la cassette tout simplement au client. Il s'agit simplement d'écouter cela et comparer les réactions des gens avec les groupes qui ont été faites à Vancouver ou à Toronto et de comprendre un petit mieux si il y a des similitudes ou des choses comme ça. On ne photographie pas. Je vous assure. Il n'y a pas de camera de cachee nul part - passer par le consommateur averti ou rien de ce genre là. C'est vraiment une surprise. Avec ces cassettes là, moi je prends très très peu de notes. Moi je préfère me concentrer sur la diction comme telle et... Non, je prends très très peu de notes comme telle et le lendemain matin, j'arrive au bureau et j'écoute tout simplement les cassettes de la veille et ça me permet de compléter les notes manuscrites et à partir de là, bien je rédige un rapport. C'est ça à quoi ça sert. Ca ne vas pas plus loin que ça.

Alors dans un atelier de groupe comme ça, il n'y a pas de bonne ou mauvaise réponse. Je dis ça parce qu'il y a des gens qui s'imaginent que parce qu'on les paient pour venir à une entrevue comme ça qui est tout à fait normal. Y a quand même votre déplacement, votre temps, etc... les gens disent, s'imaginent qu'ils doivent être positifs... c'est beau, c'est parfait, c'est idéal, bravo. Ce n'est pas du tout cela que je veux. Moi, comme je dis tout le temps, on me paye pour trouver ce que les gens aiment, ce que les gens n'aiment pas. Ne vous cassez pas la tête si vous me dites que mon affaire ça n'a pas d'allure, ce n'est pas bon, c'est pourri. Y a pas de problème, ça ne me fait pas de peine, le client va quand même payer la facture au bout du mois. Donc. Ne vous cassez pas la tête. Vous dites tel que c'est, y a vraiment pas de problème. Je ne cherche pas nécessairement non plus à avoir un consensus. Des fois tout le monde est d'accord, des fois c'est pas tout le monde qui est d'accord. C'est chacun son opinion. Et c'est correct. Ca non plus y a pas de problème. Vous avez droit chacun à votre opinion. Il s'agit pas d'essayer de se convaincre mutuellement et de changer.

A l'occasion ça se peut que je fasse un petit geste discret vers quelqu'un comme ça. Ca ça veut tout simplement dire qu'on va aller à l'autre afin de donner la chance peut-être au voisin ou à la voisine de parler un petit peu parce que c'est normal, quand il y a 9 ou 10 personnes dans une salle comme ça, c'est normal qu'il y en a toujours 2 ou 3 qui ont la parole plus facile que les autres. C'est humain et c'est correct comme ça. Sauf que, une heure et demie, deux heures, c'est vite passée et moi, un groupe a du succès vraiment quand tout le monde a mis son grain de sel dans la conversation et a donne son opinion. Donc, c'est un petit peu frustrant quand se sont toujours les deux trois mêmes qui parlent et que les autres apparemment c'est frustrant pour ces gens là. Et d'autre part, ça me prive moi, d'information intéressante de la part des 7 ou 8 qui parlent moins souvent.

Donc, encore une fois, si jamais je vous fait un petit geste, ne vous choquez pas, c'est pas pour

vous faire peur, on est là pour jaser. Mais c'est pour que vraiment tout le monde aille la chance de placer son mot et de cette façon là, vous allez voir ça, c'est le fun, ça roule pis ça bouge rapidement et c'est vraiment intéressant. Bon. Je pense que c'est tout ce que j'avais à vous dire. Mais avant de commencer, si vous permettez, je vais prendre vos noms.

J'aimerais cela que vous me dites peut-être avant de commencer tout simplement votre prénom, si ça ne vous ennuie pas. Je pense qu'on va s'en rappeler plus facilement et plus rapidement par les prénoms et d'autre part, ça préserve aussi l'anonymat sur les bandes sonores. Ça ne révèle pas les noms de famille. D'accord. J'aimerais cela aussi si vous me disiez si vous travaillez, dans quel genre de métier. Je veux pas savoir pour quelle compagnie du tout, mais plutôt quel genre de travail vous effectuez, si vous travaillez. Et peut-être, une dernière question, dans quelle partie de la ville est-ce que vous habitez. D'accord? Alors je commence avec monsieur à ma droite.

Moi, c'est Claude.

Claude

Je suis dans le domaine de la construction - surintendant. Je demeure dans l'est.

Nadine. Je demeure au centre Nord. Je suis caissière... en voie de changement.

Ca marche.

Moi je suis Christian. Je reste dans Verdun. Je travaille pour la vente d'impôt.

Ca marche.

Ginette. Je travaille dans un centre de travail Québec à St-Léonard. Je demeure à St-Léonard.

Ca marche.

Moi c'est Michel. Je travaille à la Banque du Canada. Je reste à Laval.

J'espère que tu n'imprimes pas les billets, Michel... Ca serait intéressant..

Moi, c'est Michel aussi. Dessinateur technique en fabrication _____ à Montréal.

Ca marche.

Moi, c'est Judith. Je suis secrétaire.

Ca marche.

Rosaire.

Mario. Je suis informaticien.

Moi aussi. Ca c'est du service que je fais pour gagner ma vie. C'est pas compliqué. Quand je rencontre des gens comme ça, c'est très plaisant.

Écoutez, on va parler d'économie en générale. Je ne sais pas si c'est bien ou mal. Vous allez peut-être me le dire tout à l'heure. On va parler de façon très générale. J'aimerais ça que vous me disiez dans les deux ou trois prochaines années qui s'en viennent..je suis sûre qu'on ne voit pas ça venir dans une boule de cristal, pas plus moi que vous. Mais j'aimerais ça quand même avoir un feeling de votre part à savoir durant les 2 ou 3 prochaines années, est-ce que vous mêmes et votre famille immédiate, avez-vous l'impression que ça va être mieux ou moins

bien que ça l'est présentement. Est-ce qu'on s'en va vers quelque chose de mieux économiquement parlant ou est-ce qu'on s'en va vers quelque chose de pire ou est-ce que c'est statique, ou je ne le sais pas. Ce qui m'intéresse incidemment là avant que j'aille plus loin, c'est vos perceptions. Hein. C'est-à-dire que les statistiques je peux aller à statistique Canada, pis je vas trouver toutes les réponses très facilement. C'est pas ça qui est intéressant pour moi. C'est de savoir comment vous percevez les choses. Et quand on perçoit les choses, ben c'est ce qu'on pense. Ça peut être la vérité, ça peut être la réalité ou ça peut être très loin de la réalité les choses qu'on perçoit. Mais cassez-vous pas la tête, c'est ça qui m'intéresse. Donc, si vous parlez un petit peu au travers de votre chapeau là, il n'y a rien là, il n'y a pas de problème, c'est ça qui m'intéresse dans le fond beaucoup plus que la réalité des chiffres, des statistiques que je peux trouver très facilement comme n'importe-qui d'entre nous d'ailleurs dans un livre, c'est pas beaucoup compliqué. Alors, o.k. Si on faisait un tour de table rapidement avec ça, ensuite on va y aller à la bonne franquette toute le monde qui veut mettre son mot, levez la main, je vous pointe et pis on y va. Alors, je commence avec Mario, tient.

As tu l'impression chez toi, Mario, que ça va être mieux économiquement parlant ou la même chose, ou moins bien d'ici deux-trois ans.

Je pense que ça va être pire.

Ca va être pire...

Oui.

O.K.

A cause du vieillissement de la population. C'est-à dire que pour la majorité des gens ça va être pire, mais pour ceux qui font beaucoup d'argent, ils vont en faire encore plus. Ceux qui en font pas beaucoup, vont en faire encore moins.

O.K. Est-ce qu'on peut continuer avec Rosaire.

Je suis plutôt optimiste mais je pense que ça n'a jamais été trop facile, et ça ne le sera pas non plus. Mais, je suis assez confiant.

Est-ce que ça va être assez stable ou est-ce que ça va s'améliorer économiquement parlant.

Ca va être assez stable, je pense.

Il n'y aura pas grand différence...

Non.

Ca marche. Judith, votre point de vue c'est quoi là dedans.

Moi, _____ pour le monde en général. Pour ceux qui sont plus riches, probablement qu'ils vont toujours pouvoir être plus riches parce qu'on les ménage dans les impôts. Et puis, comme le gouvernement veut couper dans l'aide social, bien ça va être plus difficile.

Avez-vous l'impression que ça va être de plus en plus dure dans l'avenir.

Oui. Parce que d'abord pour la santé, on veut nous ôter des choses, on veut égaliser avec les États-Unis qui en ont moins que nous autres.

Michel 1...

Pour moi, j'ai l'impression que ça ne sera pas facile pour les prochaines années. Ça va dépendre peut-être aussi des orientations qui va avoir sur le point de vue des emplois. Moi de ce côté-là, je suis un peu pessimiste.

O K. Si je peux continuer avec Michel 2...

Moi je trouve que ça peut rester assez stable. Ça dépend encore du Lac Meech, comment ça va tourner là-dedans. Ça peut quand même arriver à une séparation, ça peut chambarder beaucoup l'économie du Canada... ça peut être très grave...

Moi, je pense que ça dépend beaucoup de l'orientation au point de vue politique avec tout ce qui est en marche avec le Lac Meech et toutes ces affaires là.. Remarquez que je ne suis pas ça de près mais la séparation du Québec, ces choses là, ça peut changer le point de vue économique des choses pour le Québec.

O.K. Avez-vous l'impression, jusque pour peut-être vous deux, parce que vous êtes les deux premiers qui l'avez mentionné, est-ce que si jamais il y a une séparation, c'est une possibilité, tout le monde l'envisage, avez-vous l'impression qu'on serait... qu'il n'y aurait pas de changement économiquement parlant, qu'on serait moins bien ou mieux.

Moi, je pense qu'on aurait de la misère pendant un bout de temps. Ça serait difficile.

Ca prendrait un bout de temps avant de s'habituer..

C'est diviser l'économie.

Christian, est-ce que tu penses que tu vas être mieux, moins bien ou la même chose.

Pour moi, ça va peut-être être un peu plus dure. Ça va se stabiliser avec le temps. Le monde vont s'y faire et vont prendre ça comme ça vient.

O.K. Ca marche. Nadine

Moi, au contraire, j'ai l'impression que ça va être mieux. Je suis à l'âge justement à me tailler une carrière, à me trouver une carrière pour moi, pour mon foyer ça va avancer. Un point de vue dans la société dans laquelle j'habite, on parle du Lac Meech, ça passera pas et tout ça, ce qui fait que bon socialement, ça va être un gros coup à observer pour le Québec. Mais je suis quand même optimiste par rapport à ça que ça prendra pas si longtemps pour que le Québec puisse justement se stabiliser économiquement, évidemment après une séparation éventuelle, je pense que ça va se faire quand même assez rapidement. Rapidement bon, ça dépend comment on le voit là. Cinq ans dans la vie du commun des mortels, c'est beaucoup mais pour la vie d'une société, pour la vie ce n'est pas très long. En économie, 5-10 ans, c'est très acceptable.

Claude...

Moi, je suis optimiste aussi. Parce que de toute façon, on est dans un cycle de dix ans en général. C'est un cycle qui revient tout le temps. Je me rappelle dans les années 80, la construction ça été assez difficile, pis on retombe dans les années 90, pis c'est sensiblement la même chose. Quoi que, naturellement, justement à cause de l'instabilité des politiques de ce temps là, ça amené des petits problèmes.

Je suis d'accord avec ce qu'il dit là lui.

Si vous voulez bien, pour le bénéfice de la discussion, pis remarquez moi aussi je suis tout à fait incertain autant que vous l'êtes à ce qui va se passer le 23 juin au soir à minuit. Est-ce que ça va passer ou est-ce que ça ne passera pas le Lac Meech. Je n'ose pas me prononcer pas plus que beaucoup de gens. Mais, pour les fins de la discussion, effectivement, ça peut changer tellement de choses qu'on peut vraiment, si on ne prend pas un scénario précis en partant on saura pas vraiment comment orienter la discussion. J'aimerais ça, voyez-y pas un souhait comme quelque chose qui va arriver, mais j'aimerais ça qu'on essaie de dire, ben, supposons que ça passe le Lac Meech et pis on reste dans le Canada, dans la perspective canadienne. Je vois sourire Nadine. Encore une fois, j'essaie tout simplement d'orienter ma discussion selon un scénario. Mais si on pense d'une façon, si la moitié de la salle pense que ça va passer, et l'autre pense que ça ne passera pas, ben, les deux, vous allez exprimer une vision économique, parce qu'on va parler d'économie différente et on ne saura pas finalement, pas vous référer, si c'est parce que votre vision de ce qui va arriver au mois de juin est pour ou contre ou de ce qui va se passer. Encore une fois ce n'est pas un choix que je fais parce que l'inverse on pourrait très bien dire, o.k. d'accord, admettons que ça ne passera pas, pis qu'on se sépare, ça pourrait être un scénario facilement envisageable. Est-ce que vous êtes d'accord qu'on prenne le scénario que pour le moment on est dans le Canada et admettons qu'on parle aujourd'hui que ça reste comme ça pour le moment, juste pour les besoins de la discussion. Est-ce que vous êtes d'accord. Pas de problèmes.

Non

O.K. Ca marche. Des fois des hypothèses c'est fait pour être démolies. Alors, si on parlait maintenant, là je vous ai parlé en tant qu'individu dans votre noyau familial ou est-ce que vous voyez dans deux ou trois ans, mais j'aimerais ça savoir aussi au point de vue régional, si on parle de la région de Montréal, du Québec, du Québec en général, est-ce que encore une fois, toi, personnellement, tu te sens avancer dans les trois prochaines années. Est-ce que tu es optimiste pour l'ensemble de la région du Québec? T'es pas optimiste.

Ben, optimiste.. je crois que, évidemment, si on décide d'opter pour le Lac Meech, on fait partie du Canada et on y reste, je crois que l'appauvrissement serait très bon pour le Québec, surtout dans les grandes régions, surtout à Montréal.

Les autres, on va faire de petites interventions. C'est quoi, si vous voulez bien, juste pour avoir du feedback. Comment vous réagissez à ça dans l'ensemble du régional. Est-ce que ça va aller mieux ou moins bien durant les deux ou trois prochaines années.

Pas pire. Je trouve que les riches vont s'enrichir, pis les pauvres vont rester là.

Mais, est-ce que vous avez vu pour vous-mêmes, est-ce que c'est la même opinion que vous avez pour l'ensemble du Québec ou ben donc c'est différent comme dans le cas de Nadine, c'était différent. Elle dit, moi je suis jeune. Je pense que ma situation va s'améliorer durant les deux prochaines années. Mais ce n'est pas nécessairement vrai pour l'ensemble de la province. Ca c'est son opinion. Est-ce que ce que vous avez dit tout à l'heure

Ce n'est pas nécessairement vrai pour l'ensemble des jeunes non plus.

Effectivement, il y en a qui vont peut-être en arracher.

Toi, comment tu vois ça? Est-ce que tu penses que pour l'ensemble du Québec, ça va être mieux ou moins bien d'ici deux trois ans?

Non. Parce que on n'arrive pas à suivre avec ce qu'on gagne, vrai-ment même si on a des augmentations de salaire par exemple, avec qui vont avec le taux d'inflation, ça reste que ça coûte toujours plus cher quand même en fin de compte. Et puis, on s'aperçoit dans les caisses il y a toujours de moins en moins d'argent. Je pense que c'est un des principes

du capitalisme si tu dois de l'argent à quelqu'un tu vas rester en vie. Si tu dois à personne, tu vas mourir, il n'y a personne qui va faire l'effort pour te sauver. Les gens en ont tout de même "ben" plus qu'ils en avaient "v'là" 20 ans. Les gens ont plus d'argent à dépenser, les gens en dépensent plus. Le niveau de vie est plus élevé qu'il l'était.

Mais dans l'ensemble Rosaire, est-ce que vous êtes optimiste pour les deux trois prochaines années, commençant du Québec? Est-ce que vous pensez que ça va mieux aller ou.....

Je sais pas. C'est peut-être pas quelque chose

D'autres commentaires

Il va y avoir des changements dans les recherches. Il y a beaucoup de monde qui font.. il y en a qui vont fermés, il y en a d'autres qui vont grossir.

Mais dans l'ensemble si on décide de faire une moyenne, Judith, est-ce que ça va mieux aller, économiquement parlant au Québec? Je ne sais pas...

Ca va nous nuire ben gros...

Incidemment, je n'essais pas de vous faire dire des choses, hein, je vas vraiment à la pêche, je vous assure de ça. Je n'ai pas d'idées pré-conçues, que j'essaye pas de vous naviguer comme on dit en bon "canayen".

Moi je suis dessinateur technique, pis j'ai eu à travailler avec des grosses compagnies comme Bombardier, maintenant, pour ces grosses compagnies là, il y a comme un ralentissement, pour les petites et moyennes entreprises, j'ai l'impression que ça va dépendre de la demande du produit qui se trouve à fabriquer à ce moment-là.

