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Privy Council Office Continuous Qualitative Data Collection of Canadians' Views – Wave 10 of Focus Groups

FINAL REPORT
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Political Neutrality Statement

I hereby certify as Senior Officer of Ipsos that the deliverables fully comply with the Government of Canada political neutrality requirements outlined in the Communications Policy of the Government of Canada and Procedures for Planning and Contracting Public Opinion Research. Specifically, the deliverables do not include information on electoral voting intentions, political party preferences, standings with the electorate or ratings of the performance of a political party or its leaders.



Mike Colledge
President
Ipsos Public Affairs

1. Executive Summary

Background and Objectives

The Privy Council Office (PCO) is the hub of non-partisan, public service support to the Prime Minister and Cabinet and its decision-making structures. Led by the Clerk of the Privy Council, PCO helps the Government implement its vision and respond effectively and quickly to issues facing the government and the country.

As an advisor to the Prime Minister, PCO brings together quality, objective policy advice and information to support the Prime Minister and Cabinet, including information on the priorities of Canadians. To this end, the Communications and Consultation Secretariat within PCO supports the Prime Minister’s Office in coordinating government communications and setting broad government communications themes and messages, in accordance with government priorities, as determined by the Prime Minister, Cabinet, Cabinet committees and the Clerk of the Privy Council. The Secretariat also works with PCO policy secretariats to advise and support Cabinet and its committees.

In fulfilling its mandate, PCO required an ongoing cycle of qualitative data collection to ensure that it has up-to-date representations of Canadians’ opinions on macro-level issues that are of interest to the government, such as their views on what should be the priorities of the government. Additionally, such research increases the Government of Canada’s understanding of emerging trends, and measures Canadians’ views on key national issues and policy initiatives.

Through the use of an ongoing cycle of focus groups, PCO is gaining a solid understanding of Canadians’ views as they relate to the most important issues facing the country; their perceptions of how the federal government can best address these issues; expectations of actions related to government priorities; and, perspectives on how the government can most effectively convey its efforts in dealing with emerging issues. This research helps inform the development of communications messages, products and dissemination tactics to respond to priority issues. Additionally, the research allows the Government of Canada to develop and refine communications activities to meet the specific needs of Canadians with timely, up-to-date, easily understood information based on the current perceptions of Canadians in the requisite areas.

This tenth wave of ongoing qualitative research was meant to gather feedback from Canadians on select issues and policy areas that are important to the Government of Canada. The issues discussed during focus groups differed from one location to the next. Topics covered included:

- Creative Canada
- Corporate tax rules
- Canada-US relations
- Healthy eating
- Labour and employment
- Gun control laws
- Deferred prosecution agreements
- Fall economic statement
- Offshore protected areas
- Immigration fees
- Bombardier
- Asylum seekers

Overview of Methodology

This wave of qualitative research was comprised of a series of 12 focus groups with Canadians aged 20 years old and above, held between October 11th and October 26th, 2017. All group discussions lasted approximately two hours and were conducted in the evening, with the first session in each city starting at 5:30pm and the second starting at 7:30pm. These sessions were held in the following locations:

- October 11th – Laval
- October 17th – Prince Rupert
- October 18th – Vancouver
- October 19th – North Bay
- October 23rd – Fredericton
- October 25th – Quebec City
- October 26th – Mississauga

A total of 12 participants were recruited for each session to ensure that a minimum of eight to ten participants would attend. In total, 122 participants took part in the discussions. All participants received an honorarium of \$75 for attending the sessions at the focus group facilities. The screening questionnaire helped ensure that participants included a good cross-section of the general population, with good mixes of gender, ages, education and income levels, as well as household composition. Additional methodological details can be found in the appendix of this report.

This second wave of research is part of a continuous qualitative research project that will include a total of 144 focus groups to be held in multiple waves over the 2017 calendar year, with the option of renewing the cycle of research for two additional years. The contracted amount for this research project for calendar year 2017 is \$916,865.05, including HST.

Key Findings

Creative Canada

Laval, North Vancouver, North Bay, Fredericton and Quebec City participants were asked a series of questions regarding the Government of Canada’s Creative Canada initiative. Participants were unaware of the name of the initiative on an unprompted basis, but most participants said they had in fact heard about the announcement when prompted on some key features. The most widely-recognized elements of the initiative were all related to Netflix.

In both Quebec locations, participants spontaneously mentioned that they had heard about the debates regarding the taxation of Netflix services, but not of the other elements of the initiative. Many participants outside of Quebec said they were aware of the future creation of Netflix Canada and the

added funds for Canadian productions. They mostly shared positive views regarding all elements of Creative Canada, even if they did not previously know about most of them.

Corporate Tax Rules

A short discussion on the Canadian government’s possible changes to the corporate tax regime was held in Laval, Prince Rupert, North Bay and North Vancouver. Awareness of the recent Canadian consultations on tax changes was highest in Prince Rupert and North Vancouver. Only a handful of participants in Laval and North Bay were aware of the consultations, and most displayed little to no understanding of the nature of the proposed changes to the corporate tax regime. Those who were aware of the proposed changes shared mixed views as to whether these were a good idea or not. These participants’ views depended in large part on how they understood the changes and who they believed would be affected.

Canada-US Relations

Laval, Prince Rupert and North Vancouver participants were asked to share their views on current NAFTA negotiations between Canada and the United States. Almost all participants were aware of NAFTA negotiations and mostly shared a deep sense of worry and pessimism about the possibility of reaching a fair deal for Canada. Their pessimism stemmed mainly from their highly negative perceptions of the current US government. Most participants felt that the Government of Canada was talking the right approach by not engaging in public disputes with the US, while seemingly standing firm on key points.

Participants were also asked to select top priorities among a list of seven items that was presented to them, including: environmental standards, dispute resolution mechanism, ability to work cross-border, labour standards, indigenous rights, Canadian culture and gender equity. Environmental standards were chosen by most as a top priority because participants feared that Canadian standards might be lowered to match those of the United States and Mexico. Three other priorities stood out during discussions: ensuring the presence of a strong dispute resolution mechanism, the ability for Canadians to work cross-border and the protection of Canadian labour standards.

Healthy Eating

Fredericton, Quebec City and Mississauga participants took part in extensive discussions about encouraging healthier eating habits among Canadians. While most participants felt that the Government should do more to encourage healthy food choices, a vocal minority disagreed. Views were mostly split according to general opinions about the appropriate balance that should be achieved between private and public responsibility. When prompted on the possibility of applying new types of warning labels on foods to provide immediate information on the amount of fat, sugar and sodium contained in packaged food items, opinions were divided along similar lines. The majority who favoured this initiative believed that it would provide Canadian consumers with an easier way of identifying what was bad for them. Those who opposed such labeling said that the approach seemed too strong and preferred to have the information provided to them in a less direct manner.

Participants in all locations were presented with a series of possible warning labels and asked to select those they viewed as the most appropriate. Results were fairly consistent across all locations. Two versions stood out as most efficient: a label that included a triangle ensign with an exclamation mark and

a similar label including a stop sign with an exclamation mark. These two options ranked higher than others because of their overall simplicity and clarity. Images for all labels shown to participants are presented in the body of the report and in the discussion guide included in the appendix.

Aside from the idea of introducing warning labels on food packages, participants were asked about the appropriateness of a series of additional measures, including mandatory calorie counts on restaurant menu items, a new tax on sugary items (with revenues generated being used to promote healthier lifestyles) and a ban on advertising for unhealthy foods targeted at children. The most popular measure was the introduction of a tax on sugary items, although many among those who supported the idea stated that their support was contingent on the money being used for the stated purpose only. The two other measures generated mixed reactions.

Labour and Employment

An in-depth discussion on potential changes to labour standards in federally regulated industries was held in Prince-Rupert and North Vancouver. Participants were asked to complete three written exercises. One exercise presented a series of potential areas of focus for the Government of Canada and required respondents to select which among them should form the core of the government’s strategy as it is revisiting these standards. Wording that included “good quality jobs”, “quality jobs” and “fair jobs” worked best. On the other hand, mentions of “decent work” and “decent jobs” did not fare well.

The second exercise presented participants with the government’s statement of intentions regarding the revamped standards, as follows: *The Government of Canada must promote good quality jobs by addressing the changing way that people work, and work to increase the workforce participation of women and underrepresented groups. To do this, it will be necessary to update the Canada Labour Code to address emerging issues such as unpaid internships, and to ensure that Canadians continue to have a robust and modern set of federal employment standards.*

The paragraph was generally viewed positively, but it was also difficult to absorb as a whole for some participants. Many appreciated the inclusion of a sentence about “changing the way in which people work” because they felt this was an important new reality to deal with. The mention of working to “increase the workforce participation of women and underrepresented minorities” generated the most discussion. Some, mostly women, felt it was essential to promote equality in the workplace for women and for other groups that may not be treated on equal footing. However, others mentioned that this did not sound right because it seemed to single out only two groups at the expense of others who might also face discrimination or other challenges. The part of the paragraph that read “continue to have a robust and modern set of federal employment standards” generated mostly negative reactions as participants felt it did match the overall objective of improvement and change, but rather suggested continuity.

Finally, participants were invited to identify among a list of twelve possible labour standards that the Government of Canada could implement in federally regulated industries, which were most important. While all measures were seen as positive and important by most participants, the most important measure chosen was ensuring equal hourly wage for people working part-time and for temporary workers compared to those who completed the same tasks as a full-time worker. The equation was simple for most participants: you should get paid according to the tasks you perform, not your status.

They summarized it as “equal pay for equal work”. A higher minimum wage was also popular for most participants. Some questioned the impact it may have on small companies who could not afford it, but most agreed that this should not be an excuse to delay increasing the minimum wage.

Gun Control Laws

Discussions on gun control laws were held with participants in Prince Rupert, North Vancouver and North Bay. Participants in all three locations generally felt that Canada was not affected by the kind of gun violence and mass shootings that plagued the United States. A few stated that gun violence was a problem, mostly related to street gangs in larger urban areas like Vancouver and Toronto, but that it generally did not affect every day Canadians. This generalized sense of comfort with the current gun situation in Canada created a sense for Prince Rupert and North Vancouver participants that gun control laws were likely just fine as they were, with a few wanting stricter controls.

Discussions in North Bay were somewhat different than in other locations. In this city, many participants believed that current gun control laws were strong enough and should not be changed, but a few strongly advocated for loosening current controls. The latter believed that current laws should be changed so that Canadians who wanted to carry guns for self-defence could do so.

Deferred Prosecution Agreements

Discussions on deferred prosecution agreements (DPAs) were conducted in Laval, Prince Rupert, North Vancouver and North Bay. Only a handful of participants had heard about deferred prosecution agreements on an unprompted basis. On a prompted basis, some said they had heard about them, but most equated this with a “standard plea agreement” for criminals in exchange for collaboration rather than something that applied specifically to corporate crimes.

The instinctive reactions of most participants across all locations were negative, driven by a generalized impression that corporate crimes and their perpetrators were given preferential treatment. Most believed ordinary Canadians would not have access to this type of plea bargain and therefore, corporate wrongdoers should not have this option. It left many participants feeling like corporate criminals could buy their way out of prosecution. Only a handful of participants spontaneously mentioned that DPAs were good because they would encourage collaboration from whistleblowers or lower ranking individuals who may not speak out unless they were given more lenient sentences or have charges removed. Even when presented with a formal argument in favour of DPAs, most remained unconvinced.

Fall Economic Statement

Participants in Mississauga and Quebec City were asked a series of questions about the Government of Canada’s fall economic statement. On a top-of-mind basis, few participants had heard about the statement, even though Quebec City participants displayed slightly higher levels of familiarity with some of its specific elements. Items recalled included stronger than expected economic growth, lower deficit as a result of that growth, faster than expected indexation of the Canada Child Benefit and lower taxation rates for small businesses.

Participants were then presented with two key measures targeting small corporations’ taxes as part of the fall economic statement: restrictions regarding the practice of income sprinkling among adult family

members and the introduction of new limits to the use of a business’ passive income for personal purposes. Most participants had never heard of those two concepts. When presented with a definition of both practices, many agreed that it was right for the Government of Canada to restrict their usage.

