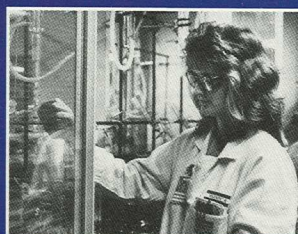


RECKONING

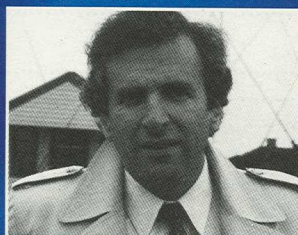
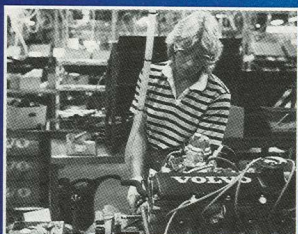
THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF CANADA



The Gazette



TEACHERS' GUIDE



National
Film Board
of Canada

Office
national du film
du Canada

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was written by
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RECKONING

The Political Economy of Canada
Teacher's Guide

Introduction

During the 1980s, economic issues have come to dominate the front pages of our newspapers and nightly newscasts (e.g., free trade, the stockmarket crash, government debt, and unemployment). As a result, most students are becoming concerned about their economic prospects. They are aware that important decisions are being made that will profoundly affect them.

The films in the *Reckoning* series can be used to stimulate students' interest in economics. They can help to clarify some of the pressing socio-economic issues facing Canadians, and put them in an historical and global context.

Since most films in this series pose "big questions" about Canada's economic and social affairs, they can be used as springboards to further analysis, problem-solving, debates, and research. At the same time, due to the nature of the films (assumptions are made about the viewers' general knowledge), and the speed with which images and dialogue are presented, students may not grasp the implied connections. By using the "pause button" to answer student queries, emphasize a point, or rephrase a concept, teachers can help students interact with the flow of the film.

How to use the films effectively

- Have the students do some background reading on the themes covered in the films.
- Have the students list general questions that arise from the readings.
- Do a pre-screening activity to focus on the film's theme.
- Use the questions provided in this guide to focus the students' viewing of the film.
- Discuss how the filmmaker approached some of the general questions brought up by the students.
- Use post-screening activities to explore the themes in the film in more detail.

All of the suggested readings for students are from the periodical *Canada and the World*, published by Maclean-Hunter, 777 Bay Street, Toronto, Ontario, M4W 1A7. Most high-school libraries have subscriptions to this periodical. Because it is directed at high-school students, the reading level is appropriate. Teachers can, of course, also select readings from other sources.

PART ONE

THE RISE AND FALL OF AMERICAN BUSINESS CULTURE

This film analyses the factors that made the United States' economy so powerful in the past and then examines the current domestic and foreign conditions responsible for the decline of American business. Neatly divided into nine "chapters," the documentary considers the effects of using credit, relations between management and labor, the Japanese economic threat, corporate America's modus operandi, the consequences of the lack of long-term planning, the merger phenomenon and the game of high finance, the hidden costs of environmental pollution, and the search to find a reason for all this economic activity. Interviews with various economic experts are intercut with host James Laxer's commentary.

57 min. 21 sec.

C 0187 094

CURRICULUM AREAS

Political Science, Economics, Senior Social Studies, Science and Technology.

BACKGROUND READING

1. "Feature Report: Industry," *Canada and the World*, October 1981, pp. 11-20.
2. "The Next Decade," *Canada and the World*, December 1979, pp. 10-21.
3. "Pollution Time Bomb," *Canada and the World*, March 1981, pp. 12-21.

PRE-SCREENING ACTIVITIES

Brainstorm the following questions with your class. List their responses.

1. What factors make a country competitive?
2. What would you do if you, as a business or government leader, discovered your industries were becoming less competitive than those in other countries?

Questions to focus students' viewing of the film (hand out before viewing):

1. How is the U.S. living beyond its means?
2. What cultural and social problems have made it difficult for the U.S. to compete internationally?
3. What is the American style of management like?
4. What are the economic advantages of listening to the wisdom of the workers?
5. How is Japan's management style different from that of the United States?

6. What does the term "level playing field" mean?
7. What factors have made long-range planning difficult in the United States?
8. Why is it difficult to develop precise economic models?
9. Why do economists find it difficult to deal with moral questions?
10. List some of the hidden costs of economic growth.
11. What are some of the effects of being a consumer-oriented society?