Mais dans l'ensemble, est-ce que tu es optimiste ou non pour l'ensemble du Québec? Est-ce que tu penses qu'on va être mieux financièrement parlant, économiquement parlant d'ici une couple d'années ou ça va être à peu près la même chose ou

C'est difficile pour moi de dire en ce moment parce qu'en ce moment je suis à la recherche d'emploi. Ca fait quasiment deux mois que je n'ai pas travaillé.

O.K.

Pis, avant, j'ai eu, je travaille pour des agences, et j'ai eu du travail quasiment constamment. Et pis là, en ce moment à Montréal, il y a un très gros ralentissement sur ce côté là. Parce qu'il y a aussi beaucoup de pâtes et papier, si vous remarquez, il y a beaucoup d'industries qui repart avec pâtes et papier, et en ce moment, les pâtes et papier.. eux autres commencent à descendre, comme il disait là lui, l'affaire du cycle, ça descend un peu en ce moment.

O.K. Ca marche. Je continue avec toi Claude.

Je vais dire la même chose. En réalité, ce qui arrive c'est que, on recule dans les trente anglais, mon père me l'a toujours dit, un moment donné à un de ces copains, "_____", arrête de jeter, y dit, ça va tomber. Ca se peut pas que les affaires restent à ce prix là. 8\$ de l'heure, aye, ça pas d'allure, ça va tomber." On est rendu à 20. Eh ben là, on est rendu à une période où c'est stable, où je pense qu'il y a une remise en question de ce qui arrive même au côté gouvernementaire qu'au côté personnes, toute entreprise à un moment donné, au bout de dix ans, il y a un cycle qui dit qu'on devrait peut-être changer telle chose et telle chose.

Faut s'arrêter et penser un peu

C'est ça qui arrive. C'est le moment où là on est dans le bas du cycle qui fait que l'on on est en train de réfléchir et pis un moment donné, on va savoir. Mais ça va jamais en descendant. Ca va toujours aller en montant.

Les autres, vous êtes optimistes ou non régionalement parlant?

La seule chose qui fait descendre les salaires, c'est les guerres. Si il y a une guerre... Avant la guerre, ça fait monter mais après, ça redescend.

Non, moi je pense qu'il y arrive quelque chose pour que ça se replace. Ben d'après moi, faudrait peut-être qu'il arrive quelque chose. Je ne sais pas quoi là.

Mais dans l'ensemble, je ce que veux savoir, c'est, je pense, je veux pas vraiment examiner des points particuliers pour le moment, mais dans l'ensemble, je veux savoir c'est quoi ton feeling pour la province du Québec économiquement, est-ce qu'il est bon pour les deux trois prochaines années? Est-ce que tu penses que ça va être stable, ça va être "rough", difficile, ou ben donc si ça va être mieux, tu sais?

Ben moi, je pense 50\50. Ca peut remonter comme ça peut rester pareille.

Ouais, ça ça ne me donne pas une réponse inter.

Maintenant, je suis assez optimiste. Mais je pense pas vraiment que ça arrive.

Christian, as-tu un opinion là-dessus.

Ben moi, je vas dire que ça roule pour moi la construction. On a toujours un 5\6 ans ben rough, pis après ça ça démarre. Pour moi, dans le moment, on est dans le bas de la côte dans la construction.

Si on transpose ça sur l'ensemble du pays.

Faut dire aussi par exemple, que bon pour tout le monde évidemment, on va dire que les riches vont continuer à s'enrichir et les pauvres, c'est ce qui arrive, c'est que sûrement, et non pas probablement, commençons par la TPS qui va faire évidemment que les gens plus pauvres, c'est eux-autres qui vont en arracher, qui vont... c'est la classe moyenne en descendant qui va avoir les plus gros problèmes. On sait que bon, la partie des gens un petit peu plus fortunés, qui seront même pas la moyenne, y en a quand même..

Je trouve cela intéressant que la jeune apporte la notion de TPS. Avez-vous l'impression que ça va affecter l'économie la TPS la semaine prochaine en 1991?

Ben je pense qu'on va dépenser moins. On va peut-être être portés à serrer nos moyens. Je crois premièrement, que ceux qui sont plus riches vont dépenser plus alors.. A part de ça, normalement, si les compagnies n'augmentent pas leurs prix tout de suite, ils vont baisser de 13.5% au dépars. Là on va commencer avec le 7% et puis ça ne fera peut-être pas tant de différence que ça. Si vous achetez moins, vous paierez moins. Ceux qui achètent, ce sont eux qui vont payer plus. Ca va rétablir plutôt..

Quels sont les facteurs qui vont faire que l'économie peut changer possiblement. La TPS s'en est un.

Si on paye nos impôts, pis l'emprunt diminue, ça va peut-être aider aussi.

Donc, ce que vous me dites, ce qu'on a examiné "so far" jusqu'ici dans le fonds, la TPS va avoir une influence, c'est certainement un facteur politique, à savoir ce qui va se passer avec le Lac

Meech qui peut peut-être avoir une influence, un impact éventuellement, est-ce qu'il y a d'autres facteurs qui peuvent influencer le bien-être économique.

Si le fédéral fait monter les taux d'intérêts ça aidera pas ça non plus.

Les taux d'intérêts... Donc, on a isolé quoi, la TPS, les taux d'intérêts, le Lac Meech. Est-ce qu'il y a d'autres choses à part ça qui peut influencer l'économie du Québec à court terme.

Ben, les taux d'intérêts, c'est la construction. Si les taux d'intérêts augmentent, c'est le ralentissement partout.

Mais si on essaie d'aller voir à l'extérieur un peu parce ben ça c'est des facteurs internes, la TPS c'est notre gouvernement, le Lac Meech, c'est un problème politique local au niveau du pays, mais on essaie d'aller voir au niveau international, y as-tu des choses qui se passent à l'extérieur de notre pays qui pourraient affecter notre bien-être économique en bien ou en mal.

Economiquement, de l'extérieur, c'est que quand le régime, si on part du départ qu'on a dit qu'on restait au Canada, à ce moment là si ça devient stable, ben les gens de l'extérieur vont vouloir investir au Québec. Ils vont dire, ben coup donc, c'est finit là, c'est réglé, c'est une chose réglée, ça ne reviendra plus sur le marché. C'est ça. Ils vont arrêter de se chicaner et pis on va pouvoir investir au Québec. Je crois que c'est une des provinces au Canada où on peut prendre le plus d'expansion en ce moment. Le Québec c'est une forteresse....

O.K. Donc, j'ai l'impression que si on se stabilisait politique-ment ça pourrait assurer des capitaux.... de l'emploi

Ouais, avec l'unification de l'Europe qui est en train de se faire, moi....

Il y a le marché avec les pays de l'est aussi.

Oui, aussi, mais qui se sauve du côté de l'est.

Donc, il y a des affaires du côté de l'est qui se sauvent, il y a l'Europe de 1992, je pense, est-ce qu'il y a d'autres facteurs.

Il y a Hong Kong qui déménage au Québec....

O.K. O.K. Est-ce qu'il y a d'autres...

Il y a la possibilité que certaines banques s'écroulent à cause des dettes.. On ne peut pas les annuler mais faut que l'argent sorte d'en quelque part. C'est de l'argent en moins qu'on va recevoir.

Mais, est-ce que vous avez l'impression que la façon dont le Canada fait des affaires avec les autres pays parce que le commerce inter-national c'est quand même des facteurs importants, est-ce que vous avez l'impression que le commerce international du Canada avec ses partenaires il y a des règles du jeu qui vont changer, ou il y a des choses qui vont faire qui vont être mieux ou moins bien dans un avenir plus ou moins éloigné, deux trois ans.

Je trouve qu'on a à faire beaucoup d'opposants qui sont très agressifs, de fonctionnaires qui sont très agressifs.. notre partenaire économique c'est surtout les États-Unis. L'Europe on y touche un peu mais seulement dans certains domaines pis, les gens de l'ouest ont toujours été plutôt agressifs... y ont plutôt tendance à vouloir avoir le plus gros bénéfice avec tous les pays avec qui ils font affaires.

Mais, est-ce qu'il y a quelque chose qui a changé entre nos relations avec les États-Unis qui pourraient affecter le commerce dans les prochaines années?

Le libre échange

Avec-vous l'impression que ça va affecter le commerce?

Ca dépend de la façon. Ils parlent du Libre échange mais si les unions aux États-Unis se trouvaient quand même à passer par exemple à vouloir dire de ne pas prendre un contrat et continuer à faire de la défense pour garder leurs propres termes à ce moment là, ça peut quand même affecter.

Ca dépend de la bonne volonté de tous...

Mais quand on parle de commerce international de façon générale, il vous vient quoi à l'esprit. Qu'est-ce que c'est que, quelles sont les images que vous allez voir dans votre esprit quand on parle de commerce international? Bien sûr, vous allez penser au Canada et au Québec parce que c'est ça qui vous intéresse particulièrement, y as-tu quelque chose qui vous vient dans la tête quand on parle de commerce international?

Un "polish pot."

Un "polish pot" mais de quoi.. de produits en particuliers ou de ...

de produits de base

De produits de base ou de ressources naturelles?

C'est ça qui est notre problème, qui a toujours été notre problème. On a toujours exporté nos richesses naturelles au lieu de les exploiter.

On a beaucoup de matières premières, mais on n'a pas de produits finis. On devrait plutôt s'axer à les finir et pis les vendre, c'est là qui est le profit.

Je disais que ça coûtait cher aussi les produire.. faut s'installer, faut les construire les usines pour pouvoir faire ce produit fini.

Sur le marché international, il y a aussi la main d'oeuvre à bon marché aussi, comme les chinois, aussitôt qui se trouve à avoir un pays avec beaucoup de monde pis qu'il y a beaucoup de monde qui sont prêts à travailler pour pas beaucoup, on s'aperçoit tout de suite, comme par exemple pour les vêtements, en ce moment on a beaucoup de vêtements qui sont faits en Chine, avant ça pouvait être fait ailleurs, au Taiwan ou au Japon.

Avez-vous l'impression que le commerce international change et si il change de quelle façon change-t-il et pourquoi change-t-il?

C'est la spécialisation. Si ils ont du succès dans ce qu'ils font et qu'ils réussissent à avoir du marché, plus ils ont de marché plus ils ont d'argent, plus ils grossissent, plus les autres deviennent moins compétitifs. Peut-être pas impossible d'imaginer que pas si longtemps, si on n'a pas une union entre les États-Unis, le Canada et le Québec, les matières premières vont venir du Canada mais vont être transformés par les mains d'oeuvre au Mexique pis vont être consommés aux États-Unis. Alors ça va être... dans trois blocs comme ça.

Qu'est-ce que vous pensez de l'idée de Mario?

C'est un petit peu..... on ne fabrique pas de télévision aux États-Unis.. tout est fabriqué ailleurs.

Est-ce que c'est un avantage le fait qu'effectivement, comme disait Mario, on peut prendre le matériel à une place, le fabriquer en une autre, l'exporter à un autre et pis... Ca semble bouger

un petit peu partout, il y a comme une espèce de.. ça se mondialise comme on dit.. Ca semble être une expression assez populaire. Est-ce que vous avez entendu déjà cette expression là, la mondialisation ou la globalisation du marché. Est-ce que c'est quelque chose que vous avez lu ou entendu vaguement là... Oui, tout le monde...

Au Québec, je dirais, ça se fait avec d'autres compagnies, comme par exemple, Bombardier va avoir affaire avec plusieurs petites compagnies pour faire faire des produits pour leurs machines, eux autres vont faire comme l'assemblage mais ils vont faire faire une distribution de travail un peu partout selon les contrats que les gens vont.... les portes sont faites à Taiwan, les moteurs sont faites ailleurs, il y a des certaines compagnies que, au moins, c'est dans la région de Montréal, de Québec ou de Toronto.

Et finalement, c'est quoi les enjeux auxquels le Canada doit faire face dans le commerce international dans le contexte de mondialisation comme disait Mario. C'est quoi les enjeux, pis qu'est-ce que, quelles sont les difficultés que le Canada a à faire face en général dans le commerce international?

On est concurrentiel avec ces gens là.

Etes-vous d'accord avec Rosaire. On est concurrentiel ou on ne l'est pas?

Je pense qu'on est concurrentiel sur le côté de la qualité du produit exacte. Mais pas pour ce qui est de vendre en gros, je veux dire.. on va avoir meilleur qualité comme produit.

On ne produit pas en quantité suffisante..

Il y a cette affaire là aussi mais ça ça prend quasiment toute une organisation bien établie comme je sais pas moi comment que j'appellerais ça ousqu'il y a plusieurs compagnies internationales ensemble qui se sont...

Mais est-ce que c'est le seul facteur auquel le Canada a à faire face, la compétitivité?

C'est dure à dire hein...

Est-ce que c'est vraiment le gros point auquel on a à faire face au Canada, la compétitivité?

Moi je pense que c'est pas rien que le Canada qui est en compétition.. c'est tout le monde.. Tout le monde veut produire plus vite pis tout le monde veut produire mieux

La compétence de main d'oeuvre... mais c'est dans toutes les domaines

Est-ce que tout le monde est d'accord avec ça, Michel 2, qu'est-ce que tu en pense.. Est-ce que, c'est-tu un gros problème la compétitivité ou si il y en a d'autres...

La concurrence.

La concurrence, ouais.

Ca, en plus, on fabrique du bon produit au Canada, mais on a moins de chance de les vendre. Le Japon, y vend ici au Canada .

Finalement, quel rôle est-ce que le Canada devrait jouer dans sa relation avec les autres pays avec lesquels il fait du commerce?

La formation de personnes plus spécialisées. On a des personnes de tête ici, on a des gens en général quand on est assez capables quand on veut, de former des gens qui sont vraiment hors

de l'ordinaire... pis il y en a des "tough."

Est-ce qu'on devrait dans le fond ce à quoi je faisais allusion, c'est qu'on devrait se refermer sur nous autres pis dire ben que le diable l'emporte à l'extérieur, nous autres on va créer notre économie à nous autres, pis on ne dépendra pas de personne pis on va travailler... ou bien si il faut au contraire s'ouvrir à l'extérieur.

Pour moi ça me paraît impossible de... La France sont vraiment perfectionniste dans beaucoup de domaines. Ca serait impossible... ils ont du meilleurs mais eux...

Si le Québec veulent leur indépendance dans ce domaine là, ça ne serait pas une économie fermée, je veux dire... on ne peut pas faire ça, on est trop petits. Nous autres, on a besoin du Canada et des États-Unis aussi.

Ginette, qu'est-ce que tu en penses... il y as-tu d'autres facteurs... Encore une fois, le Canada comme partenaire économique des autres pays, comment est-ce qu'on doit agir.. est-ce qu'on doit être ouvert ou fermé?

Pour moi, on est mieux d'être ouvert parce que fermé, on ne peut pas fonctionner si on va pas avec les autres pays, si on exporte pas.

Mais c'est quoi la plus grande menace pour le Canada finalement face à ces choses là, face à nos partenaires économiques qui ne sont pas nécessairement nos amis,, c'est quoi que vous percevez être la plus grande menace pour les canadiens pour vous personnellement, ça finit par vous affecter individuellement. C'est quoi à ton avis Ginette la grande menace qui vient du commerce international quand on regarde le Canada.

J'ai assez de difficulté à prendre parti là-dedans parce que je ne suis pas tellement...

J'ai comme l'impression que c'est des feelings qui m'intéressent le plus, c'est pas l'expertise.

Moi je considère en ce moment c'est juste

Faut que je brasse ça un petit peu. Christian, as-tu un avis là-dessus. Tu perçois ça comme étant quoi la plus grande menace que le Canada, auquel le Canada fait face?

C'est difficile à dire mais moi, peut-être pas la langue français, anglais..

Mais, quand on parle de commerce vraiment là, t'sais. A part de ça qu'il y a des changements qui se produisent, la globalisation du marché, il y a des changements qui se produisent, il y a le libre échange qui vient de passer il n'y a quand même pas si longtemps que ça. C'est quoi la menace, est-ce qu'il y en a une menace qui vient de ça.

Je sais pas si il y a une menace de la manière qu'on parle, mais, moi je vas dire que ça aide les compagnies disont au Québec, en ouvrant avec les États, le marché est plus grand.

Donc, toi tu vois plus d'opportunités que tu vois de menaces à cette chose là. O.K. C'est un point de vue intéressant, pis je vois que Claude

Je dis la même chose. Il n'y a pas de menace comme telle.. plus d'opportunités. Le problème qu'on pourrait voir c'est de n'être pas assez agressifs. Si on veut, ça reste au dynamisme..

Qu'est-ce que vous pensez les autres. Avez-vous l'impression qu'on n'est pas assez agressifs au Canada comme partenaire économique des autres.

Je pense qu'on se défend bien... on commence.. si on ne l'était pas, on dormait.. Si on regarde avec les américains, je crois qu'on a un meilleur salaire. Par contre, on a aussi plus de dépenses à faire parce qu'on est dans un pays qui a une dette et ça nous oblige souvent... comme les voitures, le sel ça n'aide pas. On est obligés de la changer à tous les cinq ans tandis qu'aux États-Unis, y ont pas besoin de changer aussi souvent.