Among a series of core measures announced in the economic statement, cutting the small business tax rate was viewed as positive for the economy and a way to encourage small businesses to flourish in Canada. Enhancing the working income tax credit was also viewed positively because participants felt that it rewarded Canadians who worked for their income. Finally, most also believed that it was a good idea to start indexing the CCB to the cost of living earlier than expected.

Immigration Fees

A discussion on the fees charged by the Government of Canada for new immigrants took place in North Vancouver, Mississauga and Fredericton. Upon being informed that there were three broad classes of immigrants (economic, family and refugees), most participants said they had heard about them previously. Participants in Vancouver were most likely to display some familiarity with the class system, followed by those in Mississauga, with participants from Fredericton being the least familiar.

Most participants across locations could not hazard a guess as to the current fee structure for those applying for permanent residency. Those who did provide a number generally overstated the amounts charged by many hundreds, sometimes thousands, of dollars. Once informed of the current fee structure, many felt the amount was reasonable, with some saying it was too low. Nearly all agreed that that refugees should not be charged an application fee. Most also agreed that the entrepreneur category should be charged higher amounts because they could probably afford it.

Offshore Protected Areas

A short discussion on offshore protected areas was held with participants in Prince Rupert, North Vancouver and Fredericton. In each location, participants were provided with a list of possible names that could be used to designate such areas, including: Marine Habitat Conservation Area, Marine Habitat Protection Area, Fish Habitat Conservation Zone, Fish Habitat Refuge, and Designated Area for Fish Habitat Protection.

The versions that contained the term ‘fish’ were considered by most to be too restrictive, while the term “marine” was seen to cover the whole habitat, including crustaceans, marine mammals and birds. Participants mostly felt that ‘conservation’ was about taking proactive steps to ensure sustainability and was perceived as a softer term than ‘protection’. The latter was viewed as stronger, more direct. Participants felt that if the goal was to act urgently on a crucial problem, then protection was the best choice. However, if the main objective was to encourage conservation and raise awareness, then participants preferred conservation. In general, participants did not relate to, nor understand, the word ‘refuge’.

Bombardier

The recently sealed agreement between Bombardier and Airbus to expand market opportunities for C-Series’ planes was discussed in Quebec City, Mississauga and Fredericton. Quebec City participants

clearly stood out from their Mississauga and Fredericton counterparts for being much more aware and familiar with the topic, while also sharing more positive views on the agreement.

It was difficult for participants in Fredericton and Mississauga to see how this agreement would benefit anyone outside of Airbus and, to the extent that jobs could be created in Alabama, the United States. It was hard to understand how Canadian jobs would be preserved, let alone created, in Canada as a result of this deal. Quebec City participants expressed more positive views of the deal in general. They mostly agreed that Bombardier had little choice but to strike a deal with Airbus in order to expand its marketing and sales forces worldwide and counter the effects of the American tariff.

Asylum seekers

Laval and Prince Rupert participants took part in a short discussion on asylum seekers who have crossed the Canada-U.S. border. Participants in both locations displayed high levels of awareness on this issue, having heard about it through traditional media outlets, as well as through social media and internet coverage. All agreed that most of the information circulating on social media about asylum seekers was negative. Most participants in both cities believed asylum seekers were coming to Canada because of a general change of immigration stance by the Trump administration in the United States, although not all could pinpoint the specific policy or event that triggered the influx of asylum seekers into Canada.

Despite the similar awareness levels across both locations, the nature and tone of discussions were different in each, with Prince Rupert participants expressing more positive views than those from Laval. Participants in Prince Rupert were indeed more likely to believe the Canadian government had improved in its handling of the issue compared to when the influx started a few months ago. Most Laval participants did not share this impression and felt that the Canadian government needed to inform them better regarding the process that had been put in place to vet these asylum seekers and ensure that the border was secure.

Note on Interpretation of Findings

Qualitative research is designed to reveal a rich range of opinions and interpretations rather than to measure what percentage of the target population holds a given opinion. These results must not be used to estimate the numeric proportion or number of individuals in the population who hold a particular opinion because they are not statistically projectable.

Focus group research on government priorities seeks to provide a deeper understanding of participants’ views, often complementing quantitative findings gathered through survey research. Discussions allow for deep probing on key issues that is not possible with quantitative research. This type of information is essential for the Privy Council Office in its role advising and supporting the Cabinet and its committees.

2. Detailed Findings

This section of the report presents the detailed findings from sixteen focus group discussions held in eight different locations across Canada. The section is organized thematically to best reflect the varying discussions held from one location to the next. The moderator’s guide was adapted slightly from one location to the next in order to focus on various subject areas. Each iteration of the moderator’s guide can be found in the Appendices.

Themes Addressed

Government Actions

Participants were asked to relate what they had seen, read or heard about the Government of Canada recently. Items spontaneously mentioned by more than one individual covered a broad range of issues and included:

- Tax reform
- Marijuana legalization
- NAFTA
- Asylum seekers
- Change in mortgage lending rules
- Small business tax breaks
- Bombardier deal with Airbus
- Universal Child Care Benefit
- Ocean Protection Plan (in Prince Rupert)
- Netflix taxation (in Laval)

Designated (prompted) topics discussed in the focus groups included:

- Creative Canada
- Corporate tax rules
- Canada-US relations
- Healthy eating
- Labour and employment
- Gun control laws
- Deferred prosecution agreements
- Fall economic statement
- Offshore protected areas
- Immigration fees
- Bombardier
- Asylum seekers

Each one of those themes is treated in detail below.

Creative Canada

Laval, North Vancouver, North Bay, Fredericton and Quebec City participants were asked a series of questions regarding the Government of Canada’s Creative Canada initiative. Participants were unaware of the name of the initiative on an unprompted basis. After being provided with a detailed explanation regarding the content of the initiative, most participants said they had in fact heard about the announcement. The most widely-recognized elements of the initiative were all related to Netflix.

In both Quebec locations, participants spontaneously mentioned that they had heard about debates in the media regarding the taxation of Netflix services, while being mostly unaware of the other elements of the initiative. Most of them believed that the GST should apply to Netflix services in order to put the

company on a level playing field with local companies. It was clear from the discussion that some participants were confused as to whether it was Netflix or Netflix consumers who would not pay taxes. Participants who erroneously believed that Netflix would be exempt from paying taxes in Canada had more negative reactions to the deal than those who understood that it was consumers who would not have to pay the GST on its services. Quebec participants nevertheless expressed mostly positive views regarding the creation of Netflix Canada and the \$500 million investment in Canadian productions. They mentioned that it would be important to ensure that new Canadian entity invested a sufficient proportion of the promised amount into French language productions and many wanted to get some assurance that this would be the case.

Some participants from other locations had also heard about discussions regarding the decision not to apply the GST to Netflix services, but this wasn’t a core element of discussion outside of Quebec. Many participants outside of Quebec were aware of the future creation of Netflix Canada and the added funds for Canadian productions. They mostly shared positive views regarding all elements of Creative Canada, even if they did not know about the specific details for most of them prior to the discussion. Most participants believed that this initiative would likely create jobs in Canada because the overall amount of money invested in the country appeared likely increase as a result. A few participants remained skeptical, however. They felt that it would likely not change the current trend in favour of large American companies controlling productions and jobs, or that it would end up costing taxpayers too much money to be worth it.

Of note, the mostly positive views recorded were often mixed with a number of questions, or elements of confusion. For one thing, the source of the \$500 million investment in Canadian productions was not always clear to participants. Some understood this to be a Canadian government investment in Netflix. When understood in this way, the investment was not as popular. When the moderator explained that the investment was coming directly from Netflix, participants who raised this question became more positive about the idea. Some participants also questioned whether Netflix would produce Canadian content, or simply produce American series with American actors on Canadian soil. They wanted to be reassured that Canadians would directly benefit from this through the creation of local jobs and the inclusion of local content.

Quebec City Exercise

Quebec City participants were asked to complete an additional exercise on the Creative Canada initiative. They were provided with a list of various actions that the government has already taken or could take to support the culture sector and asked to rate each of them with a thumbs up if they felt this was a good measure or a thumbs down if they believed this was a bad measure. The measures were as follows:

- Increase funding for CBC/Radio-Canada
- Increase funding for Telefilm and the National Film Board
- Increase funding for the Canada Council for the Arts
- Make investments to help better support the Canadian music industry, with a focus on francophone artists
- Increase funding for festivals and major artistic events to promote our artists within Canada

- Promote Canadian content internationally at festivals and fairs, to help Canadian content creators sell their products internationally
- Encourage international investors to finance Canadian cultural projects
- Increase funding for the Canada Media Fund, which directly supports the writers, producers, actors, directors and crew of Canadian TV shows
- Promote net neutrality, encouraging other countries and companies to support a free and open internet
- Protect the cultural exemption in Canadian trade deals, including NAFTA, that allows Canada and Quebec to restrict the access of international cultural products in local markets

A few elements clearly stood out from this exercise. The first is that Quebec City participants were not favourable towards measures that sought to increase government funding of the CBC/Radio-Canada, as well as Telefilm and the National Film Board and the Canadian Council for the Arts. Most of them believed that those institutions were already sufficiently funded. While participants did not know what the Canadian Council for the Arts was, its name did not generate positive views in general. Most participants felt that it sounded distant from their everyday reality. Many in Quebec City said they did not like to think that their tax dollars were used to fund projects for artists who they believed may be financially better off than them. These participants wanted to know that the money would go help those who needed a leg up and not established artists who did not need added funding.

On the other hand, three measures received mostly positive ratings: promote Canadian content in international festivals and fairs, increase funding for large events and festivals and encourage foreign investors to finance Canadian projects. The reasons for these choices reflected the views discussed above. Promoting Canadian content in international festivals was seen to allow talented individuals to export their talent abroad, something that participants felt was likely harder to do for artists that did not have the financial means to do so. They believed that if these artists were good, they would succeed once they got a chance to shine in larger public settings. The promotion of major events and festivals was seen by most as a way to use public funds for the benefits of the general population as well as local artists. It was a win-win situation. A local event like the *Festival d’été de Québec* was a case in point according to some. As for encouraging foreign investors to finance Canadian projects, the logic was simple for those who supported it: it brought new money into Canada and helped local talent, while costing little or nothing for Canadian taxpayers.

Corporate Tax Rules

A short discussion on the Canadian government’s possible changes to the corporate tax regime was held in Laval, Prince Rupert, North Bay and North Vancouver. Awareness of the recent Canadian consultations on tax changes was highest in Prince Rupert and North Vancouver, where approximately half of all participants had heard about them. Only a handful of participants in Laval and North Bay were aware of the consultations, and most displayed little to no understanding of the nature of the proposed changes to the corporate tax regime.

Those who were aware of the proposed changes shared mixed views on them. Opinions depended in large part on how they understood the changes and who they believed would be most affected. Participants who believed that the changes were meant to close some existing loopholes in corporate taxation that currently allowed business owners to reduce their tax burdens felt the changes were a good idea. By contrast, those who believed that the changes were meant to raise taxes on small businesses that already struggled to succeed mostly disagreed with the idea.

Participants who were not aware of the consultations or the nature of the proposed changes tended to display more cynical views, often stating that large businesses and richer individuals would likely find a way to benefit from the changes, no matter what those changes were. This type of sentiment was strongest in Laval and North Bay.

Canada-US Relations

Laval, Prince Rupert and North Vancouver participants were asked to share their views on current NAFTA negotiations between Canada, the United States and Mexico. Almost all participants across locations were aware of those negotiations, especially with regards to talks with the United States. Participants in all three cities shared a deep sense of worry and pessimism that a deal benefitting Canada could be reached with the American government. Their pessimism stemmed from their highly negative perceptions of the current US government and not from a negative judgement on Canadian efforts. Participants believed that the Trump administration could not be trusted to lead fair negotiations and felt that it would only agree on an terms that would clearly favour the United States over Canada. Most participants felt that the Government of Canada seemed to be doing its best by not engaging in public disputes with its US counterpart, while seemingly standing firm on core principles in private talks. This was generally viewed as the most appropriate stance, although a few participants said they would like to see a tougher public display of resistance to American pressure on the part of the Canadian government.