POST-SCREENING ACTIVITIES

Debate Topics

- The U.S. economy is not in decline.
- Workers do not have to be manipulated to be productive.
- Technological innovation is the major factor behind the global shift in economic power.
- Canada should copy Japan's economic strategy.

Definition of Documentary Film

Use the definition of a documentary film (below) to explore:

- What you think the filmmaker's message is.
- How the filmmaker developed it (images, dialogue).
- Whether you agree with it.

DOCUMENTARY

Loosely defined as any non-fiction film. The subject materials of the documentary (character, setting, events) are drawn from real life. They may, however, be creatively woven together. They also tell a story or deliver a message.

1. Analyse how one or more of the film's chapters attempts to prove the filmmaker's thesis that "American business is in trouble."
2. Predict how industry in Canada will change by the year 2001. What factors will affect these changes?
3. Research an environmental problem, such as acid rain, that is brought on by industrialization.

Quotations from the film for discussion

What are the implications of these quotations?

"Management must be centred around human beings."

— Kohei Goshi
Chairman, Japan Productivity Centre

"Our founding fathers recognized that government has always been the enemy of man."

— Walter Williams
Economics Professor, George Mason University

"When playing money games becomes the central preoccupation of management, when managing assets becomes more lucrative than actually producing products, then you have a casino society in which business is just another form of gambling."

— Osamu Shimomura
Chairman, Japan Economic Institute

"Economic man always seeks to maximize his advantage."

— Shirley Williams
Former U.K. Education Manager

"When I see the environment stinking from pulp mills or practically brown from the exhaust emissions, I know that something has been lost, for me, in the quality of my life."

— David Suzuki
Scientist, University of British Columbia

"I think women actually understand economics better than most men do. Women understand what economics is really about, meeting the needs of their family and community."

— Hunter Lovins
Rocky Mountain Institute

"The successful societies in the twenty-first century will have to learn how to conserve as well as consume."

— James Laxer

THE FILMMAKER: KALLE LASN

Q: *The Rise and Fall of American Business Culture* highlights a lot of problems, but does it offer any solutions? What is the purpose of the film if it doesn't present solutions?

A: I really like a story that Jim Laxer told me once when we were still researching this film. He said that if fifty years ago you went up to a British guy on the street and said to him, "Listen, your way of doing business isn't working anymore, your British business culture is now in decline," he would have laughed at you. I think the same is true here in North America today. If you tell an American that his business culture isn't No. 1 anymore, that it's now in long-term decline, he wouldn't be able to accept that. He would probably laugh at you. So, I think the purpose of this film is to make people take this idea seriously. Until we take it seriously, there is no way we can start tackling our growing competitive problems in today's global marketplace.

PART TWO

SHIFT CHANGE

The transition to a post-industrial society and all its attendant dislocations and upheavals is the focus of the second film in the *Reckoning* series. Scenes of a prosperous city like Hamilton during the '50s and '60s are contrasted with current images of workers, union leaders, and businessmen trying to grapple with economic recession and the effects of the new technology.

56 min. 36 sec.

C 0186 095

CURRICULUM AREAS

Economics, Technology and Society, Politics, Labor Studies, Sociology.

BACKGROUND READING

1. "Feature Report: Industry," *Canada and the World*, October 1981, pp. 11-20.
2. "Feature Report: Work," *Canada and the World*, January 1984, pp. 13-25.
3. "Feature Report: Poverty," *Canada and the World*, April 1985, pp. 13-27.

PRE-SCREENING ACTIVITIES

Questions to focus students' viewing of the film

1. What does the following quotation from Aristotle mean? Is it essentially true? "When the looms weave on their own, men will be free."
2. What has happened to bring about new technologies?
3. Why was 1981 a pivotal year for the workers in Hamilton?
4. Why do employers and employees view the growth of technology in different ways?
5. Why did the recession of 1981 make producers look for new technologies?
6. Have the workers in Hamilton paid for increased productivity with their jobs?
7. Why did the leadership of the United Steelworkers change?

8. Why are some workers upset about the location of the new Lake Erie works?
9. What happened in England in the 19th century that is similar to the situation in Hamilton in the 1980s?
10. How was child labor justified in the past?
11. How is unemployment justified today?
12. What was the basis of Japan's industrial contract?
13. Why is investment in research and development in Canada so low?
14. What advantages does new technology give to smaller competitors like Canada?
15. Explain the term "bottom-line people."
16. Is Japan the success story it's made out to be?