Mais de façon générale, est-ce que vous êtes d'accord avec les gens de ce côté ici que ça représente plus d'opportunités que de menaces finalement les marchés mondiaux de la façon.. je ne sais pas, vous n'êtes pas obligés d'être d'accord avec ça, je veux tout simplement voir si il y a un consensus

La menace.. ça sort beaucoup maintenant la menace qu'on n'avait pas confiance au gouvernement...

A gauche de la situation du Canada actuel, je crois que les États-Unis ont des craintes bon qui est notre plus grand partenaire commercial pour le Canada en ce moment, je crois que c'est important de faire attention aussi de voir ce qui entre dans notre marche. Mais c'est justement la comparaison avec nos produits canadiens, nos produits québécois par rapport à tout ce qui peut rentrer des États-Unis ou d'ailleurs par rapport à ça. Je pense qu'il faut quand même être sélectif, à cause de la situation du Canada en ce moment, les États-Unis ont des craintes par rapport à ce qui peut se passer au Canada. Donc, évidemment, ils vont essayer de garder leur marché actuel.

Quelles craintes ont-ils à notre égard les Américains?

Ben, c'est de voir le pays se diviser tout simplement. Pour eux, les Américains, ça part d'en haut, pis ça descend jusqu'au Mexique. Eux les Américains, c'est pas les États-Unis c'est l'Amérique. Ils ont une vision plus différente de l'Amérique, nous on prend plus pour les Québécois que pour les canadiens et puis justement, de voir une faille s'incruster quelque part pour eux ça fait une menace.

Mais, avez-vous l'impression que ça va être difficile pour nous autres de s'ajuster à ces changements là, ça va être facile ou difficile de s'ajuster à ces grands changements là qui prennent place au niveau du commerce international.

Moi, je pense que ça va être difficile.

Qu'est-ce que vous en pensez les autres

Je ne sais pas. Ça va venir tranquillement. Le problème est que c'est le contraire. C'est que c'est nous autres qui commence à donner des coup de pieds dans le derrière aux États-Unis pis qu'il n'aime pas ça. J'écoutais tout justement une émission dernièrement, ôtez publicité, toutes nos maisons de publicité au Québec, les gens des États-Unis elles essaient de les acheter.. on en a refusé 7 dans l'espace d'un mois. C'est ça qui arrive je pense, on se trouve à évoluer très vite, pis là on s'est rendu compte que les canadiens on étaient capables de faire quelque chose pis qu'on n'avait pas tout le temps besoin de demander aux États-Unis. Avant ça je pense le problème était, on allait voir aux E.U. on disait, aye, regarde c'est rendu là, on devrait peut-être faire pareille. Là, c'est le contraire. On fait quelque chose, les E.U. disent aye, regarde donc, hm, ils sont en train de nous marcher sur le dos. C'est, je pense qu'on a commencé à évoluer plus vite que, les E.U. ont peut-être peurs un petit peu des changements qui arrivent.

Est-ce que ça va être facile ou difficile de s'ajuster

Ce n'est jamais très facile. Pour moi, ça va aller.

Il me semble que si on parle de... on est dans un pays froid, on est plus actifs, on devrait, avec

un peu de chance, on devrait tenir..

Je pense qu'on a plus d'administrateurs d'envergure.

Quels sont les ajustements , les petits changements qu'on devra faire pour s'adapter à notre nouvelle réalité économique des années 1990. Il y as-tu quelque chose qu'on va être obligés de changer chez nous, de faire ou encore une fois, je vais à la pêche.

On a toujours été habitués de dépenser beaucoup. Peut-être, éventuellement on va se donner une seconde nature de se restreindre un petit peu. Parce que là on a ouvert les valves peut-être un petit peu trop grandes, là on va se réajuster, on va les refermer peut-être un petit peu pour laisser passer juste un bond de vie normale. Mais c'est une question de réajustement.

Mais pourquoi qu'on va devoir se serrer la ceinture un peu Claude au point de vue économique.,

Comme je vous dis, c'est un cycle, on a évolué beaucoup, tout d'un coup là, on dirait qu'on va la réajuster cette valve là. elle était peut-être un petit peu trop grande. Les années 90 à aller jusqu'à 92, on va se serrer la ceinture, pis après ça, oups, ça va repartir en folie encore, comme d'habitude.

Se serrer la ceinture ça veut dire que, les années...

C'est sûr, mais ce qui arrive à tous les dix ans. C'est un réajustement, il faut que les gens se réajustent. Les agences de publicité... C'est ça qui fait que ça fait donner un coup de pied dans le derrière aux gens...

Qu'est-ce qu'on peut faire pour minimiser l'impact ou s'ajuster un petit peu plus facilement, minimiser l'impact de ces gros changements là finalement qui brassent un peu tout le monde. Qu'est-ce qu'on peut faire d'après vous autres pour essayer de s'ajuster plus facilement. Il y as-tu des choses concrètes à faire.

Faut travailler sur l'environnement. D'après moi, ça va être important ça aussi.

Mais là, si on parle de commerce international, je suis d'accord avec vous que l'environnement va finalement finir par avoir un impact, ça va nous rattraper un de ces quatre matins là, il va falloir se mettre à dépenser comme des fous pour sauvegarder l'environnement autrement on ne survivra pas, mais,

Faudrait peut-être essayer un peu de , d'acheter des produits d'ici pour commencer.. Peut-être faire un peu comme les autres, je sais pas, la mentalité juive est un peu comme ça. Jamais vous allez voir un Juif aller acheter chez un Italien, il va aller acheter chez un Juif. Peut-être que ça serait bon de commencer à aller acheter des produits canadiens.

Mais si on essayait de revenir, parce que je pas sûr que je comprends bien au niveau du commerce international quels sont les problèmes potentiels parce que quand j'ai abordé ce problème là, cet aspect là, Claude a dit dans le fond il y a plus d'opportunité qu'il y a de menaces. Alors dans le fond, ça va bien notre affaire si les changements sont en notre faveur et si on ne trouve que des opportunités pis aucun problème, ben bravo pour nous autres. On est bon, on va s'en tirer, non seulement on va s'en tirer mais on va être mieux que tout le monde. Avez-vous l'impression qu'on va se tirer notre épingle du jeu mieux que tout le monde dans cet game là du commerce international ou ben donc que ça va être tu sais une belle route bien pavée...

On sera pas mieux que tout le monde mais...vous parlez à quelle échelle.

Mais je parle à une échelle de mettons trois ans, c'est quand même, aujourd'hui on peut

difficilement projeter dix ans d'avance.

C'est la même chose qu'on disait tout à l'heure que les riches deviennent plus riches et que les pauvres deviennent plus pauvres. C'est à un autre niveau. Les pays riches vont devenir plus riches alors étant donné qu'on est un pays riche, on va devenir plus riche. Ça va peut-être plus difficile pour nous en comparaison de nous, par rapport à eux autres, mais on va être mieux que, avoir mieux que ceux qui sont moins que nous ..

Etes-vous d'accord avec ça, t'allait faire un commentaire tout à l'heure Michel

Mais, c'est parce que moi, je trouve que les avantages se portent plus dans ce que nous pourrions avoir. C'est sûr qu'il va y avoir des avantages parce que si il y a des produits ici qu'on importe ici, que le monde va les acheter. C'est sûr, si y sont moins chers, c'est plus avantageux pour les jeunes, mais faut pas abuser parce que nos produits à nous autre, on va rester avec. Pis là, ben, on ne pourra plus les vendre. Ça ne marchera plus. On va être débalancé.

Donc, si j'essaie de résumer cette section là, ce que vous me dites c'est que on n'a pas de problèmes particuliers dans le commerce international, y a pas de menaces qui nous attendent au tournant de la rue, on est correcte, on est aussi capables que n'importe qui d'autres à faire face à la musique, est-ce que c'est ça que vous me dites.

C'est ça

C'est ça que je comprends.

Tous les domaines. Y reste beaucoup de domaines encore ou on n'a pas de marcher même si on a le libre échange avec les E.U., il y a encore des domaines, probablement ceux qui produisent des logiciels, ben, les compagnies québécoises qui réussissent, il n'y en a pas beaucoup parce que au départ, le même logiciel va probablement coûter beaucoup plus cher que eux vont le faire, alors qui c'est qui va l'acheter.

On parle justement de compétitivité, concurrentiels, est-ce qu'on est vraiment, est-ce que le Canada est compétitif ou concurrentiel quand on regarde finalement, parce que quand on parle d'économie mondiale, on a souvent fait mention que le Canada devrait peut-être devenir un peu plus concurrentiel de façon générale. Qu'est-ce que vous en pensez. Est-ce que vous pensez que le Canada actuellement est concurrentiel sur les marchés mondiaux.

Moi, j'ai couvert tous les angles, vous jouez bien et je vous dis merci. Je vous garde peut-être cinq minutes au maximum parce qu'on a une autre session à faire à huit heures avec d'autres gens. Vous pouvez jaser en attendant. Alors je vous reviens dans trente secondes.

Est-ce que ça vous intéresserait d'avoir du matériel d'information écrit. Mais, faites attention, on est toujours pour la vertu et contre le vice. Est-ce que vous avez l'impression que le Québécois moyen si on lui donnait une brochure qui exprime les grandes lignes du libre échange ça intéressait. Je ne veux pas que vous disiez oui ou non mais je veux juste savoir.

Certainement, oui.

Je fais un tour de table rapidement, et soyez honnêtes. Là ça fait une heure et demie qu'on parle de libre échange, tout le monde dit ben oui, c'te maudite affaire là, j'aimerais donc ça comprendre ça comme il faut. A soir, vous n'êtes pas venus ici, vous êtes allés chez vous prendre votre souper, votre café et pis regardez un peu la télé après souper là, o.k. Sortez vous ça dedans la tête là, tout d'un coup là, ça serait-tu intéressant d'avoir une brochure sur le libre échange. Alors, qu'est-ce que vous me dites, oui ou non.

Ca serait beaucoup plus intéressant si il y avait une émission d'apprendre, question d'argent...
quelque chose de visuel à la télé

Moi, je trouve qu'il y en a de l'information et il y en a beaucoup dans les journaux, faut lire les journaux, faut lire les revues,

C'est sûr que l'information y s'en passe. Mais peut-être que si quelque chose était donné avec un botin, on ne sait plus où on en est rendu avec le libre échange. Ca serait intéressant.

Moi, ça serait quelque chose d'écrit et en même temps quelque chose de visuel qui nous explique la brochure.

Pour moi, j'aimerais cela avoir une brochure pour me dire où on en est parce que ça concerne tout le monde.

Peut-être justement, quelque chose oui, mais de plus accessible, parce que à l'époque où toute cette histoire là a démarrée, l'information était beaucoup plus écrite qu'elle a été orale. Alors peut-être justement avoir quelque chose de bien accessible mais aussi quelque chose de visuel.

Moi j'irais pour une bonne émission..

Peut-être que ça aurait une certaine protection aussi, je pense, un peu partout de part et d'autre, des protections qui pour le Canada en tout cas, qui serait enlever peut-être certaine protection .

Ben merci tout le monde. Ca été ben agréable, ben le fun de jaser avec vous autres. Je vous souhaite un bon retour à la maison et tout simplement vous demander une signature à la sortie pis on va vous remettre une enveloppe de ce qu'on vient de faire. Merci encore une fois et bonne fin de soirée.

LIBRE ECHANGE

MERCREDI LE 18 AVRIL 1990
20H00

(4-723-02)

J'aimerais vous souhaitez la bienvenue. Mon nom est Serge Lavigne et je m'occupe de sondage auprès des consommateurs. Je tiens à vous rassurez tout de suite, je ne vends absolument rien. Ne soyez pas inquiets. Comme je vous ai dit tout à l'heure, il n'y a personne qui va se faire demander de faire une présentation, c'est vraiment de la recherche qu'on fait, pas autre chose. Vous allez remarquez d'ailleurs qu'il y a une salle d'observation. On ne cherche pas à la cacher. Il s'agit d'expliquer à quoi elle sert. Elle sert souvent à faire de la traduction simultanée parce que souvent de ces projets là qui sont d'envergure nationale, qui partent de Toronto, passent par Winnipeg, s'en vont à Vancouver, font un petit croche par ici à Montréal et à Québec et comme de raison quand ça arrive ici il y a un petit problème de langue, il y a des gens qui ne savent pas ce qui se passent.

Souvent on nous demande les services d'un traducteur ou d'une traductrice qui se mettent une paire d'écouteurs tout simplement, écoutent ce qui se dit en français, le traduisent en anglais, on l'enregistre sur une cassette et on donne la cassette tout simplement au client. Il s'agit simplement d'écouter celà et comparer les réactions des gens avec les groupes qui ont été faits à Vancouver ou à Toronto et de comprendre un petit mieux si il y a des similitudes ou des choses comme ça. On ne photographie pas. Je vous assure. Il n'y a pas de camera de cachée nulle part - passer par le consommateur averti ou rien de ce genre là. C'est vraiment une surprise. Avec ces cassettes là, moi je prends très peu de notes. C'est vraiment pour mes besoins personnels la cassette. Moi je préfère me concentrer sur la discussion comme telle et le lendemain matin, j'arrive au bureau et j'écoute tout simplement les cassettes de la veille et ça me permet de compléter les notes manuscrites et à partir de là, bien je rédige un rapport. C'est à quoi ça sert. Ça ne vas pas plus loin que ça.

Alors dans un atelier de groupe comme ça, il n'y a pas de bonne ou mauvaise réponse. Je dis ça parce qu'il y a des gens qui s'imaginent que parce qu'on les paient pour venir à une entrevue comme ça qui est tout à fait normal. Y a quand même votre déplacement, votre temps, etc... les gens disent, s'imaginent qu'ils doivent être positifs... c'est beau, c'est parfait, c'est idéal, bravo. Ce n'est pas du tout cela que je veux. Moi, comme je dis tout le temps, on me paye pour trouver ce que les gens aiment, ce que les gens n'aiment pas. Ne vous cassez pas la tête si vous me dites que mon affaire ça n'a pas d'allure, ce n'est pas bon, c'est pourri. Y a pas de problème, ça ne me fait pas de peine, le client va quand même payer la facture au bout du mois.

Donc, ne vous cassez pas la tête. Vous dites tel que c'est , y a vraiment pas de problème. Je ne cherche pas nécessairement non plus à avoir un concensus. Des fois tout le monde est d'accord, des fois c'est pas tout le monde qui est d'accord. C'est chacun son opinion. Et c'est correct. Ca non plus y a pas de problème. Vous avez droit chacun à votre opinion. Il s'agit pas d'essayer de se convaincre mutuellement et de changer.

A l'occasion ça se peut que je fasse un petit geste discret vers quelqu'un comme ça. Ca ça veut tout simplement dire qu'on va aller à l'autre afin de donner la chance peut-être au voisin ou à la voisine de parler un petit peu parce que c'est normal, quand il y a 9 ou 10 personnes dans une salle comme ça, c'est normal qu'il y en a toujours 2 ou 3 qui ont la parole plus facile que les autres. C'est humain et c'est correct comme ça. Sauf que, une heure et demie, deux heures, c'est vite passée et moi, un groupe a du succès vraiment quand tout le monde a mis son grain de sel dans la conversation et a donné son opinion. Donc, c'est un petit peu frustrant quand se sont toujours les deux trois mêmes qui parlent et que les autres apparemment c'est frustrant pour ces gens là. Et d'autre part, ça me prive moi, d'information intéressante de la part des 7 ou 8 qui parlent moins souvent.

Donc, encore une fois, si jamais je vous fait un petit geste, ne vous choquez pas, c'est pas pour vous faire peur, on est là pour jaser. Mais c'est pour que vraiment tout le monde aille la chance de placer son mot et de cette façon là, vous allez voir ça, c'est le fun, ça roule pis ça bouge rapidement et c'est vraiment intéressant. Bon. Je pense que c'est tout ce que j'avais à vous dire. Mais avant de commencer, si vous permettez, je vais prendre vos noms.

J'aimerais cela que vous me dites peut-être avant de commencer tout simplement votre prénom, si ça ne vous ennuie pas. Je pense qu'on va s'en rappeler plus facilement et plus rapidement par les prénoms et d'autre part, ça préserve aussi l'anonymat sur les bandes sonores. Ca ne révèle pas les noms de famille. D'accord. J'aimerais cela aussi si vous me disiez si vous travaillez, dans quel genre de métier. Je veux pas savoir pour quelle compagnie du tout, mais plutôt quel genre de travail vous effectuez, si vous travaillez. Et peut-être, une dernière question, dans quelle partie de la ville est-ce que vous habitez d'une façon générale. D'accord? Alors je commence avec monsieur à ma droite.

Steve

Vous faites quoi comme travail Steve?

Chômeur.