Because of this overall sense of pessimism, the terms “fair” and “equitable” were most often used when asked to write down what would be the best possible outcome for current negotiations. Some said that they would have liked to say something stronger, like “winning deal” or “better deal” for Canada, but they did not think this could be achieved in the current context. If a fair deal could be reached, they would be satisfied. Others also felt that a deal that was seen as fair by all parties was more likely to succeed in the long run.

Participants were also given a list of seven key items that could part of the agreement and asked to select up to three that they felt should be the top priorities. These seven items are listed below, in order of importance according to participants:

- Environmental standards
- Dispute resolution mechanism
- Ability to work cross-border
- Labour standards
- Indigenous rights

- Canadian culture
- Gender equity

Environmental standards were chosen by most participants as a top priority because they feared that Canadian standards might be lowered to match those of the United States and Mexico. While participants agreed that Mexican standards were likely much less stringent than Canadian ones, it was the environmental stance of the current US administration that generated the most spontaneous reactions, all of them negative. Participants believed that the current US government did not care much for the environment and, as a result, wanted to ensure that a future NAFTA deal would include levels of environmental protection that matched Canadian standards, not American ones.

Many participants chose a solid dispute resolution mechanism as a top negotiating priority for reasons very similar to the ones described above. They worried that without a strong mechanism in place, the current US administration would likely use its oversized economic clout to hurt Canadian companies or industry sectors to favour US business interests. To support the idea of a strong dispute resolution mechanism, the example most often raised was the ongoing softwood lumber dispute. The recent punitive tariffs imposed on Bombardier’s C-Series airplanes also came to mind for some.

The ability to work across borders was viewed as an important feature of future trade deals by many. Some participants knew of local companies or people who depended on the ability to hire or work across borders and thought this was likely a driver of economic growth and stability. They also liked the idea that it would be possible for Canadians like themselves to go work in the United States should the opportunity arise. This issue was also often raised in conjunction with that of labour standards. In this case, the main concern raised by participants was the need to protect Canadian standards, which were seen to be higher, and preferable, to those found in the United States and Mexico.

The remaining three items on the list were viewed as important priorities in themselves, but were not ranked as high as the previous four. However, many participants in Prince Rupert selected indigenous rights as a top priority, and one that they felt deserved more attention.

Healthy Eating

Fredericton, Quebec City and Mississauga participants took part in discussions regarding the role that could be played by the federal government in encouraging healthier eating habits among Canadians. Prior to completing an exercise on possible labels that could be applied to inform Canadians on the fat, sugar and/or sodium content of packaged foods, participants were asked to provide their top-of-mind views regarding the need for the Canadian government to do more to encourage healthier food choices among Canadians.

While most participants felt that the Canadian government should do more to encourage healthy food choices, a vocal minority disagreed. Views were mostly split according to general opinions about the appropriate balance that should be achieved between private and public responsibility. In other words, those who believed in the benefits of government intervention and guidance as a general rule were

more likely to favour further involvement from the Canadian government in encouraging healthy food choices. They formed a majority of participants. By contrast, those who felt that governments were already too involved in citizens’ lives believed that healthy food choices should be left to individuals. They believed that Canadians possessed enough information to make healthy food choices if they wanted to and that the government should not try to force them to behave differently.

Many participants who agreed that the Canadian government should do more spontaneously mentioned that it should find a way to make healthier options more affordable for Canadians. They felt that, too often, food items that were good for consumers, like fresh fruits and vegetables or organic foods, were too expensive relative to unhealthy options. They believed that this was a major impediment to the consumption of healthier foods for lower-income Canadians, who could not afford to purchase these better options. Another policy spontaneously mentioned by multiple participants, with agreement from most others, was to increase funding for educational programs for kids in schools or other relevant venues. They believed that if good habits were taught to Canadian children early in their lives, they would likely maintain them into adulthood and possibly influence their parents in making better choices for the whole family. Some disagreed on the latter point, saying that parents who did not care about making healthy choices were unlikely to be swayed by their kids.

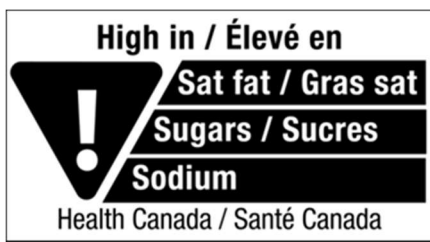
When prompted on the possibility of applying new types of warning labels on foods to provide immediate information on the amount of fat, sugar and sodium contained in packaged food items, opinions were divided along similar lines as those described above, with a majority being favourable at first glance. However, a few of those who generally supported government intervention appeared a little more hesitant about warning labels. Many participants in Quebec City and Mississauga rejected the idea.

Participants who favoured this initiative believed that it would provide Canadian consumers with an easier way of identifying what was bad for them. They did not believe that current labeling, starting with the nutrition facts table, was sufficient to properly warn consumers regarding which choices should be avoided. Many among them mentioned that the nutrition facts table could be simpler, or be modified so that consumers could more readily identify what was good or bad for them or their families.

Those who opposed such labeling said that the approach seemed too strong and preferred to have the information provided to them in a less direct manner. A few also mentioned that they would frown upon seeing warning labels on food items because they feared that entire shelves in grocery stores would contain labels. They felt it would make the shopping experience stressful or that it would make labels inefficient because the sensory overload would make them tune the labels out. Those participants mostly agreed that the current nutrition facts table provided them with the necessary information needed to make healthy choices.

Labeling Exercise

Participants in all locations were presented with a series of possible warning labels and asked to select those they viewed as the most appropriate. Results were fairly consistent across all locations. Among all labels reviewed, two versions stood out as most efficient: one label that included a triangle ensign with

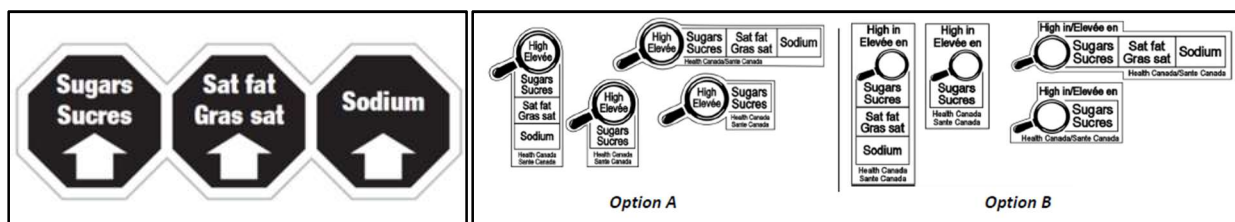


an exclamation mark and a similar label including a stop sign with an exclamation mark. They are included below:

These two options ranked higher than others because of their overall simplicity and clarity. Participants who selected them felt that each contained the information they would need to facilitate the selection of healthier food options. Of these two options, many preferred the label containing the “yield” sign over the “stop” sign. It was seen to be less “scary” or “extreme” than other options because the road sign they associated with the image did not forbid a specific action, but merely suggested caution or slowing down. By comparison, a stop sign was seen to sternly impose something, or suggest that this product should not be consumed at all. Many felt this was too strong. Participants who noticed that Health Canada was mentioned on one of the labels were generally in favour of this addition. Some mentioned that it was often hard to know whether nutritional information or labels currently included on food products were sponsored by the company making the product or by an agency providing accurate health information. Identifying Health Canada as the body responsible for the label was seen to give more credibility to the claim. Only a handful disagreed with this notion.

While these two labels were preferred over others, many participants in Quebec City remained hesitant. They contended that the signal sent by both of them was too negative and made food items look “poisonous” or “corrosive”. Some stated that they expected to see such labels on household cleaners, not food items.

The label containing three stop signs side-by-side (see left side below) was not chosen by many as most appropriate. It was deemed to be repetitive, although simple and clear. A few participants chose version A of the magnifying glass labels (see right side below) as the best option for warning labels. They believed it was less threatening than others, while at the same time being clearer than version B of the same concept, which featured magnifying glasses with no text in them. The latter was seen to lack the clarity of other options because the magnifying glass did not appear to have a precise purpose according to participants.



The last type of label presented to participants contained the quantity of selected nutrients per standardized serving of one cup (see below). It was seldom chosen as a good option for a warning label because most participants felt that it presented the same information as the current nutrition facts table and therefore, did not appear to simplify the task of the consumer trying to make healthier food choices. Many said they did not find it very clear either, as they did not know which nutrient was good and which one was bad, nor what amounts should be considered too much or too little. Some also stated that a

serving of one cup was not an intuitive measure for them. They did not know if this was a large serving or not, depending on the product in question.



Follow-up Discussion on Labeling

Following the previously described exercise on labeling, participants were asked a series of questions on the appropriateness of using such labels across a wide-variety of food types now that they had seen a few examples. Participants were somewhat divided on the issue.

When presented with the possibility that certain types of foods could have a high proportion of fat, sugar or sodium, and also have a high proportion of good nutrients, yet contain the same label as foods without positive nutrients, most participants who initially supported the idea of warning labels remained supportive. However, many in Quebec City hesitated or even reconsidered their viewpoints. This was not something they had considered during the previous exercise and felt that it could be a good argument to either modify the approach or not include the warnings at all. Participants who were the strongest proponents of the new warning labels to start with did not change their viewpoint when presented with this argument. They believed that if a food item had a high fat, sugar or sodium content, it should contain a warning, no matter what their positive attributes might be.

Measures to Encourage Healthier Food Choices

Aside from the idea of warning labels to be included on food packages, participants were asked to what extent it would be a good or a bad idea to impose a series of additional measures.

One of the items tested was the introduction of mandatory calorie counts on restaurant menu items. This measure generated mixed reactions. While most believed it was a good idea at first, those who resisted often expressed fairly strong opposition. Some of them felt that when they ate out at a restaurant, they did not want to be reminded of healthy food choices because they wanted to indulge themselves, have a nice evening. They believed that thinking about calories would remove some of the pleasures of eating out. Others suggested that including calories on the menu would mask the importance of other elements that could be just as bad for them and did not think that a simple calorie-count was an appropriate indicator of healthy or unhealthy food items.

Another idea tested was the introduction of a new tax on sugary items, with revenues generated being used to promote healthier lifestyles. A majority of participants across locations were in favour of the idea, but many among them insisted that their support would be contingent on the money being used for the stated purpose and nothing else. Without some transparency on this usage, they would be reluctant to accept a new tax. Some participants in all locations rejected this idea on the grounds that it was simply a way for the government to collect more taxes. A few mentioned that this new tax on

sugary items like drinks may also unfairly target Canadians who cannot afford healthier alternatives to pop or artificial fruit drinks.

Finally, participants were asked to discuss the idea of banning advertising for unhealthy foods targeted at children. Reactions to the idea largely depended on how the ongoing discussion about encouraging healthy food choices had evolved prior to reaching this point. In groups where the prior discussion centered more generally on the need to improve Canadians’ health but did not delve into a lot of details surrounding effectiveness and implementation, most participants agreed that a ban on advertising for products that targeted children was a good idea on the grounds that it may stop kids from requesting food items that were bad for their health.

In groups where participants had been focusing on the effectiveness of various measures or how they might be implemented, most doubted that such an advertising ban would have a significant positive effect. Some worried this measure would be very difficult to put in place, asking whether it would apply to packaging and/or sponsorships in addition to more standard advertising, which they felt might be too stringent. Some said they did not want cereal boxes (the example that more readily sprung to mind) to look like cigarette packages. Another key concern raised was the possibility that a lot of sporting events and festivals that had positive effects on children would possibly lose their key sponsors, who were often makers of foods or drinks targeted at kids or teenagers. Finally, a few participants simply disagreed with the idea because they believed that parents should be able to make the choices they wanted, whether their children agreed or not. They felt that parents could, and should, resist pressure coming from their children.