POST-SCREENING ACTIVITIES

1. Summarize "The Technician of Power," chapter five of *The Third Wave* by Alvin Toffler.
2. Research the evolution of the microchip.
3. Study the history of unions in Canada.
4. Visit a local unemployment centre and report your findings to the class.
5. Write a report on the Luddite movement in 19th-century England.
6. Write a report on the role of unions in today's society.
7. Write a report on the effects of unemployment on the community, families and individuals.

Debate Topics

- Labor unions have become too radical.
- Business must respond to the demands of the marketplace before being concerned about workers.
- Technological change should be controlled for the benefit of humanity.
- The technological revolution has freed people.
- Workers and unions should have some control over technological change.

Quotations from the film for discussion

"I think the next 25 years will be one of the most exciting periods in human history. The new technologies cascade upon one another, so that we will find problems of disease being solved, problems of famine being solved. There is a potential to do absolute miracles that makes everything that's happened in the past seem like nothing."

— Dr. Stuart Smith
Chairman, Science Council of Canada

"The only way we're gonna have secure jobs and high standards of living is to be on the leading edge in the use of technology. Now that doesn't mean that everyone in the country is going to be some kind of computer whiz-kid out there. They're not leading the Star Wars brigade, but by being on that frontier technologically, it creates all kinds of other jobs, at all levels through the economy, and makes it possible to have many of the social services and so on that generate other jobs."

— Fred Pomeroy
President, Communications and Electrical Workers of Canada

"(The) Tonga Valley (in Lancashire, England) deserves a special place in history, because it was here that the first Industrial Revolution was born. Here in this valley a weaver named Samuel Crompton invented a machine he called the spinning mule. It was the very first factory machine, able to do the work of thousands of hands. It was hailed as brilliant, revolutionary, and yet to those whose hands had once done the work, the spinning mule was an invention of the devil. So, for seven years, while he worked on a smaller prototype, Samuel Crompton was forced to hide it in a cubby-hole in his attic. In its time the spinning mule was as disruptive as the microchip is today, and yet once Samuel Crompton had invented it, there was no going back."

— James Laxer

"If Canada doesn't move to new technology smartly, then we basically all have to get together and pray that by some fluke natural resources will make us as rich in the future as they did in the past."

— James Laxer

"Our educational system has been slow to adapt and so it is the parents with the time and the education themselves who are doing what they can to make their kids winners, and someone else's kids can be the losers."

— James Laxer

THE FILMMAKER: JEFFERSON LEWIS

Q. The film highlights a lot of problems — does it offer solutions?

A. The first solution, I think, is to recognize that this is not simply another cycle of unemployment, but that this is something radical that we're going through and that in the next five or ten years the pace of this is going to accelerate. By the mid-1990s, the face of the country will change in terms of where people are working, what kind of business they're working in, what kind of industries they're in, what they're getting paid, and what the role of unions is. The whole structure is changing. So the first thing we're trying to do in terms of a solution, I think, is to propose that there is something particular happening and that there is a second industrial revolution going on.

The second thing is not to lose a sense of optimism about the potential of this. I mean it's not necessarily the best thing a person can do to spend eight or nine or ten hours a day sweating near a hot oven, making steel. And even many of the steelworkers would like to see their children do something better. So we're not trying to protect these old jobs because that would be ridiculous and pointless, and it won't happen in any case. What we should be doing is recognizing that a lot of jobs are going to disappear and dealing with that problem.

PART THREE

RIDING THE TORNADO

The boom-and-bust nature of a resource-based economy is the subject of this film, which looks at the oil industry in Alberta. The human and political consequences of such exaggerated economic swings are examined in detail, with particular attention paid to the changing balance of power between central Canada and the resource-rich regions.

57 min. 27 sec.

C 0186 053

CURRICULUM AREAS

History, Senior Social Studies, Economics, Political Science, Business.

BACKGROUND READING

1. "Feature Report: Inflation and Recession," *Canada and the World*, September 1983, pp. 13-25.
2. "Basic Economics," *Canada and the World*, February 1979.
3. "Decade of the 30's," *Canada and the World*, February 1979.