Dans quelle partie de la ville vous habitez?

Près du Parc Lafontaine.

C'est O.K., tout le monde connaît ça le Parc Lafontaine. Ca marche.

Gilles

Ouais.

Je suis dans l'enseignement et puis je demeure dans Rosemont

Ca marche

Denise. Je ne travaille plus et je demeure près du tunnel Hyppolyte Lafontaine. Donc, c'est Montréal.

Ca marche

Luc, je demeure sur la rive sud.

Ca marche

Pascal, je travaille dans le textile et je demeure dans Rosemont

Richard

Je travaille comme journaliste système financier, pis je demeure sur la rive sud.

Moi, c'est Pierre. Je travaille dans un centre hospitalier et pis je demeure à Montréal nord.

Ca marche. On va parler de façon très générale d'économie. Soyez tranquille. Ca va être très relaxe. De toute façon, vous savez, dans une discussion comme ça, ce qui m'intéresse moi, ce sont vos perceptions. Je dis ça parce que il y a des gens qui à un moment donné, ne savent pas les chiffres très précis et ne veulent pas parler: ah, je peux pas dire moi, j'ai pas étudié ça, ou je connais pas ça, ou je pas renseigné là-dessus. Écoutez, vous parlez au travers de votre chapeau, il n'y a rien là, moi ce qui m'intéresse ce sont vos perceptions, c'est ce que vous pensez que c'est. Parce que la réalité, c'est pas compliqué. Je vas aller à statistique Canada, pis j'vas avoir tous les chiffres "ben" enlignés dans un beau tableau, pis c'est facile facile. Quand on se donne la peine, on peut avoir les faits assez facilement. Ce que je veux dire dans le fond, c'est que si vous ne savez pas quelque chose, n'hésitez pas quand même d'exprimer une opinion, une idée basée sur les ouï-dire, je pense que, j'ai entendu dire que, c'est parfaitement acceptable. Y a pas de problème, non seulement c'est acceptable, mais c'est ça qui m'intéresse plus que la réalité. Je vois des gens qui arrivent avec leur thèse en-dessus du bras pis leur projecteur en-dessous de l'autre bras. C'est pas vraiment cela qu'on veut,

c'est vraiment l'opinion générale des gens tel que ressentie. O.K.

On va parler donc d'économie. Je vous pose une question très générale. On va faire un tour de table une fois avec chaque individu pis après ça c'est à la bonne franquette. Vous voulez émettre une opinion, vous levez votre main, je vous pointe, vous y allez, faite votre commentaire. Ca va. La première question que je vous pose est celle-ci.

Si on se projette dans deux trois ans dans l'avenir, j'aimerais qu'on me dise si personnellement au point de vue économique, vous avez l'impression que vous allez être en meilleure position, en moins bonne position ou si somme toute, il n'y aura pas grands changements que vous pouvez prévoir d'ici trois ans. De façon très générale. Avez-vous l'impression qu'il va y avoir des changements en mieux, en moins bien, ça va être stable, ou quoi. Je commence avec toi Pierre, tu me réponds quoi à ça.

Ouf, disons que les changements je pense pas que d'ici deux trois ans ça va être vraiment spectaculaire. Y va peut-être bien avoir, avec le libre échange, la TPS, pis tout ça, y va y avoir je pense bien des mouvements dans les emplois là, qui vont se faire, mais

As tu l'impression d'avoir été affecter toi personnellement de ces changements là que tu disais au point de vue emploi...

Disons que moi, je travaille dans une hôpital pis je dois vous dire que ça fait quand même un petit bout de temps que je travaille là, ben je veux dire, ma job est très sécuritaire. Disons qu'il y a certains secteurs à l'hôpital qui prévoient être privatisés par exemple.

Ca marche. Donc, pas de grands changements pour toi.

Juste peut-être une hausse de prix due à la TPS.

O.K. Ca marche.

Parce qu'il y a des affaires qui vont être couverts.

O.K. Je continue avec Richard, tu me dis quoi de façon générale dans les deux trois prochaines années, toi personnellement et ton environnement immédiat.

Je suis un peu optimiste là. Mettons que ça risque d'aller un petit mieux que ça va dans le moment. Avec la TPS, ça devrait apporter des changements positifs à mon avis.

La TPS va apporter des changements positifs...

Bon, admettons que les taux d'intérêts d'après moi sont rendus pas mal à leur place dans le moment, peut-être ce qui pourrait arriver

c'est qu'ils descendent là. Au niveau personnel, je suis en pleine ascension, en croissance.

O.K. Ca marche. Pascal, comment tu vois ton environnement immédiat durant les deux trois prochaines années.

Moi, les changements draconniens, je pense pas que j'en aille. J'sais pas. Moi "j'sus" pas tellement optimiste. Je pense à une restructuration de l'économie pour x-raisons, la TPS, le Libre-Échange, etc. pis qu'il y a des classes sociales qui vont nous coûter plus que d'autres, il y en a qui vont avoir les pieds mieux placés que d'autres. Mais moi je travaille dans le textile pis j'ai comme l'impression qu'on est une classe d'ouvriers qui va y goûter, à cause du Libre-Échange.

Donc, tu as l'impression qu'on pourrait se détériorer un petit peu

Dans mon cas, oui, sans doute, un peu plus, c'est déjà pas fort. A court terme, je ne suis pas très optimiste.

O.K. Luc, tu vois ça comment toi personnellement.

Je pense pas qu'il y aille de gros changements là d'ici deux trois ans, mais avec la TPS, si ça rentre en fonction, d'après moi ça peut créer un petit peu des remous dans toutes les noces? Les personnes qui vont acheter, tout ça, ça peut ralentir un petit peu les personnes qui vont acheter. Pour moi dans mon cas, non, dans mon environnement comme vous disiez tantôt là, ça pourra pas changer, ça changera pas beaucoup.

Non, ça ne devrait pas changer très bientôt. O.K. Denise, ça va changer quelque chose dans votre vie.

Étant donné que ça été planifié, ça va pas changer beaucoup mais j'ai l'impression que d'ici quelques années, on va en souffrir un peu plus étant donné que la hausse d'électricité, on va avoir les taxes municipales qui vont remonter, il y a la TPS qui arrive en ligne de compte, il y a aussi _____, le gouvernement a bien l'intention de bien vouloir faire un peu de ménage dans ça. Donc, c'est toujours la classe moyenne qui va souffrir un peu plus que les personnes qui sont à plein salaire et tout. Si tu regardes aujourd'hui les pensionnés, si ça été planifié, il ne devrait pas y avoir de problème. Mais si ça été mal planifié, bien à ce moment là, il pourrait y avoir quelques problèmes.

D'accord. Gilles dans votre cas, comment ça va vous influencer.

Disons que, moi je pense bien que personnellement il n'y aura pas de changements majeurs. Alors, ma situation est assez stable. Au point de vue fédéral disons, dans le Québec au Canada, je ne prévois pas non plus de catastrophe économique, de grosses révolutions sur la hausse, parce-que je pense pas que ça aille

beaucoup mieux à cause que d'abord on dit qu'un climat politique c'est pas plus stable que ça par rapport à si on prend un Canada fort un Canada unis etc.. Disons que le problème du lac Meech et puis tout ça jouera peut-être pas d'une façon énorme mais c'est pas ça qui crée une situation cruciale.

Steve, as-tu l'impression que ça va changer quelque chose dans ta vie durant les 3 prochaines années?

Bien j'espère que ça va améliorer.

Es-tu optimiste?

Bien moi je m'apprête toujours à avoir six mois de travail, six mois de chômage et six mois de bière.

Bon, t'as tu des années de 18 mois toi? six mois de travail, six mois de chômage, six mois de bière.

Ça arrive, ça arrive comme la fois que tu travailles, tu fais tes six mois puis un moment donné on t'aime bien gros on te donne un autre mois, mais avant t'a une coupure. Là on t'engage pour un autre mois là après ça on vient te voir on va dire bon bien là on sait pas si on va te garder on sait pas si on va te mettre dehors. Là un moment donnée ils disent bon là écoute on va te mettre dehors.

Es-tu optimiste, personnellement durant les trois prochaines années?

Bien je veux dire, si les gens qui travaille au bureau de placement décidaient d'aider les gens qui veulent prendre des cours les aidés vraiment là ouais il y aurait peut-être des possibilités d'amélioration, mais comme c'est parti j'ai bien l'impression que non.

Il y a une chose que j'aimerais clarifier parce que finalement ça été peu abordé sauf peut-être Gilles qui en a mentionné ou touché brièvement, l'histoire du lac Meech. On en parle beaucoup, c'est très populaire et par exemple dans le groupe précédant ils ont dit ça pourrait affecter dépendant de ce qui va arriver. Est-ce que ça va être accepté? Est-ce que ça va être pas accepté? Est-ce qu'on pourrait se séparer ou pas se séparer? Disons pour l'hypothèse de notre discussion et c'est pas nécessairement un voeu que j'exprime quand je dis ça c'est juste pour rendre l'hypothèse de notre discussion au clair parce que si non quand vous allez parler je ne sais pas ce que vous auriez derrière la tête. Disons que pour l'hypothèse de notre discussion qu'on va prendre pour acquis que y a pas de séparation pour le moment. Puis je dis pas que ça pourrait pas arriver, ça pourrait fort bien arriver. Encore une fois il n'est pas question que moi ça soit un voeu ou pas un voeu je suis neutre dans cette histoire là. Je suis là pour animer une

discussion et pas autre chose. Donc voyez-y pas là un désir de ma part de vous imposer une façon de voir, c'est pas dutout ça. Mais c'est parce qu'encore une fois si on veut parler tous le même langage , il faut se mettre dans une hypothèse très précise et disons, faisons l'hypothèse que pour le moment bon que je ne sais pas ce qui va se passer si ça va passer ou non l'histoire du lac Meech mais qui aura pas de séparation. Donc l'économie ne pourrait pas être affectée par une séparation. O.K. Juste encore une fois pour clarifier la chose parce qu'encore une fois si on l'a pas derrière la tête on risque d'émettre certaines opinions d'une certaine façon en fonction de ce qui pourrait arriver le 23 juin puis là bien on parlera pas le même langage. Encore une fois vous y voyez pas de ma part un voeu ou désavoeu. C'est rien de cela Pour les fins de la discussion, je suis neutre encore une fois. Ca va là-dessus. Si, encore une fois, il y a un jeune qui a fait allusion à ça, à part de votre cas personnel dans le plus grand ensemble qui est dans la province de Québec est-ce que vous avez, parce que ça peut être différent votre potentiel à vous va être meilleur ou moins bon que l'ensemble des gens de la province, mais comment vous voyez les trois prochaines années au point de vue économique pour l'ensemble des Québécois. Est-ce que ça va être mieux, est-ce que ça va être moins bien, est-ce que ça va être à peu près stable, je vous pose la même question, là on ne fera pas de tour. Ceux qui veulent émettre une opinion, vous la donnerez.

J'ai l'impression que ça va être un peu plus difficile.

Ca va être plus difficile. Pourquoi?

Oui, parce que disons qu'il y a des hausses qu'on connaît présentement puis va falloir je pense bien que les gens peut-être apprennent à vivre selon leurs moyens, peut-être aller moins au crédit avec leur fichu de carte de crédit, pis, parce que le taux d'intérêt est assez haut. J'ai un petit peu l'impression que ça va remonter encore, un peu. Je pense pas que ça soit au point de baisser tout de suite. J'ai l'impression que ça l'a une petite tendance vers le haut. Mais ça va rebaisser, mais pas tout de suite. Moi je donne encore peut-être un six à huit mois.

Qu'est-ce que vous en pensez les autres. Etes-vous optimiste ou pessimiste pour l'ensemble du Québec en général au point de vue économique.

Mais pour les trois prochaines années, peut-être que je suis légèrement pessimiste.

Pourquoi?

Hum, par contre, à plus long terme, je suis plus optimiste. Parce que c'est justement le cas comme Denise dit, les taux d'intérêts sont élevés. Moi je trouve qu'au gouvernement fédéral en tout cas, y ont pas d'l'air à savoir trop trop ce qui s'en vient. Je veux

dire que moi je trouve que depuis qu'ils sont là là, c'est pas disons un gouvernement que je trouve qui a été magnifique, performance un peu en-dessus de la moyenne je trouve. Je trouve entre autre, pendant que nous les citoyens on se faisaient imposer de plus en plus. Les compagnies elles se faisaient moins imposer. Je trouve pas ça correcte même si bon y a toutes sortes de trucs financiers comme ils disent.

Qu'est-ce que vous en pensez les autres sur l'économie du Québec en général? Est-ce que Luc ça va aller mieux ou moins bien ou stable..

Pour les prochaines années je ne pense pas qu'il y aille de gros changements par contre sauf si ça ne continue pas à augmenter les taux d'intérêts, puis généralement, l'Hydro Québec parlent d'une hausse, la TPS qui s'en vient avec les autres choses; l'autre fois je regardais l'essence est rendue à 60 et quelques sous le litre là. Mon Dieu, si ça continue à ce rythme là, pis les salaires ne vont pas au même rythme, là ça peut être un peu inquiétant.

Qu'est-ce que vous en pensez les autres.

Moi, je vais un peu dans le même sens. C'est que comme Denise l'a mentionné tantôt, les taux d'intérêts, pis les gens si d'après ce qu'on lit dans les journaux, le crédit à la consommation pis tout ça, y a rien qui a d'l'air à ralentir beaucoup pis les taux d'intérêt montent continuellement, y va un moment donné, en avoir qui vont avoir des problèmes. Pour combler ça, le gouvernement, je ne veux pas nécessairement prendre la défense du gouvernement actuel à Ottawa, je me dis, il est prit avec ça, il y a un taux d'inflation pis il essaye de le ralentir pis, je sais ben qu'il y a d'autres gouvernements comme le Québec qui dit que c'est pas nécessairement en augmentant toujours les choses à l'intérieur qu'on va combler ça, mais, en tout cas, ils ont quand même un problème de toute façon. Tout ça fait, je pense pas qu'on peut être très optimiste.

D'autres opinions.

Moi, personnellement, je ne sais pas, d'ici de trois à cinq ans, en calculant disons que le Lac Meech fonctionne, supposons, je sais pas, moi je ne suis pas trop trop optimiste, je serais même un petit peu pessimiste là pour la simple raison en particulier que je ne suis pas sûre que c'est dans le Québec qu'on trouve son économie à cause du Libre-Échange, à cause de son commerce extérieur, tout ça. Je sais pas si, il me semble qu'il n'a pas le contrôle de son économie, ça va fluctuer selon un marché qui va lui échapper. Pis je ne suis pas sûr qu'il...

Avez-vous l'impression que le reste du Canada va, Jean est-ce que l'économie du Québec va fructifier au même rythme que l'économie du..

Ben, il y a des facteurs clefs qu'on contrôle pas.. comme les taux d'intérêts.

Est-ce que vous êtes optimiste pour le Québec pour les trois prochaines années, non.

Ca dépend des secteurs économiques. Y a des secteurs je suppose qui sont en avance

Mais dans l'ensemble, on essaie de faire une espèce de moyenne, as-tu l'impression...

Moyenne, c'est passable. Passablement optimiste de ce côté-là.

Mais qu'est-ce que c'est qu'on a à faire face, c'est quoi le défi des années 90 des québécois, des canadiens en général, mais plus spécifiquement les Québécois, c'est quoi les défis les plus importants, les enjeux les plus importants qu'on a à faire face au sujet de ce qui peut se passer dans les prochaines années là? Qu'est-ce que c'est qui sont les grands enjeux?

Je pense bien que ce sont au niveau des étudiants, je dirais moi que la formation des étudiants, faut qui soient un moment donné au delà du travail, mais disons au niveau des compagnies, on voit pas ça encore ici. On a beaucoup d'étudiants qui sortent des universités qui ne sont pas prêts, qui sont en formation pour être placés dans différentes industries. Ca ça manque beaucoup pour l'économie du côté universitaire. C'est très important. Je trouve que cela c'est malheureux. Je le sais, moi j'ai travaillé. Ils veulent se placer mais ils n'ont pas d'emploi.

Mais quel genre de changement est-ce que ça va produire ça le fait que peut-être que les gens n'arrivent pas à prendre l'expérience nécessaire, n'ont pas la compétence.

C'est que la plupart des compagnies ne sont pas formés...

Mais, est-ce qu'il y a d'autre chose en dehors de la formation. J'admets que c'est un problème important. Est-ce qu'il y a autre chose à part de la formation, est-ce qu'il y a d'autres défis auxquels on fait face pour les années 90.

Se rendre le plus compétitif possible.

C'est ça.

Grossomodo, vis-à-vis la mondialisation des marchés, pis tout ça, je veux dire, va falloir à un moment donné, c'est-à-dire, on est en train de le faire. Une chose qui est bien intéressante je trouve dans plusieurs secteurs on devient de plus en plus compétitifs. Je veux dire quand une compagnie fait de l'expansion pis qui s'en va dans le restant du monde entier, je veux dire...