Labour and Employment

An in-depth discussion on potential changes to labour standards in federally regulated industries was held in Prince-Rupert and North Vancouver. As part of this discussion, participants were asked to complete three written exercises. One presented a series of potential areas of focus for the Government of Canada and required respondents to select which among them should form the core of the government’s revamped strategy. The second exercise presented participants with a paragraph describing the government’s statement of intentions regarding the revamped standards and asked that they provide an assessment of the various elements contained in the paragraph. Finally, participants were presented with a list of possible labour standards that the Government of Canada could implement in federally regulated industries moving forward and were invited to identify which ones were most important or most relevant.

Government’ “Key Focus” Exercise

Results from the key focus exercise were fairly consistent across both locations. Items tested as part of this exercise included:

- Quality Jobs
- Fair jobs
- Good quality jobs

- Decent work
- Decent jobs
- Better jobs
- Modern employment standards (not tested in Vancouver)

Three options came out as the strongest: “good quality jobs”, “quality jobs” and “fair jobs”. “Good quality” jobs scored a little higher than the simpler “quality jobs” because it was seen as more specific and more positive. A few felt it was redundant to include “good” and “quality” in the same statement, hereby preferring “quality jobs” without “good” attached to it. The notion of quality was important to participants because it spoke of satisfying, fulfilling employment, not just a regular job. Some mentioned it made them think of being “proud to work” as well. The term “fair jobs” was appreciated by those who instinctively linked the term to the issue of fairness in the workplace, especially for women and minorities. It spoke to core values that were important to those individuals.

Another option that received significant support in one Vancouver group was “better jobs” because it was inspirational, and implied looking for something more than what is already in existence. “Modern employment standards” received some support in Prince Rupert, but was not included in Vancouver.

Mentions of “decent work” and “decent jobs” did not fare well. They were seen to suggest that the bar was already low and that new jobs would “only” be decent from now on. Many participants felt this was deflating rather than inspirational.

General Statement of Intentions

A paragraph stating the Government of Canada’s intentions regarding labour improvement in federally regulated industries was then presented to participants: *The Government of Canada must promote good quality jobs by addressing the changing way that people work, and work to increase the workforce participation of women and underrepresented groups. To do this, it will be necessary to update the Canada Labour Code to address emerging issues such as unpaid internships, and to ensure that Canadians continue to have a robust and modern set of federal employment standards.*”

The paragraph was generally viewed positively, but it was also difficult to absorb as a whole for some participants. During the first series of groups testing this exercise in Prince-Rupert, participants had a difficult time processing the information that was presented to them. To make it easier for participants during the second evening of groups, the paragraph was presented on paper and broken down into separate sentences. A few key findings surfaced from this exercise.

Many participants appreciated the inclusion of a sentence about “changing the way in which people work” because they felt this was an important reality for the Canadian government to deal with. It also matched their own perceptions of the Canadian job market and was seen to be aligned with the spirit of a revamping of labour standards. The mention of working to “increase the workforce participation of women and underrepresented minorities” generated the most discussion, for both positive and negative reasons. Some, mostly women, felt it was essential to promote equality in the workplace for women, as well as for other groups that may not be treated on equal footing. However, a few others mentioned that this did not sound right because it seemed to single out only two groups at the expense of others

who might also face discrimination or other challenges. They preferred to think of the workplace as inclusive and fair for everyone, not just select subgroups.

The mention of unpaid internships was also questioned for similar reasons: many participants felt that other issues could also be listed, some of them being even more important than this one item. Also, most participants were not aware of problems associated with unpaid internships, making them question its selection as a core priority over many other problems that would likely deserve attention.

The part of the paragraph that read “continue to have a robust and modern set of federal employment standards” generated mostly negative reactions. Participants felt it did not match the overall idea of this entire statement, which they believed was about improvement and change, not continuity. They explained that if the government proposed to continue to do something then it was unlikely that improvements would be made. Some also pointed out that mentioning continuity while also emphasizing modernity in the same sentence did not seem correct. They believed that standards that were continuing were likely not the most modern. This appeared even more contradictory to them in light of the stated desire for the Government of Canada to improve current practices, not maintain them.

Most important measures

Participants in both locations were shown the following list of measures that could be taken by the Government of Canada to modernize labour standards:

- A higher minimum wage.
- Access to paid sick days.
- More annual paid vacation.
- Additional statutory holidays.
- Additional unpaid statutory leaves (e.g. for a medical appointment).
- Paying part-time and temporary workers the same hourly wage as full-time workers who are doing the same work (for example, in some industries, full-time workers may be paid at a higher hourly rate than part-time workers doing the same job for the same employer).
- Portability of benefit (for example, if you change jobs, and your new job doesn’t have benefits, you can bring your existing benefits with you).
- Being paid to be on-call.
- Disconnection Policy (for example, France introduced a policy to allow employees in companies of more than 50 people to ignore emails after regular work hours).
- Adequate breaks and daily rest periods (e.g. for meals).
- Maximum hours of work without a break (that is, standardizing the maximum number of hours that a person can work without a break, for example, in the trucking industry where the safety of workers and the public may be at risk if drivers are not well-rested).
- The right to request flexible working arrangements (for example, the right to have a discussion with your employer about flexibility in your working arrangements).

While all measures were seen as positive and important by most participants, a few stood out as being more personally relevant. The most important or relevant measure chosen was ensuring equal hourly wages for people working part-time and for temporary workers compared to those who completed the same tasks as a full-time worker. The equation was simple for most participants: you should get paid according to the tasks you perform, not your status. They summarized it as “equal pay for equal work”. This was all about fairness and equality between all members of the workforce. Some explained that some businesses used temporary or part-time workers to reduce their internal expenses because this allowed the company to avoid paying them the same wages or providing them the same long-term benefits as full-time employees. Many agreed that more vulnerable groups, including women, were more likely to be faced with this situation.

A higher minimum wage was also popular for most participants. Some questioned the impact it may have on small companies who could not afford it, but most agreed that this should not be an excuse to delay increasing the minimum wage. The latter believed that current pay rates did not allow individuals or families to live properly. To them, the current minimum wage was not a living wage. Many in Vancouver spontaneously mentioned the high cost of housing as a reason for the government to raise wages. They could not see how younger generations would be able to afford decent lodgings in the city in years to come unless wages went up.

Changing guidelines for the maximum number of hours that one could work without a break was also a key priority for many, especially in Prince-Rupert. Those who knew people working in industries like trucking or in healthcare facilities, which were seen to force long work hours for its workers, felt that many workers put their safety and that of others at risk by pushing themselves too hard.

Gun Control Laws

Discussions on gun control laws were held with participants in Prince Rupert, North Vancouver and North Bay. Participants in all three locations generally felt that Canada was not affected by the kind of gun violence and mass shootings that plagued the United States. The mass shooting that killed 58 individuals in Las Vegas was top of mind for most participants, yet most of them did not feel that this was a major issue for Canada. A few stated that gun violence was a problem, mostly related to street gangs, in larger urban areas like Vancouver and Toronto, but that this issue generally did not affect Canadians in their daily lives.

Opinions on Changing Gun Control Laws

This generalized sense of comfort with the current gun situation in Canada was also evident when participants were asked whether they believed that Canadian gun control laws should be made stricter, less strict or remain the same as they are now. In Prince Rupert and North Vancouver, participants were split between those who felt that current controls were likely just fine as they were, and those who wanted stricter controls. However, very few respondents in those two locations expressed strong views on the topic, feeling that the seemingly low levels of gun violence in Canada must be a sign that the system is working well.

Participants who felt that no changes were needed mentioned that they did not see a need to tinker with a system that seemed to work well from what they could see. Those who expressed a desire for stricter gun laws rarely gave precise examples of what they had in mind, but rather expressed a general desire to get rid of guns, or generally reduce their numbers, outside of hunting rifles. Their problem was with criminals, not law-abiding gun owners.

Discussions in North Bay were somewhat different than in other locations. While many participants in this city shared the belief that current gun control laws were strong enough and should not be changed, a few participants strongly advocated for loosening current controls. Those who supported the status quo presented very similar arguments to what was heard in North Vancouver and Prince Rupert. However, those who wanted to loosen the current system believed that current laws should be changed so that Canadians who wanted to carry handguns for self-defence could do so. Their focus was on the right to carry a concealed weapon, while also making it easier to purchase ammunition and to transport firearms. They felt that they needed to carry a firearm for personal protection, citing recent burglaries, muggings and events in the US. They argued that if everyone had a gun, violent crime would decrease.

Participants in all locations were presented with a series of possible gun control measures and asked if they felt these were good ideas or not:

- Enhance border guards’ ability to stop illegal guns crossing the border into Canada
- Require enhanced background checks for anyone seeking to purchase a restricted firearm
- Require purchasers to show a license when they buy a firearm
- Implement UN firearms regulations requiring the marking of all guns being made in Canada or imported into Canada
- Require a permit to transport handguns and restricted firearms

Overall, nearly all participants across locations felt that all of these measures were reasonable and should be enforced. In fact, most spontaneously believed that these measures must already be in place in Canada and thought that was a good thing. A few expressed some doubts, or confusion, over the effectiveness of implementing the UN firearm regulation. They did not understand how marking guns would help reduce gun violence. Overall, the vast majority of participants in all locations could not see clear downsides to applying these measures.

Deferred Prosecution Agreements

Discussions on deferred prosecution agreements (DPAs) were conducted in Laval, Prince Rupert, North Vancouver and North Bay. Only a handful of participants overall had heard about deferred prosecution agreements on an unprompted basis. Once a short explanation this type of agreement was presented to participants, some said they had heard about them, but most equated this with a “standard plea agreement” for criminals in exchange for collaboration rather than something that applied specifically to corporate crimes.

Opinions on DPAs

Views on DPAs were very similar in all locations. The instinctive reactions of most participants were negative. The main driver of negative reactions was a generalized impression that corporate crimes and

their perpetrators were hereby given preferential treatment. Most believed that ordinary Canadians would not have access to this type of plea bargain and therefore, it did not seem fair that corporate wrongdoers could profit from such agreements. It left many participants feeling like corporate criminals could buy their way out of prosecution, something that matched some of their pre-existing doubts about the fairness of the justice system when dealing with the rich and powerful. Only a handful of participants spontaneously mentioned that DPAs were good because they would encourage collaboration from whistleblowers or lower ranking individuals who may not speak out unless they were given more lenient sentences or have charges removed.

Participants were then presented with arguments in favour and in opposition of DPAs, included below:

- *Those in favour of DPAs say this encourages companies to self-disclose wrongdoing since they may otherwise have to face the prospect of a formal criminal conviction. They also say that it helps ensure employees who were not connected to the wrongdoing are not harmed (e.g. job loss) by a criminal sanction on the entire company.*
- *Those opposed to DPAs say these can become "a cost of doing business," allowing corporations to buy their way out of trouble by paying a financial penalty - as long as they have the money to settle. Thus, they say that DPAs do not deter misconduct.*

The argument in favour of DPAs triggered some hesitation among a few of those who strongly rejected their use, but most remained unmoved. Those who hesitated said they could understand why some individuals may indeed be convinced to self-disclose damaging information if they knew they could be shielded from prosecution. However, most felt that this opened the door to abuse because wrongdoers may decide to open-up only once they felt entrapped, hereby allowing them to escape jail time through simple risk-calculation and not a true desire to come clean. They also had a hard time understanding why someone who was not connected to the wrongdoing may need this kind of protection. If they did nothing wrong, then they should not worry about being prosecuted.

A few also felt that DPAs may allow corporations to plan ahead for this possibility, giving them a way out if they ever got caught. Some mentioned that they could see the positive side of maybe handing out lighter sentences to encourage openness, but that wrongdoers should still face some jail time and significant fines if they broke the law. If the fines were not commensurate with the size of the fraud or evasion, then it did not make sense to them. For these reasons, all of those individuals were therefore much more convinced by the second argument presented, in opposition to DPAs. It made a lot of sense to them that DPAs could indeed become a cost of doing business.

The few participants who held favourable views on DPAs before being presented with the arguments for and against them also kept the same position. They were more convinced by the favourable argument, which matched their initial thinking on the topic. Their support was also partly based on an impression that without such agreements it would be extremely difficult to catch corporate criminals who had the resources to cover their tracks and hire the best defense teams. To them, it seemed preferable to catch

a larger proportion of wrongdoers by letting others off the hook than to let most of them evade justice in order to avoid making deals with some criminals.

Fall Economic Statement

Groups in Mississauga and Quebec City were held shortly after the Government of Canada’s fall economic statement was delivered. Participants in both cities were asked a series of questions about its content. On a top-of-mind basis, few participants had heard about the statement, even though Quebec City participants displayed slightly higher levels of familiarity with some of its specific elements. Items that a few participants recalled included stronger than expected economic growth, lower deficit as a result of that growth, faster than expected indexation of the Canada Child Benefit and lower taxation rates for small businesses.

When participants were asked what they believed might explain the higher than anticipated growth rates, most could not provide an answer. Those who ventured explanations mentioned a few possibilities: housing market growth (foreign investors were singled out as the drivers of this growth), increased government payments to families with children, increased investments in infrastructure and finally, a few tentatively mentioned that the oil and gas sector may have performed a little better than anticipated. Noticeably, many participants expressed doubts about the positive economic figures, saying it was hard for them to accept this as a fact when they did not see such positive stories around them. To them, the economy did not “feel” stronger than expected.

In both cities, participants appeared divided as to how the additional revenues generated by stronger growth should be used by the government. When asked to choose between using the money to reduce the debt or the deficit, reduce taxes or invest in infrastructure, no clear winner emerged. Some advocated for all three, while those who selected one option were split fairly evenly across groups.

Participants were then presented with two key measures targeting small corporations’ taxes as part of the fall economic statement to get their impressions. The first measure presented was the addition of restrictions regarding the practice of income sprinkling among adult family members on the part of business owners. Most participants had never heard of income sprinkling and the concept proved difficult to understand for many. Many instinctively thought of income splitting between spouses, which was viewed mostly favourably. When presented with a definition of income sprinkling, many agreed that it was right for the Government of Canada to restrict the practice. However, a lot of confusion remained as to why this was legal to start with and how the government could enforce this new measure, considering the difficulties involved in trying to prove that family members did not contribute to the family business.

The second measure presented to participants was the introduction of new limits to the use of a business’ passive income for personal purposes by business owners. This measure proved even harder than the first one to understand for most participants. At first glance, they mostly felt this was a good idea on the part of the Government of Canada, especially in Quebec City.

A series of five core measures announced in the economic statement were presented to participants, who were then asked to say if each of them was good idea or not, before being asked to choose which among them was the most important measure of all. The five items shown to participants were:

- Cut the small business tax rate from 10.5% to 9% over the next fourteen months
- Introduce measures to limit income sprinkling by private corporations while ensuring meaningful contributions to the business by spouses, children and other family members aren’t impacted
- Limit opportunities to defer income on passive business investments income for personal purposes while providing flexibility to hold savings for multiple purposes, including for personal reasons
- Bring in cost of living increases for the Canada Child Benefit two years sooner than previously scheduled, that is, starting in July 2018 instead of July 2020
- Enhance the Working Income Tax Benefit

In general, participants reacted positively to most of these measures. Because of the confusion discussed above, the measures pertaining to income sprinkling and passive investment were the least likely to be chosen as the most important ones, even if they received mostly positive notes. The remaining three measures generated the most enthusiasm. Cutting the small business tax rate was viewed as positive for the economy and as a way to drive small businesses to flourish in Canada. Some spontaneously mentioned that they would not be as favourable at the idea of cutting taxes for larger companies. Enhancing the working income tax credit was viewed positively because participants felt that it rewarded Canadians who worked for their income. Some also felt that, contrary to other measures, it benefitted a large proportion of Canadians, no matter their age or their family situation. Finally, most also believed that it was a good idea to start indexing the Canada Child Benefit to the cost of living earlier than expected. They believed this made a big difference for families living under tight budgets. However, a few mentioned that they ranked it lower than some other measures because it did not help those without children and that the extra amount provided would be too small to make a large difference for families.

Offshore Protected Areas

A short discussion on offshore protected areas, which are zones where fishing and some commercial activities are not allowed for environmental reasons, was held with participants in Prince Rupert, North Vancouver and Fredericton. In each location, participants were first provided with a list of possible names that could be used to designate such areas, including:

- Marine Habitat Conservation Area
- Marine Habitat Protection Area
- Fish Habitat Conservation Zone
- Fish Habitat Refuge
- Designated Area for Fish Habitat Protection

In general, participants preferred the two terms that included the word ‘marine’. The versions that contained the term ‘fish’ were considered by most to be too restrictive. While marine was seen to cover the whole habitat, including fish, crustaceans, marine mammals and birds, the term fish was perceived to cover only fish species.

Participants mostly felt that ‘conservation’ was about taking proactive steps to ensure sustainability and was perceived as a softer term than ‘protection’. The latter was viewed as stronger and more direct, since it connoted the need to stop or enforce something. It was about laying down the law. Both words were fine for most participants, but protection was viewed as directly related to protecting endangered species and for more extreme scenarios. If the goal was to act urgently on a crucial problem, then using the word protection was the best choice. However, if the objective was to encourage conservation and raise awareness, then participants preferred conservation. In general, participants were not very keen on the word ‘refuge’.

Immigration Fees

A discussion on the fees charged by the Government of Canada for new immigrants took place in North Vancouver, Mississauga and Fredericton. To start the discussion, participants were asked whether they knew about the various classes of immigrants in the Canadian immigration system. On an unprompted basis, most participants could not name any of the specific classes, although they assumed that immigrants must not all be evaluated by the same criteria. Upon being informed that there were three broad classes of economic immigrants (e.g. skilled workers, caregivers and entrepreneurs), family class (i.e. family members of people already in Canada) and refugees, most participants said they had heard about them, or of similar concepts, previously. Participants in Vancouver were most likely to display some familiarity with the class system, followed by those in Mississauga, with participants from Fredericton being the least familiar.

Most participants across locations could not hazard a guess as to the current fee structure for those applying for permanent residency. Some stated that they did not know that there was a fee in the first place. Those who did provide a number generally overstated the amounts charged by many hundreds, sometimes thousands, of dollars. Once informed of the current fee structure, many felt the amount was reasonable, with some saying it was too low. Vancouver participants were most likely to say that fees were too low, as many spontaneously thought of immigrants who had purchased expensive properties on the local real estate market over the years. A few participants believed that current fees were too high because they mostly thought of immigrants as coming from poorer countries and not having a lot of money to start with.

Nearly all agreed that it was normal that refugees were not charged any application fee because they were fleeing a terrible situation and were unlikely to have the money needed, while also needing help, not additional hardship. Most also agreed that the entrepreneur category should be charged higher amounts because they could probably afford it.

Participants’ general lack of understanding of the immigration system and the application procedures made it difficult for them to provide definitive answers on many of the questions asked. When presented with the fact that the fees currently in place had not been raised in fifteen years, some stated it was likely time to increase them, but others wondered why this had been frozen for so long, thinking there may be a reason they must be kept low. Some countered that the fee structure might be better and fairer if the income of the person or family applying for permanent residency was taken into account when fixing the rates. Many spontaneously asked what the fees were used for, or if they covered the basic expenses encountered by the Canadian government when processing demands.

When told that other developed countries like the United States or Australia often charged much higher application fees, reactions were mixed. Many viewed this as a sign that Canada must increase their fees to match those levels, as Canada looked like a “bargain” compared to others. Others disagreed, saying that this was a positive thing for Canada, showing that the country was more welcoming and caring. A few others felt that Canada needed immigrants to counter the demographic decline and the skilled-worker shortage and therefore, should continue to charge lower fees to be a more attractive destination.

The most difficult question to answer for participants pertained to how the extra money raised through higher fees should be used. They were presented with three options: speed up processing times for applications, allow more immigrants to come to Canada each year, or reduce the cost of the immigration system on taxpayers. No option emerged as a clear favorite, with participants raising a lot of questions and providing few answers. Some wanted to have more information on current processing times before making a choice. Others said that it was hard to choose any option without knowing how much extra money would be raised and therefore, how much of a difference it would make for any of the options, especially with regards to reducing the costs to taxpayers. They felt that the total amount of money raised likely would not make any difference for the pocketbook of individual Canadians.

Bombardier

The recently sealed agreement between Bombardier and Airbus to expand market opportunities for C-Series’ planes was discussed in Quebec City, Mississauga and Fredericton. Quebec City participants clearly stood out from their Mississauga and Fredericton counterparts for being much more aware and familiar with the topic, while also sharing more positive views on the agreement.

Participants in Fredericton and Mississauga shared mostly negative thoughts on the deal. Their views were negative on an unprompted basis and remained mostly negative after they were provided with a short explanation regarding the nature of the arrangement between Airbus and Bombardier and the reasons this deal was made in the first place - that is, the imposition of a 300% tariff on C-Series planes to be sold in the United States.

It was difficult for participants in these two locations to see how this agreement would benefit anyone outside of Airbus and, to the extent that jobs might be created at an Airbus plant in Alabama, the United States. It was hard for them to understand how Canadian jobs would be preserved, let alone created, in Canada as a result of this deal. However, those participants who felt that that Bombardier would have

had to shut down production of the C-Series had this deal with Airbus not been signed were more likely to see how it brought some benefits, especially for employees in Quebec. Another reason for the lack of enthusiasm in these two cities was the impression that Canadian taxpayers had put a lot of money into helping Bombardier create the C-Series, which they believed was now “given” to a foreign company. This was seen as unfair to Canadian taxpayers.

Quebec City participants expressed more positive views of the deal in general. They believed that Bombardier had little choice but to strike a deal with Airbus in order to expand its marketing and sales forces worldwide and counter the potentially devastating effects of the American tariff. They mostly agreed that were it not for this agreement, the C-Series project would have been stopped, hereby costing a lot of jobs in the province. Nevertheless, some raised concerns over the long-term sustainability of local jobs, as it was difficult for them to trust that a foreign company like Airbus would keep production here over time.

Asylum Seekers

Laval and Prince Rupert participants took part in a short discussion on asylum seekers who have crossed the Canada-U.S. border. Participants in both locations displayed high levels of awareness on this issue. They had heard about it through traditional media outlets, as well as through social media and internet coverage. Most participants in both cities believed asylum seekers were coming to Canada because of a general change of immigration stance by the Trump administration in the United States, although not all could pinpoint the specific policy or event that triggered the influx of asylum seekers into Canada. However, the nature and tone of discussions were different in both locations, with Prince Rupert participants expressing more positive views than those from Laval.

Participants in Prince Rupert were more likely to believe the Canadian government had improved in its handling of the issue compared to when the influx started a few months back. They believed that asylum seekers were now being processed properly and that initial housing problems had been taken care of (e.g. moving people out of tents and into adequate locations around the country). Most Laval participants did not share this impression and felt that the Canadian government needed to inform them better regarding the process that had been put in place to vet these asylum seekers and ensure that the border was secure. They were left feeling that asylum seekers were given preferential treatment over established Canadians who struggled to make a decent living.

While participants in Prince Rupert were somewhat divided as to whether asylum seekers would have a positive or negative impact on communities that received them as they crossed the border, most Laval participants felt the impact would be negative, although some strongly disagreed with this viewpoint. Participants who expressed negative feelings in both cities often referred to stories they had read on social media about Canada putting asylum seekers ahead of Canadian veterans, seniors and homeless. Those who shared more positive sentiments mostly dismissed these reports and believed that all stakeholders involved in this process were trying their best to resolve a difficult situation. However, all

agreed that most of the information they saw circulating on social media about asylum seekers was negative.

3. Appendix

Appendix A. Detailed Research Methodology

This seventh wave of qualitative research was comprised of a series of 12 focus groups with Canadians aged 20 years old and above, held between September 12th and September 28th, 2017. All group discussions lasted approximately two hours and were conducted in the evening, with the first session in each city starting at 5:30pm and the second starting at 7:30pm. These sessions were held in the following locations:

- October 11th -- Laval
- October 17th – Prince Rupert
- October 18th – Vancouver
- October 19th – North Bay
- October 23rd – Fredericton
- October 25th – Quebec City
- October 26th – Mississauga

A total of 12 participants were recruited for each session to ensure that a minimum of eight to ten participants would attend. In total, 122 participants took part in the discussions. All participants received an honorarium of \$75 for attending the sessions at the focus group facilities. The screening questionnaire helped ensure that participants included a good cross-section of the general population, with good mixes of gender, ages, education and income levels, as well as household composition. Additional methodological details can be found in the appendix of this report.