Un bon exemple quand même c'est Bombardier.

Sont tellement subventionnés

Ouais, c'est ça. Ca je trouve ça affreux. Personnellement, je suis contre les subventions aux compagnies parce que je trouve que c'est quelque chose qui est très artificiel et puis, moi je trouve que c'est comme un être humain, si tu lui donnes sans cesse à manger il n'apprendra pas à essayer d'aller chercher sa nourriture lui-même.

Mais, bien à part de mondialisation, est-ce que vous avez entendu, c'est un terme qu'on utilise de plus en plus dans les médias en général, je sais pas, est-ce que vous êtes familiers avec ce terme là, on parle de globalisation qui est plus un anglicisme là, mondialisation est peut-être plus français, est-ce que ça vous a déjà arriver de lire ou d'entendre ces expressions-là à la télé ou dans les journaux ou.. ça fait quoi en terme du Canada la mondialisation.

La clef c'est l'exportation, la recherche de la qualité d'un produit, compétitivité dans la main d'oeuvre, le contrôle des coûts, d'être en avant tout le temps, on ne peut pas se permettre d'arrêter sur place, quand on est sur place on recule.

Est-ce que c'est un défi auquel on fait face dans les années 90, le Canada comme pays.

On dirait qu'il y a une prise de conscience qui est en train de s'effectuer, mais je ne suis pas sûr qu'on y fait face vraiment. Y a beaucoup de compagnies qui disent à leurs employés bon ben si on a un peu plus de productivité, bon ben, tout ce qui se passe avec GM, pourtant, mais des fois il y a peut-être un peu d'exagération, c'est ben beau de dire aux employés d'accroître leur productivité, leurs moyens, la formation, plus les moyens techniques pour le faire, il y a beaucoup de choses. Les années 90, il y a une chose qui est importante par exemple, est-ce qu'il y a des secteurs qui vont tomber ou n'importe quoi. Au lieu de prendre les gens, les mettre au chômage et à rien faire, qu'on les recycle mais qu'on les recycle d'une manière intelligente, pas en donnant des chèques de bien-être ou de chômage. C'est pas ça. En prenant des stages de ci ou de ça, de toute façon, le gouvernement serait énormément gagnant. Ca c'est un défi.

L'élément de mondialisation, est-ce que vraiment c'est un défi du Canada, la mondialisation du commerce...

Ben ce que des industries essayent de faire. Ils essayent d'en partir en Europe, il y a le marché commun qui s'en vient avec l'idée qu'il va y avoir l'unification de tous les pays européens ensemble. Là il y a les E.U. qui sont laissés un peu pour contre parce que les E.U. commencent à paniquer. Ils s'aperçoivent que

l'Europe est en train de redevenir un territoire un peu comme les E.U., pis il y a la Chine, pis les pays en voie de développement qui ont la main d'oeuvre, qui peuvent être payés pour presque rien, pis là, ils peuvent essayer de vouloir faire une compétitivité. Alors j'ai l'impression que la CFC pis tout ça y vont manger leur claque là eux autres à un moment donné.

Mais comment ça change notre façon de faire nos affaires avec les autres pays le Canada, tous ces facteurs là, vous semblez être très au courant avec l'organisation, les facteurs de compétitivité, etc. comment est-ce que ça change notre manière de faire des affaires avec les autres pays ça?

La spécialisation je pense.

Luc, qu'est-ce que tu en penses?

Ben, je dois vous dire franchement, comment-ce que ça peut changer...

Comment est-ce que ça affecte la façon dont on fait les affaires avec les autres, le fait qu'il faut être plus compétitif, le fait qu'il faut avoir une main d'oeuvre plus scolarisée, plus entraînée, mieux éduquée?

Oui, c'est tout beau ça, mais je trouve O.K., d'une façon c'est correcte qu'ils soient de plus en plus spécialisés, y vont avoir de plus en plus d'appareils sophistiqués mais à un moment donné, ça va venir à une certaine limite ou ben donc, ça va t-être qui aura presque plus d'employés, que ça va-t-être un marché hautement sophistiqué ou bien il va falloir qu'il arrive quelque chose parce que c'est beau se perfectionner, se spécialiser et puis essayer d'être compétitif, de couper les prix au plus bas pis les salaires mais à un moment donné, il y a du monde qui va falloir qui paye pour aujourd'hui. Le Canada là comme un pays nord-américain va avoir de la misère parce que comme je disais tantôt parce que soient les pays développés comme la Chine, ces pays là, y vont avoir la main d'oeuvre bon marché, ils vont être capables de...

Ca va être quoi la solution à ce moment là si on n'est pas capable d'être concurrentiel au niveau des salaires par exemple. Qu'est-ce qui doit arriver?

Ben, c'est ce qui se produit en ce moment. ... mettre des robots, pis là après ça, il y a des enfants qui s'illiment, là la-dessus il y a de l'immigration qui viennent s'établir ici au niveau économique en espérant avoir un meilleur salaire pour pouvoir vivre. Pis, il y a le côté asiatique qui commence vraiment à avoir une force de frappe, il y a l'éveil au niveau du pays communiste qui sont en train de vouloir se capitaliser.

Justement, toutes ces choses là dont toi tu me parles et dont vous

ne parlez tous, comment ça achète notre façon de faire nos affaires avec les autres pays.

Ben c'est parce que les autres, les industrielles vont venir chercher la main d'oeuvre européenne, eux autres en Europe ils ont un certain niveau de vie à comparer avec ici là, ils ne sont pas très bien payés en Europe à comparer avec ici. Ici on est très bien payé. Alors les joueurs vont allé chercher... il y a beaucoup de compagnies allemandes qui investissent au Canada, il y a des compagnies américaines qui investissent au Canada. Si il y a une percée au niveau de la publicité, les américains essayent de pouvoir prendre maintenant au niveau de la publicité ici au Québec, là ils s'aperçoivent que les gens ont beaucoup d'imagination, ont beaucoup d'idées, alors ils sont au niveau, le gouvernement leur donnent tellement de possibilités que...

Mais, quand on parle de commerce international, comment ça change, comment ça évolue le commerce international. Avez -vous un commentaire là-dedans...

Moi, je vois deux facteurs qui jouent. C'est comme l'inondation. On n'est peut-être pas concurrentiel tant que ça notre main d'oeuvre n'est pas si concurrentiel que ça, on n'est pas si compétitif que ça, faut qu'on aille les aider. Mais on se réveil, on se réveille. Le marché est tout là il me semble. Les capitaux, ben il y en a une bonne partie qui est contrôlé par ici même si..

Avez-vous l'impression que le commerce international change de façon générale.

Il y a sans doute plusieurs façons d'un service international, de toute façon il n'y en a pas seulement une. Il y en a, bon, une des pires que je connaisse, dont moi je ressens là, c'est tout simplement de faire faire un produit dans un pays où ça te coûte absolument rien, le ramener ici, pis le distribuer pour le vendre aux prix de gros. Ca se fait beaucoup. En tout cas dans le vêtement ça se fait beaucoup pis je suis certain qu'il y a beaucoup d'autres domaines. Ca ça apporte absolument rien. Ca fait engraisser les actionnaires ou le patron d'une entreprise, tant mieux pour lui, mais je veux dire que ça n'apporte pas grand chose à la société. Le consommateur pourrait payer son produit un peu moins cher, ça ne donne absolument rien. Pis, il y a sans doute une autre façon aussi, en tout cas, il y a une question d'innovation technologique, bon, inusité, ça c'est la façon la plus productive qu'il y a.

Encore une fois, si on essaie de regarder le Canada face au commerce international, c'est quoi les gros enjeux des années 90. On a parlé de productivité, d'être concurrentiel. Est-ce qu'on l'est concurrentiel ou si on l'est pas en général.

Par contre, à prendre la grosseur du pays, on est quand même 25

millions. Si on regarde le restant du groupe 7, ça part à 50, 55 millions en montant,

365 millions

Je parle de chaque pays là moi.

Quand tu vas en Allemagne, quand tu vas en France, tu as un passeport français, tu peux aller travailler en Allemagne, si tu as un passeport allemand, tu peux aller travailler en Italie. Là eux-autres, y commencent à éliminer ça.

Ce que lui y dit, c'est que les sept pays qui font partie du groupe des sept là, 25 millions des plus petits et 55 millions en montant. O.K.

T'allait dire quoi Pierre?

Ah, ben je trouve que dans l'ensemble de considération de 25 millions, je trouve qu'on est quand même dans une maudite belle position comparable à un autre pays. Il y a des petits pays qui ont un plus haut niveau de vie mais parce que ils ont une ressource en particulier je veux dire, si on prend la république de la Suède qui a le plus haut niveau de vie dans le monde, sont chanceux, ils sont assis sur une mine de pétrole pis y sont rien que 120 ou 200 milles personnes. Mais, sauf que nous autres, à long terme, on est beaucoup plus stable parce qu'on a une économie diversifiée. Sauf que, je pense que la clef là dedans, ça va être de se spécialiser. Étant donné qu'on est 25 millions, faut falloir trouver un champ ou quelques champs où on va vraiment exceller pour pouvoir faire notre place.

Bon Pierre a dit qu'on devrait se spécialiser. Est-ce que vous êtes d'accord avec Pierre et si oui ou non, est-ce qu'il y a d'autres enjeux?

Faudrait sûrement tenir compte des différences culturelles. On fait pas affaire au Japon comme on a à faire aux E.U. Il y a des barrières aussi. Autant on a des barrières ici, ils ont leur style de barrières là-bas aussi.

Je prends comme exemple parce qu'il parlait de petits pays comparables, ben ou revient toujours à l'exemple de la Suède. Ils ont un niveau de vie au moins égal si non supérieur au nôtre. Pis regarde comment ils fonctionnent. Oui, ils sont spécialisés comme en aeronatique ou certains secteurs de pointe, ça c'est officiel. Mais par contre aussi, il y a un marché intérieur fort. Les suédois achètent beaucoup chez eux. Ça c'est très important il me semble pour stabiliser ton marché là, c'est à ça que je voulais en venir, c'est important.

Est-ce que ça veut dire qu'on doit se replier...

Ca ne veut pas dire , prendre un produit en égale qualité, pourquoi pas l'acheter pis employer des gens qui travaillent chez toi.

Est-ce qu'on doit fermer notre marche?

Non, non, sûrement pas.

Ce que tu dis c'est que les canadiens soient conscientiser au fait d'acheter chez nous

Ouais, il y a certains pays qui se sont développer à cause de ça.

Ca c'est un gros enjeux, disons. Si t'encourage les tiens, ça vaut grossir. Mais si tu vas toujours ailleurs...

Mais, est-ce que le Canada devrait jouer un rôle particulier, spécial dans sa relation avec ses autres partenaires commerciaux.

Pas qu'il ne veut pas mais je pense qu'il n'est pas considéré. Il ne fait pas le poids face aux E.U.

Si les pays puissants décident la "grub" quelconque, le Canada n'aura pas grand chose à dire. Si on vote, on ne sera pas tellement fort.

Le Canada est considéré comme étant les amis des américains, c'est une des raisons pourquoi le marché des sept ne voulait pas les avoir.

Mais finalement, quel rôle est-ce qu'on doit jouer au Canada avec nos partenaires commerciaux? Quel genre de relation est-ce qu'on doit avoir avec nos partenaires commerciaux globalement?

C'est comme ça que ça marche en économie, c'est la loi du plus fort.

Mais l'idée, est-ce qu'on devrait s'enfermer. Toi tu disais tout à l'heure qu'on devrait acheter chez nous avant d'acheter à produit égale ou même un petit peu plus cher, on devrait acheter nos produits, mais est-ce que vous favorisez une économie fermée sur nous autres mêmes, centrée vers l'intérieur ou bien donc, ouverte vers l'extérieur?

Ouverte vers l'extérieur.

A favoriser..

Est-ce que tu penses qu'on devrait favoriser une économie ouverte vers l'extérieur ou fermer nos barrières? On est 25 millions. On est capable de se créer une industrie d'automobile, on est capable de se créer ci ou ça. On va vivre entre nous autres, pour nous autres, pis avec les autres, pis tant pis, les autres que le diable

les emporte.

Non, non, il y a ben des pays qui ont essayé ça.

On apprend toujours de d'autres. ON va toujours chercher ce qu'il y a de mieux ailleurs. Si on se replie sur nous eh ben, on va toujours rester comme des moines.

Si on parle de voiture. On peut toujours acheter une voiture au Japon, tu la payes beaucoup plus chère que quand tu la vend ici. Nous autres on a l'impression qu'on fait un marché avec les prix, à mesure que tu exportes, donc tu baisses tes prix pour pouvoir être un peu compétitif. En Italie, c'est le même principe, en Allemagne c'est le même principe aussi. Quand ça vient de l'extérieur c'est moins cher, quand c'est dans le pays, c'est plus cher.

Moi je voulais dire que par rapport à la libéralisation, que c'est toujours compliqué de dire que l'achat chez nous, je pense bien qu'on a ça dans notre culture pis de vouloir défendre nos jobs pis tout ça, mais c'est pas si sûr que ça que ce soit le meilleur moyen. On pense au libre échange aussi là. On se sent un peu menacé. On sait bien que c'est un peu l'avenir d'avoir une ouverture pour les autres marchés pis que nous autres réellement aller acheter ailleurs. On pense que les gens, il y a ben des gens même si les douanes sont pas abolies entre le Canada et les E.U. on sait le nombre de gens qui s'en vont acheter aux E.U. sur les fins de semaine pour voir ce qu'ils pensent avoir à meilleur marché.

Face à tous ces changements là, Gilles, est-ce qu'il y a des choses qui nous menacent, est-ce qu'il y a des menaces pour le Canada quand on regarde tous ces changements au niveau du commerce international? Est-ce qu'il y a des choses qui nous guettent au tournant qu'il faut surveiller, est-ce qu'il y a des choses qui nous menacent? Je n'ai pas rien dans la tête quand je dis ça. Je vais à la pêche littéralement là. Est-ce qu'il y a des choses qui vous menacent?

Moi dans tout ça, là, c'est que tous les pays qui sont capables de produire à très bon marché, à bon compte, soient capables d'arriver, venir exporter au Canada des produits qui vont être tellement attirants au point de vue prix que si on tient pas à payer un peu plus cher pour acheter quelque chose de fabriquer ici pour tenir nos marchés, ben là, on va importer en quantité pis on va avoir un déficit après ça qu'on pourra plus combler pis on va être à la merci de tous les pays qui sont capables d'exporter ici. Comme aux E.U. à un moment donné, c'est ça qui va arriver.

Je pense pas que ça va arriver de même. J'imagine...

On est déjà dedans. Regarder ce qui se passe à Vancouver, regarder

ce qui se passe à Toronto quand vous voyez des gens de Hong Kong qui vont acheter des maisons pour presque rien quand on sait qu'en Hong Kong le prix du terrain ça vaut une petite fortune. La raison qu'ils viennent ici, ils achètent, c'est ça qui fait l'inflation.

Je comprends. Moi je suis pas d'accord. Je dirais qu'on est plus solide que ça quand même on est des canadiens, on est au Canada.

Ben, on se rencontre tout le temps

Ben, pas tout le temps

Est-ce qu'il y a d'autres menaces à part de ça qui...

Il y a des bons points des fois. Les canadiens, on n'a pas une très grande fièreté nationale. C'est drôle l'autre jour, je voyais un programme à la télé là-dessus, ils disaient, aux E.U., tu t'en vas aux E.U. Avant une partie de baseball ou avant n'importe quoi, ils chantent l'hymne national. Ca c'est tout le monde. Ben, leur point ben sûr, c'est le coeur. Ils sont deboutes, pis sont ben droites, pis sont ben fiers de leur pays pis tout ça, malgré tout ce qui se passe sur le programme, ils sont contents d'être là, pis envoie donc. Icite au Canada, ils te mettent un vieux disque toute scratché de l'hymne national. Là ils contrôlent ça. Là un moment donné, paf, l'aiguille débarque pis là, t'as un bonhomme animateur qui vient au micro pis y dit, anyway guys, you know all the rest so let's get home with it. Pis là, il enlève le disque, pis bingo ils partent. Ca, les américains trouvent ça drôlent quand ils s'en viennent ici. Pis ça, c'est que il y a comme un petit manque quelque part, c'est pas pour rien qu'on a longtemps décrit le Canada comme une traque de chemin de fer pis une_____. Je veux dire là-dedans, c'est ben beau la mosaïque culturelle, mais je pense que il y a ben du monde, je veux dire..

Ben, écoutez, moi j'ai mentionné le mot menace, mais on peut parler aussi opportunité, on peut regarder ça de deux façons. Est-ce que vous avez l'impression que aussi il y a des opportunités, il y a rien-que des menaces, il y a plus d'opportunités de menace, ou plus de menaces que d'opportunités. Comment voyez-vous ça des changements au niveau du commerce international, la mondialisation, l'aspect compétitivité, etc. est-ce que il y a des menaces ou des opportunités, est-ce qu'il y a plus de menaces que d'opportunités. Comment voyez-vous ça. Oui, vas-y...