Group participants were meant to be representative of the Canadian population aged 20 years and above in all locations. They were recruited using a formal recruitment screening questionnaire administered via a telephone interview. The screening questionnaire helped ensure that participants included a good cross-section of the general population, with good mixes of gender (half men and half women in all groups), ages, education and income levels, as well as household composition. The fully-detailed recruiting questionnaire is presented in Appendix B.

The recruitment screener was devised by Ipsos in collaboration with PCO and in accordance with the specifications of the project authority, the Standards for the Conduct of Government of Canada Public Opinion Research – Qualitative Research (<http://www.tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca/rop-por/rechqual-qualres-eng.html>) and following all Market Research and Intelligence Association (MRIA) standards and guidelines for the conduct of qualitative research. All groups were moderated by an Ipsos research professional.

In accordance with the Standards for the Conduct of Government of Canada Public Opinion Research – Qualitative Research, and the MRIA guidelines for the conduct of qualitative research, Ipsos informed participants of their rights under Privacy Law. Ipsos provided participants with details specific to the conduct of the groups, and obtained their consent for audio/video taping of the discussion, the presence of observers, explained the purpose of the one-way mirror, basic rules about privacy and confidentiality

including the fact that tapes will be destroyed according to MRIA guidelines, and that participation was voluntary.

As is standard with qualitative research done on behalf of the Government of Canada, the following conditions were also applied for all participants recruited for this study:

- They had not participated in a discussion group within the last six months;
- They had not attended, in the past two years, a focus group discussion or in-depth interview on issues related to the topic at hand;
- They had not attended five or more focus groups or in-depth interviews in the past five years;
- At least one third of the participants recruited for each group must never have attended a group discussion or in-depth interview before;
- They had a sufficient command of English (or French for the Drummondville groups) to fully participate in the focus group sessions; and,
- They or their family are not employed in any of the following:
 - A research firm
 - A magazine or newspaper
 - An advertising agency or graphic design firm
 - A political party
 - A radio or television station
 - A public relations company
 - Federal or provincial government

As with all research conducted by Ipsos, contact information was kept entirely confidential and all information that could allow for the identification of participants was removed from the data, in accordance with the *Privacy Act* of Canada.

Appendix B. Recruitment Guide

**Recruitment Screener
Government of Canada
RECRUIT 12 FOR 10**

Hello, my name is _____. I'm calling from Ipsos, a national public opinion research firm. On behalf of the Government of Canada we're organizing a series of discussion groups with Canadians to explore current issues of importance to the country. A variety of topics will be discussed and we are interested in hearing your opinions.

EXPLAIN FOCUS GROUPS. About ten people like you will be taking part, all of them randomly recruited just like you. For their time, participants will receive an honorarium of \$75. But before we invite you to attend, we need to ask you a few questions to ensure that we get a good mix and variety of people. May I ask you a few questions?

- Yes **CONTINUE**
- No **THANK AND TERMINATE**

Participation is voluntary. No attempt will be made to sell you anything or change your point of view. The format is a “round table” discussion lead by a research professional. All opinions expressed will remain anonymous and views will be grouped together to ensure no particular individual can be identified.

S1) Do you or any member of your household work in or has retired from:

	YES	NO
Market Research or Marketing	1	2
Public Relations or Media (TV, Print)	1	2
Advertising and communications	1	2
An employee of a political party	1	2
An employee of a government department or agency, whether federal or provincial	1	2

IF “YES” TO ANY OF THE ABOVE, THANK AND TERMINATE

S2) Are you a Canadian citizen at least 20 years old who normally resides in the [INSERT LOCATION] area?

- Yes 1 **CONTINUE**
- No 2 **THANK AND TERMINATE**

S3) How long have you lived in [CITY]? _____

TERMINATE IF LESS THAN 2 YEARS

S4) Are you the head or co-head of your household?

Yes	1	CONTINUE
No	2	CONTINUE

S5) Have you ever attended a consumer group discussion, an interview or survey which was arranged in advance and for which you received a sum of money?

Yes	1	MAX. 1/3 PER GROUP
No	2	GO TO Q1

S6) How long ago was it? _____

TERMINATE IF IN THE PAST 6 MONTHS

S7) How many consumer discussion groups have you attended in the past 5 years?

TERMINATE IF MORE THAN 4 DISCUSSION GROUPS

ASK ALL

Q1) Could you please tell me what age category you fall in to? Are you...

Under 20	0	THANK AND TERMINATE
20-24 years	1	} ENSURE GOOD MIX PER GROUP
25-34 years	2	
35-44 years	3	
45-54 years	4	
55-64 years	5	
65+ years	6	
Refuse	9	THANK AND TERMINATE

Q2) Do you currently have children under the age of 18 living in the house with you?
[RECRUIT MIX]

Yes	1
No	2

Q2a) Do you currently have children under the age of 13 living in the house with you?
[RECRUIT MIN 3 per group]

Yes	1
-----	---

No 2

Q3) How many people above the age of 18 are there in your household?

One 1
More than one 2

Q4) Could you please tell me what is the last level of education that you have completed?

Some high school	1	}	ENSURE
Completed high school	2		GOOD
Some College/University	3		MIX PER
Completed College/University	4		GROUP
RF/DK	9		

Q5) What is your current employment status?

Working full-time	1	}	MAX 3 PER GROUP
Working part-time	2		
Self-employed	3		
Retired	4		
Currently not working	5		
Student	6		
Other	7		
DK/RF	9		

Q6) [IF EMPLOYED/RETIRED] What is/was your current/past occupation?
_____ **(PLEASE SPECIFY)**

Q7) Which of the following categories best describes your total household income? That is, the total income of all persons in your household combined, before taxes **[READ LIST]**?

Under \$20,000	1	}	Ensure good mix by...
\$20,000 to just under \$ 40,000	2		Recruiting 2-3 from the below \$40K category
\$40,000 to just under \$ 60,000	3		
\$60,000 to just under \$ 80,000	4		
\$80,000 to just under \$100,000	5		Recruiting 3-4 from the between \$40 and \$80K category
\$100,000 to just under \$150,000	6		
\$150,000 and above	7		
DK/RF	99		Recruiting 5-6 from the above

Q8) DO NOT ASK – NOTE GENDER

Male	1	} ENSURE 50-50 SPLIT
Female	2	

Q9) If you won a million dollars what would be the first two things you would do with the money? (MUST HAVE TWO RESPONSES TO ACCEPT. TERMINATE IF FLIPPANT, COMBATIVE OR EXHIBITS DIFFICULTY IN RESPONDING)

TERMINATE IF RESPONDENT OFFERS ANY REASON SUCH AS SIGHT OR HEARING PROBLEM, A WRITTEN OR VERBAL LANGUAGE PROBLEM, A CONCERN WITH NOT BEING ABLE TO COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY OR IF YOU HAVE A CONCERN.

During the discussion, you will be audio- and videotaped. This taping is being done to assist us with our report writing. Also, in this room there is a one-way mirror. Sitting behind the mirror may be Government of Canada staff, including members of the staff from the department that sponsored this research, and by staff members from Ipsos. This is standard focus group procedure to get a first-hand look at the research process and to hear first-hand your impressions and views on the research topic.

Do you agree to be observed for research purposes only?

Yes	1	THANK & GO TO INVITATION
No	2	THANK & TERMINATE

******(IN EACH LOCATION, PLEASE ENSURE TWELVE (12) PARTICIPANTS ARE RECRUITED FOR 8-10 TO SHOW)******

[Read to Stand-by Respondents]

Thank you for answering my questions. Unfortunately, at this time, the group you qualify for is full. We would like to place you on our stand-by list. This means that if there is an opening in the group, we would then call you back and see if you are available to attend the discussion. May I please have a daytime contact number, an evening contact number and an email address, if you have one, so that we can contact you as soon as possible if an opening becomes available?

[RECORD CONTACT INFO]

[Read to Screened in Respondents]

Wonderful, you qualify to participate in one of these group discussions which will take place on, (DATE) @ (TIME) for no more than 2 hours. The Government of Canada is sponsoring this research. All those who participate will receive a **\$75** honorarium as a thank you for their time.

Do you have a pen handy so that I can give you the address where the group will be held? It will be held at:

	Date	Facility / Hotel

We ask that you arrive at least 20 minutes early to be sure you locate the facility and have time to check-in with the hosts. Prior to being admitted into the focus group room you will be required to sign a non-disclosure agreement, failure to do so will result in you being denied participation in the focus group session for which you have been selected. Payment of the incentive is contingent on participation in the focus group sessions.

In addition, we will be checking your identification prior to the group, so please be sure to bring two pieces of government issued photo identification with you (i.e. driver’s license, health card or other). Also, if you require glasses for reading, please bring them with you.

As we are only inviting a small number of people, your participation is very important to us. We have invited you to participate based on the questions we went through a moment ago, so we ask that you do not send a representative on your behalf should you be unable to participate. **IF FOR SOME REASON YOU ARE UNABLE TO ATTEND, PLEASE CALL SO THAT WE MAY GET SOMEONE TO REPLACE YOU.** You can reach us at 1-xxx-xxx-xxxx at our office. Someone will call you the day before to remind you about the discussion.

What would be a good time to reach you?
 And at what telephone numbers?
 May I please get your name? ON FRONT PAGE

Thank you very much for your help!

Appendix C. Discussion Guides

INTRODUCTION (5 minutes)

GC NEWS (5 minutes)

- What have you seen, read or heard about the Government of Canada lately?

ASK IN QUEBEC, MISSISSAUGA AND FREDERICTON

- PROBE: Have you heard anything in the news lately about Bombardier?
 - What specifically?

CLARIFY AS NEEDED

The US Department of Commerce's International Trade Administration has called for tariff of 299.45% on Bombardier's C Series jet. The action was taken in response to a complaint filed by Boeing in April regarding Delta Air Lines' order for 75 of the Canadian jets. Boeing says that Bombardier was selling its C Series passengers jets to U.S.-based Delta Air Lines at an unfairly low price, thanks to loans and grants from both the province of Quebec and the federal government..

On Monday, Airbus announced that it has acquired a 50.01% stake in Bombardier's next-generation C Series airliner program. Production of US-bound C Series jets will switch from Quebec to its factory in Mobile, Alabama. The two firms believe producing the C Series in the US will bypass any potential tariffs levied by the Department of Commerce.

- How do you feel about this?

CREATIVE CANADA (10 minutes) **DO NOT ASK IN PRINCE RUPERT OR MISSISSAUGA**

- IF NOT MENTIONED: Have you heard anything about the Creative Canada announcement? What have you heard?

CLARIFY AS NEEDED

The Government of Canada recently announced the launch of Creative Canada, which involves:

- Investing in Canadian creators, cultural entrepreneurs and their stories
- Promoting discovery and distribution at home and globally. This includes an agreement with Netflix:
 - to create Netflix Canada – a permanent film and television production presence here in Canada, the first time that the company has done so outside the United States.
 - To invest a minimum of \$500 million in original productions in Canada, in both official languages, over the next five years.
- Strengthening public broadcasting and local news
- Now that I've described it, does anyone remember hearing anything about it?

- How do you feel about this?
- What type of impact do you feel it will have?
- How do you feel about Netflix investing \$500 million for Canadian productions?

CORPORATE TAX RULES (10 minutes) DO NOT ASK IN FREDERICTON, QUEBEC OR MISSISSAUGA

- IF NOT MENTIONED: Have you heard anything about a consultation around proposed changes to corporate tax rules in Canada? What have you heard?
- What do you see as the strengths of this proposal? What do you see as the weaknesses?

CANADA-US RELATIONS (20minutes) ASK IN LAVAL, PRINCE RUPERT AND NORTH/WEST VANCOUVER. GO STRAIGHT TO HANDOUT IF SHORT ON TIME

- IF NOT MENTIONED: Have you heard anything about Canada-US relations lately? What have you heard?
- (IF TRADE SELECTED: A few of you mentioned Trade as a top issue). Who here has heard about NAFTA negotiations? (show of hands)

Pretend I’ve been overseas for the past few years. So I know what NAFTA is and have heard a little bit of high level news about what’s going on in Canada and the US, but haven’t heard anything about NAFTA negotiations.

- Explain to me why NAFTA negotiations are happening.
- Explain to me what exactly is involved in the negotiation process.
- What do you expect the result of these negotiations to be?
- Thinking about these negotiations, are there any sectors that you are especially concerned about?
- Do you think the Government of Canada has a good negotiation strategy, or do they need to change their strategy?

START DISCUSSION HERE AS NECESSARY

HANDOUT

- I’ve got a handout related to NAFTA negotiations:
 - First, I’d like you to complete the sentence: “I will feel good about the NAFTA negotiations if the final deal _____”
 - Next, I’d like you to go through the list of items and circle the three you feel are the most important aspects of the deal:
 - Ability to work cross-border
 - Canadian culture
 - Dispute resolution mechanism
 - Environmental standards
 - Gender equity
 - Indigenous rights

- Labour standards,
- Of the three you circled, which is most important in your opinion? What makes you say that?
 - What specifically related to this issue do you need to see in a final deal?

FALL ECONOMIC STATEMENT (35 minutes)

ASK IN MISSISSAUGA AND QUEBEC CITY

- Has anyone heard anything about the Government of Canada’s Fall Economic Statement (FES)?

If YES PROBE IN-DEPTH:

- What did you hear?
- What are your overall impressions of the FES?
- What do you think the overall focus of the FES is?
- What specific initiatives are in it?
 - Is there anything in there you like?
 - IF YES PROBE: What do others think about (ITEMS MENTIONED)?
 - Anything you don’t like?
 - IF YES PROBE: What do others think about (ITEMS MENTIONED)?
- The Fall Economic Statement showed that economic growth projections have improved over the past year. For example, in Budget 2017 the Government projected that the Canadian economy would grow by 2% this year, and it is now projected to grow by 3.1%, the highest rate in the G7. What do you think are the principle reasons for this?
 - (if they just answer “good economy”) PROBE: And why do you think the economy is doing better?
 - Do you think any government initiatives have led to this economic growth?
 - (if YES) Which ones specifically?
- With these stronger growth numbers, the deficit is forecast to be smaller than it had been forecast in the most recent Budget. How do you feel about this?
 - With the fiscal outlook improving, do you think the government should use the added revenue to pay down the deficit faster, cut taxes, or spend on infrastructure and services?
- The Fall Economic Statement and other recent Government announcements have mentioned proposed tax changes for small businesses (i.e., “private corporations”).
 - Has anyone heard about these tax changes? What have you heard?
- One of these proposed changes relates to a practice called income sprinkling.

Here is how income sprinkling works: Owners of private corporations – many of whom are in a higher personal tax bracket – can sprinkle income with family members. This can reduce the total income tax paid by the family because these family members face lower personal tax rates or aren’t taxable at all.

The Government now proposes to move forward with changes to the tax rules to limit income sprinkling using private corporations. The new rules will not impact businesses as long as family members make meaningful contributions to the business.

- Have you heard about this change?
 - How do you feel about this change?
 - Does this make the tax system more or less fair?
- Another proposed change deals with passive investment.

This refers to situations where an incorporated business owner or professional saves money **within** the corporation. The advantage of saving in this manner is that **corporate** income tax rates are generally much lower than **personal** income tax rates.

- Have you heard about these proposed changes to the tax rules regarding passive investment income?
- What have you heard about the Government’s reason for making changes in this area? Do you think the Government’s reasons are fair?
- What have you heard about concerns regarding changes in this area on the part of business owners?
- Do you agree or disagree with their concerns? Why do you agree/disagree?

Recently, the Government said that it heard that savings held in a business can be for **business** purposes, such as future expansion or new equipment, but also to deal with **personal** needs, such as maternity leave, sick days and retirement.

The Government proposes to make changes to the tax rules to limit the use of passive investments within a private corporation – but **also** provide greater flexibility for business owners to save for both business and personal purposes. For example, the Government will provide a passive income threshold of \$50,000 per year for go-forward investments. There will be no tax increase on investment income below this threshold. Assuming a 5-per-cent rate of return, earning \$50,000 today means you would have to have \$1 million in savings

- Have you heard about this recent adjustment to the Government’s approach?
- Does it seem reasonable to you that business owners need more flexibility to save – for both business and personal reasons?
- Or do you think additional flexibility for business owners gives them an unfair advantage?

HANDOUT

I’m now going to give you a handout with these changes and several other measures announced in the FES. Please give each a thumbs up or thumbs down if you think it is a good idea or a bad idea. Then circle the measure that you think is the best initiative.

- Cut the small business tax rate from 10.5% to 9% over the next fourteen months
 - Introduce measures to limit income sprinkling by private corporations while ensuring meaningful contributions to the business by spouses, children and other family members aren’t impacted
 - Limit opportunities to defer income on passive business investments income for personal purposes while providing flexibility to hold savings for multiple purposes, including for personal reasons
 - Bring in cost of living increases for the Canada Child Benefit two years sooner than previously scheduled, that is, starting in July 2018 instead of July 2020; and
 - Enhance the Working Income Tax Benefit
-
- (Discuss what they selected as best initiative)
 - On CCB, probe: Who is familiar with the Canada Child Benefit?
 - For those in group who are parents, would adjusting the Benefit to reflect the higher cost of living sooner be helpful to you?
 - On WITB probe: Who is familiar with the Working Income Tax Benefit? (The Working Income Tax Benefit, or WITB is a refundable tax credit that provides income support for low income Canadians to improve their return from working. This provides them with income support, and ensures it is economically attractive to low income Canadians.)
 - Do you think it is a good idea to invest more money in this measure?
 - What type of people do you think would benefit from this?
-
- Now that we’ve discussed it for a bit, how would you sum up the Fall Economic Statement in a sentence, if someone who hadn’t heard about it asked you to describe it?
 - Taken together, what do the proposed changes in the Fall Economic Statement tell you about the government’s priorities?

HEALTHY EATING STRATEGY (50 minutes) ASK IN FREDERICTON, QUEBEC AND MISSISSAUGA

- Do you think the government should be doing more to encourage healthy eating habits among Canadians?
 - If yes, what specifically do you think the government should be doing?
- Some have suggested that the government should put mandatory warning labels on foods that contain large amounts of sugar, sodium or saturated fats.
 - What are some reasons why this would be a good thing for the government to do?

- If not mentioned, probe on whether the labels might have a positive affect on health, consumer choice or transparency.
- What are some possible negative effects of the policy?

HANDOUT

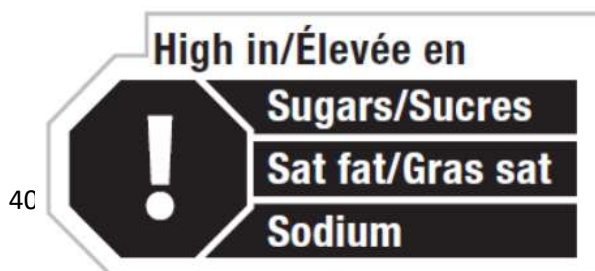
I’ve got an example of the current Nutrition Facts table:

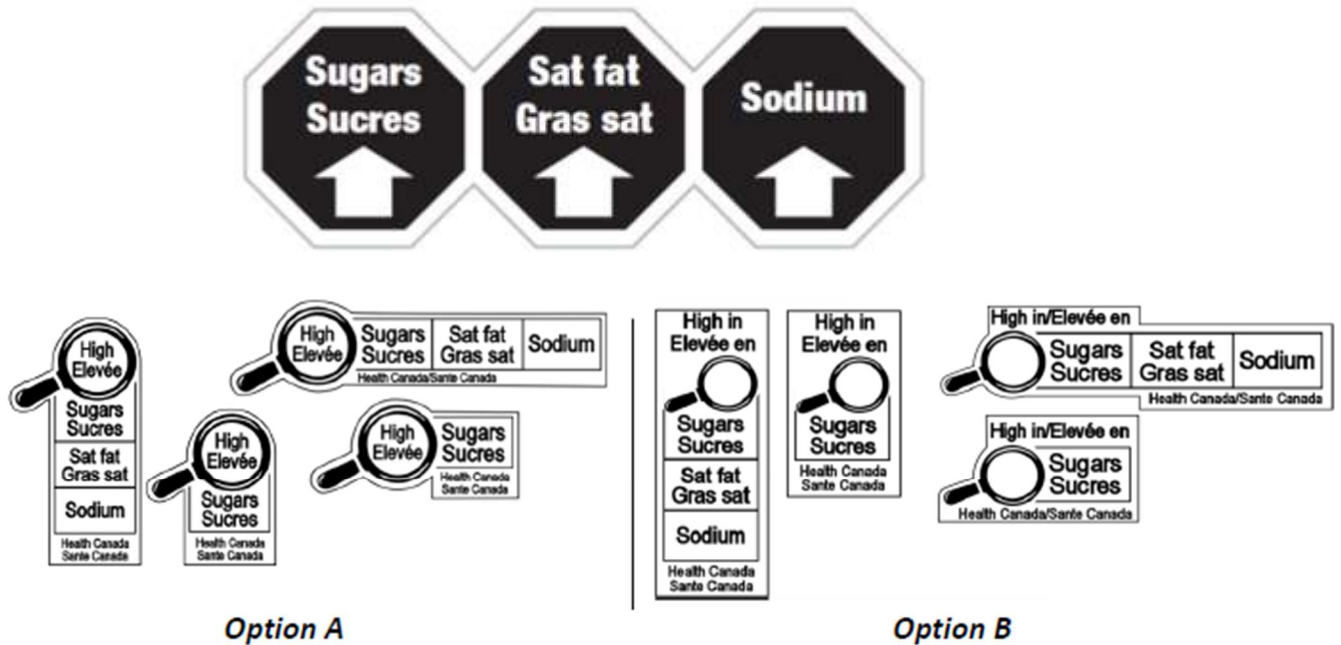
Nutrition Facts	
Valeur nutritive	
Per 1/2 cup (125 mL) pour 1/2 tasse (125 mL)	
Amount Teneur	% Daily Value % valeur quotidienne
Calories / Calories 80	
Fat / Lipides 0.5 g	1 %
Saturated / saturés 0 g + Trans / trans 0 g	0 %
Cholesterol / Cholestérol 0 mg	
Sodium / Sodium 0 mg	0 %
Carbohydrate / Glucides 18 g	6 %
Fibre / Fibres 2 g	8 %
Sugars / Sucres 15 g	
Protein / Protéines 3 g	
Vitamin A / Vitamine A	2 %
Vitamin C / Vitamine C	10 %
Calcium / Calcium	0 %
Iron / Fer	2 %

- Current laws require most food packaging to include a Nutrition Facts table like the one I have just passed out. Do you check these tables?
 - Are these Nutrition Facts tables easy to read and use to make decisions?
- Under proposals being considered for new labelling rules, products would be required to include simpler labels on the front of the packaging that indicate whether a product is high in sodium, sugar, and / or saturated fat.

HANDOUT

Here are some examples of possible labels that could go on the front of packages.





- Which of these labels would you prefer? Why?
 - Are any of these difficult to understand?
 - Do you think you would use these labels when deciding which food products to buy in a store?
- . Some products that are high in saturated fat, sugar or salt also have healthy attributes such as Vitamin C or calcium, for example:
- Yogurt could be high in sugar, but has healthy attributes such as calcium
 - Cranberry juice is high in vitamin C, but has sugar added because it would be too tart to drink otherwise
- Is this a concern for you?
 - IF YES:
 - Is it enough to make you reconsider how you feel about the labels?
 - A lot of Canadian businesses, like the dairy industry, worry this could hurt sales of their products. Is this a concern for you?
 - (IF YES) Is it enough to make you reconsider how you feel about the labels?