C'est que, avec les pays qui étaient sous l'empire socialiste, ailleur qu'ils sont libérés, ça vaut beaucoup de marchers. Présentement, il y a beaucoup de compagnies canadiennes qui sont rentrés dans ces pays là. Ca, si ces compagnies là sont capables de rentrer les premiers là en exportant leurs produits de qualité si ils font un produit de qualité là, et pis si c'est produit ici, si ils vont produire ça en Europe ou en Corée ou ailleurs, ça ne donnera rien pour notre pays en fait de compte. Si ils produisent

en quantité et qu'ils peuvent rentrer dans ces marchés là, les nouveaux marchés, des marchés de 50 millions là qu'on parle.

Comment vous voyez ça vous autres, est-ce que ce sont des opportunités ou est-ce que ce sont des menaces, ou si il y a les deux ou quoi?

Moi je dis que le Canada c'est quand même un pays que _____
_____ même si nous autres on le trouve pas toujours un pays riche, on se sent pauvres à bien des points de vue, on sait très bien si on se compare au reste du monde, même si le fait qu'on soit parmi les sept pays les plus riches au monde, on a notre place, un rôle à jouer. Je ne pense pas qu'on est démuné.

C'est quoi notre rôle...

Je vais dire, ben, dans , au point de vue commerce, on a nous autres aussi, ben un rôle, pour donner un exemple, quand on est conu pour un pays plus riche, ben ceux qui pensent que le Canada joue un rôle en aidant les pays moins développés ou riches.

Parlant strictement au niveau commerce là, qu'est-ce que c'est, encore une fois, c'est quoi les opportunités, les embuches des années 90 pour le Canada dans le commerce international.

Moi je trouve qu'il y a toujours plus d'opportunités que de menaces.

Tu as exprimé cela tout à l'heure. Richard, comment tu vois ça. Est-ce qu'il y a des opportunités, ou seulement des menaces ou

Je trouve qu'avec les ouvertures qu'il y a , il y a la communication pour faciliter avec les ouvertures qui se font un peu partout, l'économie de marchés qui répondraient pour plusieurs.

Est-ce que ça va donner plus d'opportunités ou plus de menaces?

Pour le Canada, moi je trouve qu'il y a plus d'opportunités dans le sens qu'on a des secteurs forts, c'est le temps de les développer ceux-là. Je pense qu'il va y avoir des choix à faire probablement douloureux là.

Qu'est-ce que t'en penses parce que toi Pascal, t'es particulièrement dedans, t'est dans un secteur mou effectivement, le textile c'est considéré comme un secteur mou à moins que je me trompe.

Vous avez probablement raison. Ce que j'en pense personnellement, moi ça fait longtemps que je le sais le textile pour moi c'est, si je suis pour répondre à cette question là, j'aime autant pas parler du textile parce que pour moi c'est classer le textile dans 20 ans ça n'existera plus, ça n'a plus d'affaire au Canada. Il faut se

recycler ou faire autre chose, ça c'est personnel à chacun. Mais c'est ça qui sont des opportunités, des opportunités au point de vue, on a un grand pays. Qu'est-ce qui est bon, ce sont les communications. Ça ce sont des choses très importantes. Il y a toute une industrie à supporter. C'est tout ce que je peux dire là-dessus. Bon, on est bon dans quoi. On a du pétrole, on a du gaz naturel, il y a des ressources, des techniques qui gravitent autour de ça qui sont...

Ca je trouve ça intéressant. Pascal disait qu'on est bon dans la communication, dans l'énergie. Il y as-tu d'autres domaines dans lesquels on est bons, on est compétitifs, on est...

Les groupes d'ingénieurs conseils.

Oui, l'ingénierie.

On a passé v'là plusieurs années avec un groupe d'ingénieurs du Canada. On essayait de vendre en Chine un projet de barrage là, sur le fleuve jaune, pis c'était quand même un moyen de beau contrat.

Il y as-tu d'autres éléments, l'énergie, la communication? Quoi d'autre est-ce qu'on est bon vraiment, compétitif, etc. Quoi d'autre est-ce qu'on peut vraiment penser, exporter ou enfin se faire valoir au niveau international, au niveau commerce international? Encore une fois, parce qu'on a mentionné une couple de domaines, oui...

Les Indes. Il y a la question de la mode là, ça vient de Toronto, de Montréal. La fourrure, on a un centre de fourures ici.

Est-ce qu'il y a d'autres choses aussi..

Il y a notre hydro électrique aussi... le plus gros réseau électrique au monde.

On parlait aussi des pâtes et papier dans le premier groupe. Est-ce que c'est un domaine où on excèle ça les pâtes et papier, non.

On excellait.

On est moins bons qu'on était...

Ouais, c'est ça. Parce qu'au Brésil, ils font pousser des arbres en 10, 15 ans.

Est-ce que de façon générale, pour revenir à ma question primaire, les changements qui s'opèrent présentement, est-ce que à votre avis, le Canada, on va réussir à s'adapter à ça relativement facilement ou si ça va être difficile pour nous autres en tant que pays et aussi en tant que région, le Québec, en tant qu'individu.

Est-ce que ça va être plus facile ou difficile de s'adapter à ces nouvelles réalités là du commerce mondiale.

On va s'adapter parce que personne ne veut crever. Mais on va s'adapter avec des grincements de dents.

Ouais, je suis d'accord. Ca va pas être facile.. les changements. Humainement parlant, les changements ont toujours...

Pourquoi ça va être difficile...

Parce que il y a plein de facteurs qui va falloir convertir, soit changer, repenser, c'est beau en parole, mais là-dessous, il y a des humains, des milliers d'humains qui eux vont être touchés.

C'est qu'il y a d'autres pays qui rentrent en ligne de compte aussi, qui rentrent dans le marché.

Ca aussi, il y a des secteurs, c'est plutôt une économie de service ici au Canada. Mais on a comme "jumper" nous autres, on a "jumper" du secteur primaire qui était notre grosse force avant, on a "jumper" dans le secteur tertiaire où il y a bien des services, et pis, le secteur secondaire entre les deux, y est pas très fort, y est là un peu mais y est pas très fort pis je pense que là-dessus, on devrait y aller devant au niveau de la reproduction, pis toute sorte de chose comme ça parce que le Japon qui est un pays super-industrialisé ben bon yenne, il y a des industries où il y a quasiment pas un chat là-dedans... la production sort. Tu as des robots qui produisent pis t'as des robots qui alimentent le producteur, pis t'as des robots qui vont venir réparer les robots qui sont pétés.

T'as raison là, mais j'ai entendu le reportage v'là pas longtemps, ça s'peut que le reportage soit biaisé sur le Japon, c'est sûr quand tu parles sur la reproductrie.. c'est des grosses boites. Mais la majorité de l'économie du Japon ne marche pas comme ça. Elle marche avec des petites boites, des petits arrières de fond de cours, où est-ce que les gens à la main y mettent des puces dans les ordinateurs. Ils ne sont pas payés chers ces gens. C'est comme ici au Québec, là, tu parles. Les plus gros employeurs au Québec c'est _____

Mais si on parlait de, comment on peut faire pour diminuer l'impact pour minimiser l'impact de ces changements là, de ces ajustements. Est-ce qu'il y a des choses à faire d'une part? Vous dites, bon, on va devoir s'adapter, on n'aura pas de choix, y va peut-être y avoir des pleurs et des grincements de dents parce que il va falloir recycler les gens, qui réapprennent d'autres choses, entreprennent une deuxième carrière, se recycle. Est-ce qu'il y a des moyens de minimiser ou d'éviter carrément l'impact de ces changements là, de ces ajustements là? Est-ce qu'il y a des solutions à ça ou bien est-ce qu'on n'a pas le choix? Il va falloir

encaisser les coups pis fermer notre boîte comme on dit.

Je pense qu'on n'aura pas le choix. Si vous regardez le secteur pétrolier, il y a eu des changements apportés depuis dix à 15 ans. Regardez la tenue Montréal-Est, qu'est-ce qui en reste? Tous ses employés sont à jour, y en a à Toronto, à Vancouver, on les a distribués comme ça. Pis après ça, on a donné des congés à tous ceux qui arrivaient à 50, 54 ans, prendre des pensions anticipées.

Il n'y a pas grand chose à faire si j'écoute Denise. Est-ce qu'il y en a d'autres qui varient d'opinion? Est-ce qu'il y a des choses à faire...

Il y aurait peut-être à intéresser ceux qui y sont à rester, à apporter des changements dans les compagnies, pourraient intéresser de plus en plus les employés dans le sens que, leur donner la chance de pouvoir se reformer, de prendre des cours spécialisés, quitte à les envoyer pour deux trois ans si il faut, si ils sont intéressés à aller étudier pour se spécialiser dans la technique qu'ils vont avoir. Les intéresser à...

Est-ce que les coûts qui sont impliqués dans ce recyclage là sont élevés ou... parce que tu sais, tu déloges quelqu'un pendant deux ans, tu dis, moi je vas te "parker" pendant deux ans pour que tu puisses continuer à manger pendant deux ans, pis je vas te donner... mais après une couple d'années, ça coûte de l'argent ça. Est-ce que c'est possible de faire ça vous penser... Je ne dis pas que c'est pas possible, je ne sais pas là. Je pose la question comme ça, c'est même pas sur mon guide comme tel.

Je pense qu'ils n'auront pas le choix à un moment donné. Ou bien, on va les envoyer à leur pension prématurée ou leur donner de l'assurance chômage. Ça va faire un peuple d'assurance chômage. Que c'est qui va payer à la fin de compte. Un robot lui...

Ce que tu me dis dans le fond c'est qu'on est mieux de dépenser de l'argent pour recycler les gens que de leur donner un chèque comme le disait tout à l'heure Pascal. On est mieux de faire ça que de leur donner un chèque d'assurance chômage ou de désintéresser les gens.

Si le gars est en chômage, à part que si il recherche effectivement de l'emploi, il ne fait rien au niveau professionnel. Je veux dire, ou ben donc il se recycle ou ben donc il s'assoit devant la télé. Mais...

J'aimerais ça qu'on revienne sur l'aspect concurrentiel ou compétitivité si vous voulez. On parle souvent souvent que le Canada devrait être plus compétitif, plus concurrentiel, ça veut dire quoi. Est-ce qu'on est vraiment dépasser, est-ce qu'on est vraiment pro-concurrentiel sur les marchés mondiaux.

C'est qu'on est gâté un peu hein, en général.

Dans quel sens...

Dans ce sens que peut-être que l'employé ne fait pas l'effort qu'il devrait faire. IL ne donne pas sa pleine mesure. Pis à ce moment là si il travaille, il fait le temps. Pis à ce moment là, ce n'est pas ça qui donne de la productivité,

Ca veut dire quoi pour le canadien de devenir concurrentiel..

Se prendre en main pis dire ben, travaille à tel endroit, y met le paquet là au maximum.

Oui mais il faut avoir les avantages pour ça, faut avoir un salaire décent, pis faut aussi avoir une mentalité..

Je suis d'accord avec vous.

La question de mentalité, ça m'intéresse ça Pascal. Qu'est-ce que tu veux dire. Est-ce que t'as l'impression que les Canadiens n'ont pas cette mentalité là d'être compétitif, d'être concurrentiel? Cette mentalité là de "fighter" si je peux dire pour emprunter un terme anglais.

Ils l'ont peut-être pas déjà eu mais là ils sont obligés. Il me semble que là ça change un peu là au point de vue... Tout le monde a rien que ce mot là dans la bouche, compétitivité. Souvent, dans un sens, je sais qu'on parle d'économie, je veux pas aller dans un cycle social, mais souvent dans un sens, je veux dire, qu'est-ce qui est pas compétitif, c'est l'employé, c'est les employés, toujours les employés, les employés. Un moment donné, c'est pas ça que je veux dire. L'entreprise a des problèmes souvent structurels, n'importe quoi, pis c'est pas les employés. On est des êtres humains. On a rien qu'à les encourager un peu pis la majorité, 90% des employés vont y aller. Parce qu'ils veulent garder leur emploi, ils veulent bien faire, ils veulent bien vivre, ils veulent de l'argent, c'est humain ça. On a de quoi à faire au niveau de l'humanisation des entreprises. Je veux dire, maudite marde, moi, y a trois semaines, mon boss à l'hôpital, a coupé un employé qui travaillait trois jours par semaine, il lui a coupé deux jours par semaine. Fait que là, il travaille une journée par semaine o.k. Là après ça, le gars est sorti du bureau. Là nous autres, il nous a fait rentrer les trois qui étaient là régulièrement là, pis nous il nous a parlé de qualité de service. Pis là, l'autre, il venait de se faire "chopper"... Moi, le soir avant ça on était deux, là le soir je suis tout seul. Pis, je veux dire, là le patron qui nous parle de qualité de service. Bon. Je suis bien d'accord à vouloir faire mon effort à ranger ce qui me regarde moi, qu'est-ce que c'est qui est ma responsabilité, comment est-ce que je reçois mon monde pis tout ça. Ca je suis correct. Sauf, que, maudite marde, en tant que patron, moi je trouve que parler

de qualité de service à mes employés, je leur en aurais peut-être parlé dans six mois. C'est pas le temps là. Tabarouette, tu viens de "chopper" un gars, tout le monde est au courant. Vendredi soir celle qui est direct avec mon supérieur immédiat je viens poigner la cédule, est venue flanquer ça au babillard. Moi je regarde la cédule ouais bien Gilles y manque des journées dessus. J'appel Gilles, je lui demande, j'y dis coup donc t'as-tu fais des changements. Il dit non ça devait être une erreur. O.K. je referme le téléphone. Là je vois le patron passer, je poigne le patron je lui demande de venir icitte, j'y dis aie, qu'est-ce qu'il arrive à Gilles? Ah, bon, on t-en reparlera. Pis là, y m'ont demandé de me fermer la gueule de ça en attendant.

Je veux pas rentrer dans trop détails la dessus on risque....

Bien en tout cas sans doute je trouve qui a des boutes, y a du monde qui devrait peut-être mieux faire les choses. Au niveau humain.

Tu nous as fait un commentaire ou est-ce que ça c'est que, qui parlait tantôt la motivation des gens, de plus en plus les gens sont pas motivés, ils veulent juste faire leurs nombres d'heures pis avoir leur chèque de paye. Avec tout ce qui s'en vient, il va falloir que les employés que les personnes soient vraiment motivées. Pour les motiver il va falloir que les patrons, tous ceux qui font beaucoup d'argent, va falloir qu'ils en donne. Va falloir qu'il leur donne des avis des formes n'importe quoi.

Mais est-ce que c'est nécessaire que le Canada deviennent plus compétitif? Pourquoi est-ce que c'est important?

C'est la vie, si il ne devient pas compétitif le Canada disparaît.

On disparaît c'est ça la conséquence.

Economiquement on va être envahie par les autres pays. C'est qu'on sera plus capable d'exporter, on va devenir quasiment un pays sous développé. _____ Au point de vue monétaire un moment donné on va devenir à la merci.

Mais il s'agit finalement d'être plus compétitif d'être plus concurrentiel sur les marchés internationaux, c'est quoi, quelles sont les conséquences? Les opportunités?

Bien si le domaine industriel commence à donner de la motivation aux employés, je dis alors bon c'est ça.

Mais ça l'a quoi comme conséquence d'être devenu plus compétitif? Mais si l'employé n'est pas motivé, même si le patron veut...

Non, non tu ne comprends pas ma question. Une fois que ça c'est acquis, une fois que t'es devenu plus compétitif plus

concurrentiel, O.K. Qu'est-ce que ça a comme conséquence _____
_____ du Canada avec ses partenaires.

Bien normalement tu retiens plus de passage...

Tu peux faire des échanges avec les autres partenaires qui va avoir autour de toi. D'aller acquérir d'autres techniques.

T'augmente ta part du marché si t'es plus concurrentiel, parce que t'obtient plus de contrôle.

Mais est-ce qui a que des avantages à être concurrentiel mais est-ce qui a aussi un prix à payer pour ça de devenir concurrentiel?

Mais il faut faire un peu plus d'efforts à ce moment là.

Il faut faire plus d'efforts?

Il faut réellement montrer ce dont on est capable.

Est-ce que c'est le seul prix à payer; faire plus d'efforts? Mais est-ce qu'il y a des sacrifices à faire par exemple?

Oui mais là je vous demande est-ce que c'est l'industriel ou l'employeur. Là je veux dire l'employé qui doit donner son temps à son patron. Ou est-ce que le patron doit aussi être avec l'employé. Là vous nous demander de parler au niveau économie mais l'industriel c'est lui qui a l'argent.

Ah oui.

C'est lui à un moment donné, l'employé arrive y dis bien moi je veux avoir 110.00\$ par semaine. L'employeur va dire tu veux avoir 110.00\$ moi je mets la clé dans la porte, je vais aller voir ailleurs.

Mais je ne dis pas que c'est pas un tout, c'est peut-être un c'est peut-être une collaboration patronaux\employés je ne sais pas, c'est peut-être collaboration c'est peut-être la seule façon dans le fond d'y arriver à une meilleur compétitivité, s'il y a un petit peu de, chacun met de l'eau dans son vin comme on dit. C'est peut-être ça la façon. Donc je ne suis pas biaisé ou "insided" comme on dit. Encore une fois si je vous pose la même question est-ce que, bon ça représente les opportunités le fait d'être plus compétitif parce qu'on peut vendre d'avantage, mais est-ce qui a un prix a payer pour ça?

Vous allez me dire que n'importe quoi que t'achètes ou que t'améliores, t'as un prix a payer en quelque part même si à moyen terme ou à long terme tu vas gagner. Mais il y a toujours quelque part y a un prix a payer. Ça c'est sûr. Quand tu fasse n'importe quoi y a un prix a payer que se soit monétaire, humain.

Mais si on disait par exemple Pascal y faudrait que l'industrie du textile soit plus concurrentiel. Ça voudrait dire quoi en terme, ça voudrais-tu dire couper ton salaire en deux?

Ça pourrait vouloir dire ça mais ça serait la façon la plus débile, de réaliser ça. Il y a des compagnies à Montréal qui se modernise. J'en connais quelques unes, mais qu'est-ce qu'il y a de bon y s'achètent des ordinateurs pis des marqueurs, l'écoute ça se fait sur le laser, les machines électriques, tout ça. Le seul problème c'est au niveau humain au point de vue de quelqu'un qui gagne sa vie, ça prenait 50 employés bon. Une fois ces changements faits là, ça t'en prend 10. Tu sors la même production. Donc, c'est ça qui arrive.

Il y a même des sacrifices au niveau des jobs.

C'est ça oui.

Ben écoutez. Si on dit que bon, pour devenir plus compétitif, il y a aussi un prix à payer. Il y a peut-être des concessions salariales à faire, il y a des jobs qui sont perdues, il y a du retraining à faire, il faut que les gens se reclassent, se ré-éduquent dans d'autres domaines, etc. Avez-vous l'impression que les canadiens sont prêts à faire ça pour devenir davantage concurrentiel sur les marchés mondiaux. Qu'est-ce que vous en pensez, avez-vous l'impression que les canadiens sont prêts à faire ça.

C'est sûr qu'ils sont bien inquiets. Quand on pense au libre échange là, c'est tout ça que les gens, c'est ça qui leur vient à l'idée, si on prend au point de vue textile, même si moi je ne connais pas ben ben ça, c'est ce qu'on me dit qu'il y a des compagnies qui va falloir qui tombent par rapport avec le libre échange aux E.U. il y en a qui va falloir, les forts vont rester pis les petites vont tomber.

Les plus faibles vont tomber...

A ce point de vue là il y a un problème..

Ce que je veux dire, est-ce que les canadiens sont prêts à payer le prix pour devenir plus concurrentiel et donc avoir un meilleur sort au niveau échange modial, au niveau commerce mondial. Est-ce qu'on est prêt, est-ce que vous avez l'impression...

On n'a pas le choix...C'est pas juste les secteurs productifs de la société par exemple. C'est que les secteurs de service aussi. Moi je veux parler contre personne, faut que tout le monde gagne sa vie. Mais quand je vois les transports de la rive sud de Montréal, les conneries, les chiâlages, moi-même je suis un ouvrier. Je pourrais les comprendre mais je ne l'ai comprends plus à un moment donné. Il y a des exagérations de la société, toc toc.

Mais quand on parle, est-ce que toi par exemple, as-tu l'impression parce que j'ai déjà entendu ça Pascal dire, il y a certaines industries, ça sert à rien, on ne peut pas les taxer, dont les textiles, dont la chaussure,...

C'est pas vrai. Écoute, je dis pas que c'est vrai que c'est pas vrai..

Vous n'avez pas la compétence de décider ça mais c'est ce qu'on entend dire. Tu sais, c'est un moule à chaussure, des textiles, on en peut plus être compétitifs là-dedans. Vaut mieux laisser aller ça pis se concentrer sur d'autres secteurs de point où vraiment on est bon dedans et où on a des chances de réussir.

Non, c'est parce que le textile....

Je ne veux pas m'arrêter au textile...

Non non non , o.k. Justement parce que c'est pas tout à fait vrai. C'est vrai en partie. 80% c'est vrai, mais 20% sont, qui se servent de technologie qui existe, mais qui est tout à fait compétitif. Ça prend des gens qui investissent de l'argent. Ça prend un investisseur.

Il reste quand même que le coup de la main d'oeuvre sera toujours plus élevé qu'a Taiwan.

C'est tellement peu le coût de la main d'oeuvre comparé...

Écoute, quand tu sors, je sais pas moi, quoique 500\$ de vêtements à vendre dans ta manufacture et pis là-dedans tu as 10 employés qui ont travaillé à cause qu'il y a des innovations technologiques, comme le couteau au laser, des design à l'ordinateur pis tout ça, pleins de trucs, si tu sors 500 robes que tu vends 50\$, ben je veux dire que tes 10 employés que tu as peut-être payés 10\$ de l'heure, ça veut quand même dire que ça ne t'as pas coûté une beurrée.

Mais indépendamment de ça là, à savoir si c'est vrai ou pas, je n'ai pas la compétence de juger ça, mais je voudrais savoir, est-ce qu'il y a des secteurs en croissance qui seraient intéressants pour l'avenir du Canada, je sais pas, on a peut-être de meilleures chances, ou de bonnes chances d'avoir du succès parce que soit qu'on a une compétence, soit qu'on a ce qui faut, soit que c'est en émergence ces affaires là donc on peut être sur la première marche tu sais là au départ là tu sais , je sais pas quand l'industrie papetière a commencé y a 100 ans et un siècle, on est obligé de progresser parce qu'on avait tout sur place, le bois était là, pis bon. Je pense que...

Les barrages et...

C'est ça, les chances étaient sur notre bord en partant. Est-ce

que vous voyez des choses en émergence actuellement au Canada, des choses en croissances, en croissances qui pourraient être bonnes. Si oui, ça serait quoi d'après vous autres? Quels sont les secteurs en croissance où vraiment on a des chances...

L'aéronautique.

Oui, sûrement, avec le bord Canada Air ça semble bien fonctionner.

La télécommunication, c'est le même Bell Canada pis Northern Telecom c'est des maudites belles compagnies.

Quoi d'autre à part de ça. C'est ça que je veux savoir. Quoi d'autre

L'ingénierie

L'ingénierie, oui, o.k.

L'hydro électrique qui se développe..

D'autres secteurs de pointe, en forte croissance...

Des bottes..

Des bottes..

Des bottes, oui. Parce qu'on les redéfinies, je pense qu'on est un des pays qui...

Je pense pas qu'on fasse face au refroidissement de la planète pour le moment là pour augmenter le marcher des bottes considérablement.

Non non non, je fais juste le fin... Je fais seulement niaiser...

O.K. Est-ce que vous pensez qu'on devrait concentrer davantage dans ce genre de choses là où on est vraiment compétitifs sur les marchés mondiaux et peut-être importés, et là je reviens un peu à ma théorie encore une fois à tort ou à raison, mentionnons pas les secteurs nous, ceux dont ont pense qui sont des secteurs nous, laissez les secteurs nous finalement à d'autres gens qui semblent être capables de mieux compétitionner que nous autres pour le moment en tout cas. Est-ce qu'on devrait encore une fois essayer de faire ce genre de choses là, se spécialiser dans certains secteurs qu'on est bon..

Il y a des couturiers qui font maintenant vraiment vraiment bien, les canadiens français, les québécois.

Il y a deux façons qu'on peut voir ça, on peut se concentrer sur certains secteurs très particuliers où on est bons où on a une marge de vente sur les autres pis dire qu'on va compétitionner sur

les marchers mondiaux là-dessus, il n'y a pas de problèmes et pis ont va abandonner totalement les autres au tiers monde, aux pays de l'Asie, etc. Ou l'autre possibilité, on va se faire une belle grosse clôture chez nous, on va toute fabriquer chez nous, on va avoir le textile, nos chaussures, nos lacets, toute le kit, on fabrique rien que pour nous autres pis on exporte pas, on garde ça pour nous autres. Tu sais, une économie fermée. Qu'est-ce que c'est que vous favorisez?

Ca va donner comme le restant, pis ... on sera pas stimulés rien de ça...

Donc, on laisse le marché ouvert...

Regardez la Caisse Populaire par exemple, la Caisse Populaire Desjardins, ça grossit, pis ça grossit, ça grossit parce qu'il y a toujours beaucoup de monde...

Donc, est-ce qu'on favorise le marché ouvert... spécialisé peut-être par opposition à....

Non, mais c'est parce que ça c'est bon si, admettons qu'on se consacre, si on se régionalise, faut que ça soit fait par motivation personnelle ou de l'entreprise. Pas par un grand consensus national qu'il faut que ça soit fait. Si les caisses populaires sont si fortes que ça c'est parce qu'elles ont délibérément fait un choix entre entreprises de renforcer les industries, pis de mettre en stock nos bas de laine dans des coffre-forts. Je veux dire..

Je trouve qu'il y a beaucoup de motivation personnelle qui rentre en ligne de compte. Il n'y a pas de solution coupée au couteau.

De façon générale, avez-vous l'impression que le Canada fait bien ou fait mal au niveau du commerce international, et sur quoi est-ce que vous jugez cela. Pis encore là, c'est votre perception .. Faisons un tour de table, ça m'intéresse. Pensons-y trente secondes, ne changez pas votre opinion, quel que soit... je commence avec Steve, les autres vont tout avoir entendus... Pensez-y pis gardez votre opinion, changez-la pas o.k. Alors, dites-moi si à votre avis, votre perception du commerce international, la position du Canada, est-ce qu'on fait bien dans le commerce international, autrement dit, est-ce qu'on a des surplus à l'exportation ou est-ce qu'on a un déficit au niveau de l'exportation\importation. Je commence avec toi effectivement là.. Vas-y Pierre..

On est bien parce qu'on a toujours été un pays exportateur.

Je trouve qu'on est bien, mais c'est trompeur; si on prend dans l'ensemble on est bien, si on le prend par secteur, on flop pis on est très haut.

Moi je ne sais pas si la valeur est positive ou négative. Je sais juste une chose, je pense que ça s'est amélioré du point de vue que bon, il y a vingt ans, on a exporté beaucoup plus de matières premières, mais pas de produits finis. Là je pense qu'il y a une tendance qui commence à demander...

Donc, on fabrique plus de produits finis hein

Ou secondaire disons, mais pas arrêter admettons dans le moulin à fer, le moulin à pulpe pis...

Luc, est-ce qu'on fait bien ou non..

On fait mieux que plusieurs

Moi je suis d'accord, on fait mieux moi aussi. On s'améliore.

Gilles

Moi je pense qu'on est aussi bon que.. on est stable.. L'économie continue à souvrir . L'économie va toujours continuer à souvrir quand même, même quand ça va mal aller. Quand on regarde les autres pays, y ont pas d'économie, pis ça roule quand même.

Est-ce que le fait de rendre le Canada plus compétitif, avez-vous l'impression que ça pourrait avoir une influence positive à biens des niveaux, au niveau du gouvernement, des affaires, du travail, par exemple, au niveau apprentissage, au niveau universitaire, au niveau individuel. Est-ce que le fait de devenir plus compétitifs pourraient être globalement positif finalement? Avoir une influence positive d'une façon générale.

Ben, ça serait à souhaiter. Humainement parlant, ça serait à souhaiter qu'on veule vouloir aller de l'avant, qu'on soient plus positifs, qu'on veulent toujours avoir mieux...

Mais on parlait tout à l'heure de prix à payer, mais est-ce que vous avez l'impression en bout de ligne ça va être avantageux à tous ces points de vue là, est-ce que ça l'a une influence positive sur tous les aspects que vous avez mentionnés le fait d'être compétitifs globalement.

Si on donne beaucoup au niveau de l'éducation, oui. Ca pourrait devenir très positif. Si l'éducation en tant que telle est mis en fonction de ça oui, leur donner aussi la motivation parce qu'ils disent qu'il y a beaucoup de jeunes qui lâchent les écoles au secondaire. Il y en a qui sont même pas capables de finir leur CEGEP parce que financièrement ils ne sont pas capables d'arriver. Pis là dedans, il y a des gens qui ont du potentiel malheureusement.

Mais pourquoi est-ce que le gouvernement insiste tant sur cet aspect compétitif au niveau international? C'est quoi le gouvernement pis le rôle... Est-ce que d'une part c'est le rôle du gouvernement ou c'est le rôle de l'industrie privée ou les deux de rendre le Canada plus compétitif...

C'est l'industrie privée qui force le gouvernement à se....

Qu'est-ce que vous en pensez les autres. Pourquoi, d'abord est-ce que c'est la job du privé ou du gouvernement de faire ça de nous rendre plus compétitif.

Moi je dis que c'est le privé qui force le gouvernement à rendre ça plus compétitif.

Qu'est-ce que vous en pensez les autres?

Moi, j'trouve en tout cas, le commerce c'est la job du privé pis je veux dire que le gouvernement se voyons, s'occupe donc juste de faire les lois pour avoir une société juste, pis je veux dire le commerce, pis je veux dire les individus, c'est à eux autres de gagner leur pain pis tout ça.

Toi, ce que tu dis, c'est que le gouvernement devrait s'occuper de la législation et l'industrie privé devrait s'occuper du commerce.

Oui, pis je veux dire que le gouvernement s'arrange pour avoir un administration de ça. Y a des choses qui dépensent quoi...

C'est une question de crédibilité aussi.

Qui a de la crédibilité à ton avis..

Le milieu des affaires.

Etes-vous d'accord avec ça...

Oui, oui, moi je suis d'accord. De toute façon, le gouvernement va dire son mot dans le commerce pis dans les lois, pis dans les exportations, pis dans les échanges avec les autres pays. C'est pas pour demain qu'on va l'empêcher de jouer un rôle.

Mais si on met de l'emphase, si le gouvernement du Canada ou le pays comme tel met de l'emphase sur le commerce international, sur les échanges internationaux, qu'est-ce que ça va vouloir dire pour les individus. Avez-vous l'impression que ça pourrait avoir une influence par exemple sur la recherche et le développement qu'on devrait faire ici, sur le recyclage des gens et finalement la formation des employés compétents. Est-ce que ça pourrait avoir une influence bénéfique si on met de l'emphase encore une fois sur le commerce international, est-ce que ça pourrait avoir une influence positive oui ou non sur la recherche et le développement

et encore une fois, la formation des gens?

Je trouve que ça pourrait avoir un effet très positif là, mais si on prends la tarte un moment donné, faut distribuer la même grandeur de tarte là, question de priorité. Ca va avoir un effet positif pourvu que c'est fait intelligemment.

C'est ça.

Veux-tu m'expliquer. Je ne comprends pas au juste ce que tu veux dire.

Ben o.k. On met l'accent sur recherche et développement.

On met l'accent sur le commerce international. Donc, ce que tu me dis ça va avoir une influence positive sur la recherche et le développement...

OUI, je trouve que ça va être et le privé et le gouvernement qui vont avoir à travailler de concert .

Si on regarde y a certains endroits dans le monde qui sont des centres de bouillonnement économique, culturel, scientifique, pis tout ça, t'as le Silicone Valley, t'as la Caroline du Nord, t'as chez pas quel numéro à Boston, pis c'est parce qu'ils accordent une espèce de masse critique dans un petit secteur où t'as des universités, des compagnies, certains organismes gouvernementaux, un certain bon mixte là, pis l'arrondissement de chacun de ces affaires là, pour faire que ça bouillonne. Entre-autres, il y a quelques années, j'avais lu que dans les environs de la ville de Québec, on était pas loin d'avoir une masse critique comme ça dans le secteur de l'optique du laser pis de ces technologies là. Je veux dire, moi je trouve que si jamais on arrive à développer ce coin là, ça va être pas mal beau.

Encore une fois, si on met de l'emphase sur le commerce international, avez-vous l'impression que ça pourrait favoriser ou défavoriser les investissements étrangers. Est-ce que ça pourrait avoir un impacte positif ou négatif sur les investissements étrangers le fait de développer, mettre de l'accent encore davantage sur le commerce international.

Si on est compétitif, ça devrait bien aller. C'est à peu près ça. Mais si on est beaucoup..

Ca dépend ce que vous entendez par investissement étranger. Moi je verrais ça dans une douzaine de chaussures à Taiwan, c'est un investissement étranger mais il me semble avoir une différente qualité d'investissement étranger.

Ben je parle des investissements étrangers chez nous..

oui, oui, même l'investissement étranger chez nous, il y a des différentes qualités d'investissements. Si c'est juste un investisse-ment pour faire de l'argent, pour moi, c'est rien ça.

Il va falloir toujours de l'aide du gouvernement de toute façon.

C'est ça. Il me semble des qualités là...