- I’m now going to discuss a few other ideas that have been suggested to encourage healthier eating habits in Canada.
- Others have suggested imposing a tax on sugary products to discourage eating too much unhealthy food. Do you think this is a good or bad idea?
 - What if all the revenue collected went towards programs encouraging healthy lifestyles for kids?
 - What if all the revenue collected went towards subsidizing healthy foods, lowering the cost of healthier food options?
- Another idea is to ban any marketing of unhealthy foods that is targeted towards children. For instance, unhealthy fast food restaurants would be unable to advertise their products during children’s cartoons on TV. Do you think this is a good or bad idea?
 - Do you think this ban should extend to prevent businesses selling unhealthy food from advertising at events and sports activities that are predominantly attended by children?
 - Would you be concerned that these events would not be able to survive without these sponsors?

HANDOUT

Finally, now that we have talked about each of these options, I want you to look at this list of potential strategies to encourage healthy eating in Canada and put a checkmark beside every option you would like to see the government put in place. Then, circle the strategy that you think would be the most effective.

- Put mandatory labels on the front of food packages to indicate if a product contains large amounts of sugar, sodium or saturated fats.
- Impose a tax on sugary products with revenues going towards encouraging healthy lifestyles.
- Ban the marketing of unhealthy foods directly to children.

ASYLUM SEEKERS (20 minutes) ASK IN LAVAL AND PRINCE RUPERT

- Who here has heard about asylum seekers crossing the Canada-US border? (show of hands)
 - How did you hear about this story?
 - What news source or news sources have you heard about asylum seekers from?
 - And what specifically have you heard about asylum seekers crossing the Canada-US border?
- As far as you know, what happens to these individuals after they cross the border?

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR THE MODERATOR:

If an individual comes into Canada through a designated port of entry at a land border and makes an asylum claim, the Canadian Border Services Agency (CBSA) assesses whether they can enter Canada.

If an individual illegally crosses into Canada (e.g. walks across a field into Canada), once they are in Canada, they are arrested by the RCMP and transferred to CBSA for an immigration examination. The individual can make an asylum claim.

- Why do you think these asylum seekers are choosing to cross the border illegally into Canada?
- Because seven different Canadian provinces share a land border with the US, many asylum seekers are crossing into different parts of the country. Some say each province should develop their own strategy for dealing with the individuals that have crossed into their own territory. Others say the federal government has a responsibility to deal with all asylum seekers that enter the country no matter where they cross the border. Which do you agree with more?
- Looking specifically at the federal government, do you generally think the Government of Canada is doing a good or a bad job of managing recent increases in the number of asylum seekers in Canada?
 - What is the federal government doing well to manage this issue?
 - What does the federal government need to change in how they are approaching the issue?
 - PROBE: Better border security? Accept more asylum claims?

LAVAL VERSION

- I would like you to think about individuals crossing the border nearby and being housed in near here while their asylum claims are being processed. What impact, if any, do you think that will have on your community?
 - What impact, if any, do you think this would have on you personally?

OTHER LOCATIONS

- I would like you to imagine that your city was near the Canada-US border and individuals who were crossing the border nearby were being housed in your community while their asylum claims are being processed. What impact, if any, do you think that would have on your community?
 - What impact, if any, do you think this would have on you personally?

IMMIGRATION (20 minutes) ASK IN VANCOUVER, MISSISSAUGA AND FREDERICTON

- Are you aware of the different immigrant classes?
- CLARIFY AS NEEDED: There are 3 different categories:
 - Economic immigrants - e.g. skilled workers, caregivers and entrepreneurs
 - Family class - i.e. family members of people already in Canada
 - Refugees
- Are you aware roughly what the application fees to become a Permanent Resident in Canada are?
- CLARIFY AS NEEDED: The fees for a skilled worker are \$550, for a business immigrant \$1050, and for family class \$550. Refugees do not pay any fees.
- These fees have not been increased for 15 years. How would you feel about fee increases that would mean about an extra \$150 for skilled workers, by an extra \$300 for business class, and \$150 for family class? Refugees would continue to not pay any fees.
- The fees in Canada are considerably lower than in other countries. For example, immigrants pay \$1,500 to \$4,900 in the United States, and \$4,200 to \$6,900 in Australia. Does this change the way you feel about proposed fee increases?
- Do you think the added revenue from this should be used to increase processing times for applications, to allow more immigrants to come to Canada each year, or to reduce the cost of the immigration system on taxpayers?
- Now, imagine fees were increased to pay for more immigrants and faster processing times. What do you see as the strongest argument in favour of doing this? What do you see as the strongest argument against doing this? (write on white board and discuss with group)

GUNS (15 minutes) ASK IN PRINCE RUPERT, NORTH VANCOUVER AND NORTH BAY

- Do you feel gun control laws in Canada should be made more strict, less strict, or kept as they are?
 - PROBE IF MORE/LESS STRICT: What specifically needs to be more/less strict?
- I’m going to read you a list of possible gun control measures:
 - Enhance border guards’ ability to stop illegal guns crossing the border into Canada
 - Require enhanced background checks for anyone seeking to purchase a restricted firearm
 - Require purchasers to show a license when they buy a firearm

- Implement UN firearms regulations requiring the marking of all guns being made in Canada or imported into Canada
- Require a permit to transport handguns and restricted firearms
- On balance, would these changes be good or bad?
 - Which of these measures, if any, is MOST important? Why?
 - Is there anything on this list the government should NOT do? Why?
- What is the strongest argument in favour of these type of gun control measures?
- What is the strongest argument against these measures?
- Do you think any other changes are needed to gun control laws in Canada?

LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (30 minutes) ASK IN PRINCE RUPERT AND N/W VANCOUVER

Now we'd like to change directions a little bit and talk about the changing world of work and what the Government of Canada is doing to support Canadians in the workplace.

HANDOUT

Thinking about labour and employment in Canada, I've got a handout that lists possible areas the Government of Canada could focus on in federally regulated industries **(MODERATOR: REFER TO BACKGROUND INFORMATION BELOW AS NEEDED)**. These are general topics and some are similar, but I want to know which ones speak to you. I'd like you to rank the top 3 most important ones (RANK 1-2-3)

LAVAL & PRINCE RUPERT:

- Decent work
- Fairness at work
- Fair jobs
- Good quality jobs
- Modern employment standards
- Modern federal labour standards
- Quality jobs

NORTH/WEST VANCOUVER

- Quality Jobs
- Fair jobs
- Good quality jobs
- Decent work
- Decent jobs
- Better jobs

For each term, probe the following:

- Why did you provide the ranking that you did?
- What does the phrase mean to you?
- What did you like about it? What did you dislike about it? Why do you say that?
- Was it clear / understandable? Why or why not?
- Did it catch your attention? Why or why not?
- Is it memorable? Why or why not?
- What, if anything, would you change about it? How could it be improved?

I’m going to read you a paragraph about what the Government of Canada could do on these topics.

“The Government of Canada must promote good quality jobs, by addressing the changing way that people work, and work to increase the workforce participation of women and underrepresented groups.

To do this, it will be necessary to update the Canada Labour Code to address emerging issues such as unpaid internships, and to ensure that Canadians continue to have a robust and modern set of federal employment standards.”

- What aspects of this statement do you like? (either in terms of language or approach)
- What aspects do you not like? (either in terms of language or approach)
- When it comes to issues around labour in Canada, is there anything missing from this you feel the government needs to address?

[Note to moderator – if the topics below come up naturally during the above conversation, please integrate discussion]

HANDOUT

I’ve got a list of some possible labour standards that the Government of Canada could implement in federally regulated industries. For each one, please indicate how important it is, if at all (1-10 importance scale). Then, I’d like you to circle the 2 or 3 you feel most positively about.

CLARIFY AS NEEDED - labour standards would apply broadly (as minimum standards) as opposed to standards being negotiated for some employees as part of a collective agreement.

- A higher minimum wage.
- Access to paid sick days.
- More annual paid vacation.
- Additional statutory holidays.
- Additional unpaid statutory leaves (e.g. for a medical appointment).

- Paying part-time and temporary workers the same hourly wage as full-time workers who are doing the same work (for example, in some industries, full-time workers may be paid at a higher hourly rate than part-time workers doing the same job for the same employer).
 - Portability of benefit (for example, if you change jobs, and your new job doesn’t have benefits, you can bring your existing benefits with you).
 - Being paid to be on-call.
 - Disconnection Policy (for example, France introduced a policy to allow employees in companies of more than 50 people to ignore emails after regular work hours).
 - Adequate breaks and daily rest periods (e.g. for meals).
 - Maximum hours of work without a break (that is, standardizing the maximum amount of hours that a person can work without a break, for example, in the trucking industry where the safety of workers and the public may be at risk if drivers are not well-rested).
 - The right to request flexible working arrangements (for example, the right to have a discussion with your employer about flexibility in your working arrangements).
-
- Which ones did you circle? Why was it important, to you? What did you like about it? Why do you say that?
 - Are there any that you do not like? Why is that?

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR THE MODERATOR:

The Government of Canada is working on updating federal labour standards to keep pace with the changing nature of work and address concerns about the security, predictability and wages and benefits that come with many of today’s jobs. These standards establish the basic rights of employees in federally regulated industries regarding hours of work, minimum wages, annual vacations, holidays, leaves, wages, termination of employment, severance pay and other working conditions.

- If asked about federally regulated industries.
 - All industries are regulated, either by the federal government or provincial or territorial government. Federally regulated industries include banking, telecommunications, broadcasting and inter-provincial and international transportation (including air, rail, maritime and trucking), as well as federal Crown corporations.
- If asked why they are being asked about labour standards that won’t apply to them:
 - They may affect the workplace rights and protections of members of your family, your friends and others who work in federally regulated industries. They affect industries that may have a direct impact on you (such as banking, air transportation and postal services)

JUSTICE (15 minutes) NOT ASK IN LAVAL, PRINCE RUPERT, NORTH VANCOUVER AND NORTH BAY

- Has anyone heard anything about Government of Canada consultations on Deferred Prosecution Agreements (DPAs)?

CLARIFY AS NEEDED

A DPA is a voluntary agreement for corporate crime that is negotiated between an accused and the responsible prosecution authority. The US and UK have DPA regimes in place.

Criminal prosecution is suspended on the accused agreeing to fulfill certain requirements including admitting to facts that would support a conviction, paying a significant financial penalty and cooperating with authorities, on completion of which, charges will be withdrawn.

- What's your first reaction to this? What do you see as the advantages and disadvantages of DPAs?

Those in favour of DPAs say this encourages companies to self-disclose wrongdoing since they may otherwise have to face the prospect of a formal criminal conviction. They also say that it helps ensure employees who were not connected to the wrongdoing are not harmed (e.g. job loss) by a criminal sanction on the entire company.

Those opposed to DPAs say these can become "a cost of doing business," allowing corporations to buy their way out of trouble by paying a financial penalty - as long as they have the money to settle. Thus, they say that DPAs do not deter misconduct.

- Having heard these arguments, how do you feel about DPAs? Is this something Canada should implement?

OFFSHORE PROTECTED AREAS (10 minutes) ASK IN PRINCE REPORT, N/W VANCOUVER & FREDERICTON

Now we'd like to change directions a little bit and talk about offshore protected areas where fishing and some commercial activities are not allowed for environmental reasons.

HANDOUT

I've got a handout that lists possible names for these types of areas. I want to know which ones speak to you. I'd like you to rank the top 2 most important appropriate ones (RANK 1-2)

- Marine Habitat Conservation Area
- Marine Habitat Protection Area
- Fish Habitat Conservation Zone
- Fish Habitat Refuge
- Designated Area for Fish Habitat Protection

For each term, probe the following:

- Why did you provide the ranking that you did?
- What does the phrase mean to you?
 - What does “conservation” mean to you?
 - What about “protection”?
 - “refuge”?
- Some of the names use “marine habitat” while some use “fish habitat”.
 - For those who had “marine habitat” as one of their top 2 rankings, do you prefer this to “fish habitat”? Why/why not?
 - What about those who had “fish habitat” in their top 2?
- Are there any names that you don’t like or don’t seem appropriate?

CONCLUSION (5 minutes)