J'essaie encore une fois de t'axer davantage sur le commerce international qui va faire que il va falloir développer une main d'oeuvre, pis spécialiser, pis scolariser, etc. on va devoir activer la recherche et le développement, pour développer les secteurs de pointe, pour être plus compétitifs, etc? Est-ce que ça c'est comparable aux investissements de par chez nous ou si ça ne fait rien.

Si tout ça ce que vous avez dit là, ça se concrétise, c'est sûr et certain que les gens vont vouloir investir à pochetés parce que toutes ces choses entrent en ligne de compte de la compétitivité, la qualité de la main d'oeuvre, les industries secondaires qui peuvent fournir ces compagnies là. Si tout ça c'est excellent, l'argent va rentrer certainement.

Est-ce qu'en général le gouvernement a une stratégie pour en arriver peut-être à ce scénario là encore une fois de mettre l'accent sur le commerce international, la compétitivité, etc? Est-ce qu'il y a une stratégie, est-ce qu'il y a une volonté politique, est-ce qu'il y a une organisation, est-ce qu'on sent que tout ça est bien organisé, est en train de se faire..

J'ai pas l'impression que c'est clair comme vous dites, pas dans mon esprit à moi - c'est pas clair comme ça.

Y gouvernent 4 ans en avant pour une fois. Quelques hauts fonctionnaires du gouvernement y ont peut-être pensé, mais...

J'ai l'impression que c'est ouvert à la petite semaine quoi.

Je verrais que même si on peut pas nécessairement être d'accord avec tous les plans du gouvernement, je pense qu'ils ont un plan d'ensemble. On pense tout simplement au libre échange où c'est déjà planifié disons que bon, ça devrait être en pleine vigueur en 98, il y a des plans qui se font.

Finalement, si le gouvernement a du succès en faisant ça il le saurait lui-même parce que si ça crée des jobs, si ça rend les canadiens heureux pis prospères, vous allez l'aimer ce gouvernement là, si il y a un gouvernement qui réussirait à faire ça, non. Vous ne pensez pas.

Pas nécessairement parce que les gouvernements qui ont eu, bien souvent dans le monde les gouvernements qui ont eu une grande

influence sur le bien-être de leur pays, qui ont arrivé à vraiment orienter le pays dans une bonne voix, ils ont été perçus comme étant tellement durs pis tellement difficiles, que les gens ne les ont pas élus après. Pis je veux dire bien souvent c'est ça. Regardez quelqu'un admettons là, toi tu t'en vas dans telle direction pis il y a quelqu'un qui te dis non, non, c'est pas ça pan toute qui faut que tu fasses, il faut que tu t'en ailles par là pis je veux dire il aura beau te le dire pis te le faire comprendre pis toute ça, même te poigner pis te mettre là, tu vas revirer, tu vas tout faire, pis à un moment donné quand tu vas être dedans, pis tu vas commencer à voir que ça va mieux, peut-être que tu vas l'accepter sauf que tu auras déjà débarquer la personne qui t'auras mis là.

Quand on parle de, on a parler tout à l'heure de globalisation, j'aimerais y revenir ou de mondialisation, quand on parle de l'Europe de 92, ça sonne une cloche, ça vous dit quelque chose, on parle aussi de la communauté économique européenne ça aussi ça vous dire quelque chose. Bon. Tous ces termes là, est-ce qu'on se dirige vers la globalisation, vers la mondialisation le Canada? Est-ce qu'on fait partie de ce mouvement là? Est-ce qu'on est embarqué là-dedans?

On a un départ avec le libre échange. Le libre échange va déboucher dans pas grand temps avec le Mexique donc, avec le marché avec l'Amérique du nord pour commencer...

La globalisation passe par les blocs, etc.

Donc, on est bien enclanché là dedans. On va en parler un petit peu du libre échange. Bon. Comme vous le savez sans doute, le libre échange a pris place en 89, donc ça fait à peu près un an grosso modo que le libre échange est en place, a été signé. Qu'est-ce, je fais encore une fois un tour de table très rapide, et je veux avoir un commentaire très succès. Je voulais savoir depuis un an, so far so good, il ne s'est rien passé, ou ben donc, c'est positif, il y a eu des aspects positifs, des aspects négatifs ou les deux ou quoi. Je veux juste un commentaire très très rapide au niveau du libre échange pour un an, juste un an. o.k. Des commentaires Steve.

Ben moi, je n'ai pas vu tellement de changements. Il y a beaucoup de gens qui vont acheter aux E.U. Ils arrivent au guichet, y sont obligés de payer des taxes, eux autres ils ne le savaient pas, pis là on est en train de s'apercevoir qu'il y a des industries qui commencent à sentir que il y a une concurrence américaine qui est en train de s'établir entre le Canada et les E.U.

Donc, il y a des changements.

Il y a des changements parce que sans l'industriel il ne bougerait pas comme il bouge.

Gilles...

Moi, je dirais que comme simple citoyen, je ne m'en aperçois pas.

Denise

Moi, ben ce que je peux dire, il y a peut-être eu des compagnies qui ont eu des faiblesses à cet effet là, pis il y en a d'autres que c'est positif.

Luc

Il y a du positif et du négatif parce qu'il y a des compagnies qui ont peurs qui se regroupent ensemble parce que ils savent que le marché américain s'en vient.

Donc il faut prendre plus de force. Pascal

D'après ce que je sais moi, ça d'l'air qu'il n'a jamais eu autant d'acquisition de société canadienne pour les intérêts américains depuis un an.

Est-ce que c'est bien ou mal ça

Je ne suis pas sûr que c'est bien, pas sûr que c'est mal non plus. Mais pas sûr que c'est bien, parce que _____ qui a acheté Catelli pis qui pensait repatrier la production aux E.U. disons que c'est pas bien pour les gens qui travaillent ici. Bon. C'est bien pour les américains plus que d'autre chose.

Richard

Moi je trouve que ça changé dans le sens que il y a une prise de conscience, question d'acquisition, de prendre des forces.

On est encore rendu au niveau des grandes actions, comme ça, on regarde ce qui en est pis je veux dire, ce qu'on a à faire pis...

Est-ce que justement votre attitude, votre état d'esprit a changé sur le libre échange depuis quelques mois, est-ce que ça évolue, est-ce que ça change, pourquoi, pourquoi pas, est-ce que ça changer votre opinion au niveau du libre échange, est-ce que ça évolué au cours des 12 derniers mois? On es-tu un petit peu encore dans l'expertive, on ne sait pas trop trop ce qui va se passer, on connaît pas trop trop les conséquences, pis on regarde ça, pis ont dit peut-être bien que oui, peut-être bien que non, je ne le sais pas trop trop. C'es-tu un peu ça. J'essaie pas de vous mettre des mots dans la bouche là mais..

C'est trop court

C'est mon impression.

C'est sur 10 ans ça..

Un petit peu trop court pour avoir une décision définitive, pour voir ce qui se passe. Est-ce que ça eu un impact sur vous autres personnellement le libre échange? Non.

Moi, je sais que personnellement, moi je suis pour le concept du libre échange à savoir comment est-ce qu'il est appliqué, si il est bien appliqué, ça c'est un autre affaire là, mais le principe du libre échange comme tel je suis pour pis je pense que je vais le rester pendant longtemps.

Si je vous demandais un "gutt" feeling là avez-vous l'impression que le nombre d'emploi, parce que finalement c'est le baromètre ultime là, je veux dire, il y a plus de jobs ou il y a moins de jobs qu'il y en avait, en fait c'est ça le baromètre ultime. Si je vous demandais personnellement, avez-vous l'impression qu'il y a plus de job qu'il y en avaient il y a douze mois essentiellement à cause du libre échange parce qu'il y a peut-être d'autres facteurs qui sont en ligne de compte, je ne sais pas là, mais il y as-tu plus de jobs ou moins de jobs qu'il y en avaient à cause du libre échange.

A cause du libre échange, j'ai pas l'impression que ça changé grand chose. Si il y a eu des changements c'est dû à d'autres facteurs.

Pas de changements. Il me semble que le libre échange est pratiqué depuis longtemps.

Depuis douze mois, je ne peux pas dire que j'ai perçu des changements malgré à part de quelques cas isolés.

Moi non plus, je n'ai pas perçus de changements.

O.K. Denise

Pas sûr sûr si ça pas affecté un peu

Négativement ou positivement

Ben, il y a eu Catelli dernièrement là, moi là je veux dire, pis ensuite il y a CAMCO aussi là qui a eut des grosses réductions aussi tout dernièrement de trois unités, ils sont passé à deux unités. Donc ils ont beaucoup moins d'employés. Ils s'en vont aux E.U. disons il y a certains facteurs comme, je ne dirai pas ce qui s'est passé aux E.U. mais ils ont gardé certains secteurs...

Moi, je penserais pas que ça joué là sur le principe de la cause.

Steve...

Attendons et voyons.

Ouais, mais actuellement, as-tu l'impression qu'il y a eut des gains ou des pertes nettes en terme d'emploi?

Il y a une évolution qui se fait en ce moment.

Mais tu ne peux pas évaluer...

Mais moi je ne suis pas prêt à évaluer...

Mais pour le moment tu ne peux pas faire une évaluation si à ton avis il y a des gains ou des pertes au niveau des emplois là globalement.

C'est moitié, moitié.

Donc, on en a perdu et on en a gagné.

On va solidifier une base.

O.K. A long terme, est-ce que l'impact qui va continuer à se faire sentir au niveau du libre échange à long terme d'après vous autres. Est-ce qu'il y a des choses qui vont se concrétiser, se raffermir au niveau des tendances?

Il y a longtemps que ça avait à arriver.

Ca va être quoi l'effet à long terme à votre avis. Si je vous demandais carrément, je sais bien que pas plus que moi capables d'aller dans une boule de cristal, je sais pas sûr que je répondrais mieux que vous autres si c'étaient vous autres qui me posiez la question là, mais je vous la pose quand même. Ca va être quoi à long terme d'après vous autres l'effet du libre échange.. un "gutt" feeling là, parce qu'on est tous dans l'expective un peu là.

Ben moi, quand je vois les américains _____, je trouve que c'est un gros avancement au niveau du libre échange. Pis qu'on arrête nous autres de se mettre à genoux devant le dollar américain.

Mais à long terme, ça va être quoi l'effet du libre échange.

Ca va être tout un changement dans la société. C'est juste un feeling. Mais au niveau de l'emploi bon, je sais pas si on va en gagner ou en perdre. Tout dépendra, après en avoir gagné, on va en perdre, on va en gagner. Le niveau de vie, je ne suis pas sûr qu'il va augmenter par exemple, pis, le problème ce sont les programmes sociaux. Ca, je pense d'après moi, c'est le gros problème. C'est que les américains pis nous au point de vue social, programmes sociaux, on est loin les uns des autres.

As-tu l'impression que les programmes sociaux sont en jeu présentement?

Je pense que oui, mais pas à court terme, mais je parle dans cinq six ans, dans sept ans, huit ans, dix ans, il va y avoir des discussions là-dessus, certainement.

Faut pas oublier que les américains sont en train de prendre conscience de leurs problèmes sociaux qu'ils ont négligés depuis longtemps. Tu regardes les canaux américains, pis quand ils te parlent d'alphabétisation, quand ils parlent de drogues, quand ils parlent des sans abris, pis tout ça, ils ont des problèmes en "joual vert" eux autres, probablement pires que nous autres justement.

Mais à long terme encore une fois est-ce qu'on y gagne ou est-ce qu'on y perd.

Jusqu'à là on y gagne, si on perd déjà notre mentalité de protectionniste...

On pourrait y gagner...

Moi je pense qu'on n'a pas tellement de choix.

Comme Richard disait tantôt, il parlait de la tarte, moi j'ai l'impression que la tarte pour les canadiens va grossir mais il va falloir apprendre à vivre divisé entre les gens. C'est ça, il va falloir qu'ils fassent ça parallèlement.

Quand on parle de déficit au niveau des échanges le Canada en général a eu des surplus, mais notre surplus ça me constamment et considérablement. Avez-vous l'impression que le libre échange a quelque chose à faire, à contribuer, ou si ça n'a rien à faire avec ça c'est d'autres facteurs qui influencent.

Je n'ai pas les chiffres. Ils diminuent depuis les douze derniers mois..

Ouais, depuis disons, je veux pas m'embarquer parce que je vous dis ben humblement que ne n'y suis pas plus que toi en toute honnêteté, mais je sais que ça diminue un petit peu tout le temps. On avait des surplus plus considérables, mais ils ne sont plus si considérables qu'ils étaient.

Je pas sûr que c'est à cause du libre échange ça.

C'est difficile à dire hein. Est-ce que le libre échange a eu un impact sur le pouvoir du gouvernement fédéral versus et aussi sur le gouvernement provincial. Est-ce que ça nous a donné tout de même un peu de "bargaining power" envers les américains, par exemple. Est-ce que ça changé notre position de force au

gouvernement fédéral et au gouvernement provincial.

Disons que moi d'après ce que j'en pense, c'est quand même assez difficile d'aller aux E.U. pis c'est pas facile pour le gouvernement fédéral d'aller aux E.U. pis de négocier.

T'as pas l'impression qu'on a gagné un petit peu de poil avec ça non...

Je ne sais pas.

O.K. Pas de problème.

Mais comme de raison, les américains, à cause de leur force économique, ils ont tout le temps négocié ensemble, pis que les administrateurs américains savent ça...

Moi aussi, j'ai comme l'impression ils ont une force...

Présentement là, o.k. pour beaucoup d'américains, il y en a une gang qui ont la chienne sur nous autres, parce que dans certains secteurs on est très fort, pis ben plus forts qu'eux autres. Pis, si on regarde juste entre autre ce qui s'est produit pendant les négociations du libre échange où avec les bardeaux de cèdre de la Colombie Britannique, les américains ont foutu dessus une taxe, une barrière tarifaire écoeurante...

Je voudrais parler très rapidement parce que j'approche la fin, si on parle encore une fois du libre échange, avez-vous l'impression que les gens connaissent bien ce que c'est, ont suffisamment d'information, est-ce qu'on en a suffisamment parlé, est-ce que les gens sont suffisamment renseignés sur ses effets, sur ce que c'est exactement. Est-ce que vous autres, personnellement, souhaiteriez en connaître davantage ou si vous avez l'impression que vous en avez ben assez entendu parlé, pis ce que vous en connaissez c'est suffisant pour vos besoins.

Moi, j'aime mieux entendre parler du libre échange que du Lac Meech.

Les changements se produisent tellement lentement qu'on ne voit pas vraiment l'évolution là mais oui,

Même maintenant, ceux qui n'en connaissent pas beaucoup du libre échange, bon quel genre d'information vous pensez qui manquent aux gens en général pour mieux comprendre, qu'est-ce que c'est que vous aimeriez avoir davantage au niveau d'information du libre échange pour peut-être mieux comprendre.

On a eu de l'information contradictoire au début, peut-être si il y avait moyen.. maintenant que ça commence à prendre forme, là on pourrait écouter.

Ecoutez, j'en ai entendu parler beaucoup mais mal parce que j'en ai entendu parlé comme tout le monde pis je me fais une idée, pis tout d'un coup je prend le journal trois jours après, l'autre me dit le contraire. Bon là, j'essais de discuter par moi-même là, c'est pas facile pis, maintenant je devrais dire de façon plus claire, une façon de mieux le présenter tout au moins.

Moi, j'aimerais savoir les échéanciers. Je sais que ça va s'appliquer progressivement, que ça va être en pleine force en 92, mais comme là, à votre question tantôt sur ce qui s'est fait depuis un an, là je ne le sais pas.

Comment vous aimeriez que cette information là, si il y a information additionnelle à distribuer, comment est-ce que ça devrait être fait? Est-ce que ça devrait être présenté sous forme de brochure, sous forme de programme de télévision, il y a eut un excellent émission sur le Lac Meech... Il reste quand même que c'était très bien fait, vous pouvez pas me dire le contraire. Est-ce que c'est quoi le medium pour dissiminer davantage l'information objective sur le libre échange? Est-ce que c'est une brochure, est-ce que c'est la télé, est-ce que c'est...

Le monde ça ne lit pas beaucoup, ça lit les caractères gras, pis la balance...

Faudrait une émission de deux heures de qualité

Avec le pour et le contre, tous les opinions de tout le monde .. Bougez pas, je vais allé voir si j'ai couvert toutes mes angles. Si oui, je vous laisse partir tout de suite, si non, cinq minutes au maximum et ça sera tout. Je vous reviens dans trente secondes.

Oh boy!

On a fait le tour du jardin comme on dit. Il n'y a pas de problème. On a couvert tous nos points. Ecoutez, j'aimerais vous remercier infiniment. Il y avait un autre groupe à six heures, ils ont fait exactement le même exercice. Et c'est extrêmement intéressant et j'espère que ça va servir à quelque chose. Peut-être qu'un jour vous verrez une émission à Radio Canada de peut-être deux heures, vous pourrez dire à ce moment là, c'est à cause de moi. Bonne fin de soirée.

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