PRE-SCREENING ACTIVITIES

Before showing the film, play word-association with your students. Ask them what words come to mind when they hear the word *boom*. Do the same for *bust*. Write them on the board and have the students record them. Repeat this exercise after showing the film. Compare the lists.

Questions to focus students' viewing of the film

1. Why is the Canadian economy so vulnerable to boom-and-bust cycles?
2. Why did Harold Innis compare boom-and-bust cycles to a tornado?
3. Why did the formation of OPEC start an oil boom in Alberta?
4. Why is a boom cycle driven by investment?
5. What were some of the hidden costs of the boom for families in Alberta?
6. Why were the federal government and Alberta squabbling all through the boom?
7. What particular economic boom affected Canada's native people?

8. Describe Sir John A. Macdonald's plan for Canada's economy.
9. Why is the Alberta oil industry so susceptible to fluctuations in the price of oil?
10. Why do businessmen borrow so much during booms?
11. List the ways the boom affected workers, businessmen, and families.
12. Why don't busts affect all people in the same way?
13. Why is Brian Peckford concerned about the traditional way of life in Newfoundland?
14. Why could an oil boom be particularly hard on rural Newfoundland?
15. Why will the temptation be great for Newfoundland to embark on a roller coaster ride of boom and bust?
16. Can the economy be controlled? For whose benefit?

POST-SCREENING ACTIVITIES

1. Make a time line of the boom-and-bust cycles throughout Canadian history and analyse the forces affecting them.
2. Study the history of a ghost town.
3. Interview someone who lived through the Great Depression.
4. Suggest ways in which the economy could be controlled to avoid booms and busts.
5. Explain why the area you live in may be susceptible to boom-and-bust cycles.
6. Use the definition of a documentary film (given on p. 6) to explore what you think the filmmaker's message is, how he developed it (images, dialogue), and whether it was effective.

Debate Topics

- Boom-and-bust cycles can't be controlled because of the unpredictable human factor.
- Economics is an imprecise science.
- People are essentially greedy.
- The federal government has every right to control the price of domestic oil.

Quotations from the film for discussion

"When the OPEC nations meet at Vienna in 1973, Canada is neither invited nor discussed, but it's hard to imagine how they could have created greater havoc in this country short of an outright declaration of war. Alberta's reserves are suddenly worth many times their former value. A billion and a half dollars becomes five, eight, ten billion, and keeps on climbing. It's as though Alberta has just won the world's biggest lottery, but there's a catch — most of the losing tickets were bought in Ontario."

— James Laxer

"I mean, my goodness, if Shell was getting ready to build a fourteen-million-dollar oil-sands plant, and that marvelous company, with more economists than we have people, decided that the oil price was gonna go up and up, and the banks were prepared to lend us money on the basis that the price of oil was going up, and they would invite us to their corporate boardroom where we would sit around and talk about nothing but hockey games, not loans even, on this basis, then who was I not to take on that debt, not to make that investment?"

— James Gray
Canadian Hunter Exploration Ltd.

"They're tough (negotiators for major international oil companies), and they have a more global view of the world, and that means that they don't have a real understanding of any one particular part of the world, and so it becomes a philosophy of business, world-wide as opposed to what makes a certain people take on a certain piece of land on the globe. And in that regard I don't like them at all. And it's difficult to get them into a frame of mind which looks at Newfoundland differently than Indonesia, or New Zealand, or Libya, or Saudi Arabia, or Texas, or Oklahoma ... so you just got to be as tough as them."

— Brian Peckford
Premier of Newfoundland

THE FILMMAKER: ROBERT LOWER

Q: Your film seems more specific than the others in dealing with certain regions, events, and time frames. It's also very people-oriented. Did you have trouble balancing the theoretical aspects of the subject with events that were tied to a time and place, and the people-oriented aspects that were tied to certain people that you spoke to?

A: More trouble than I've ever had doing anything else in my life. It was extremely difficult. I was constantly aware that what people like to see on film are people, and that theory and general history are meaningless unless you see them in very concrete terms — what it does, how it expresses itself in the lives of specific human beings. Social movements are important to understand, but they can only be identified with if you see the people — if you can find the individuals who make them up. So I was very conscious of that. I was very wary of most experts. Our principal expert was Jim Laxer. I interviewed a couple of academics, but, except in brief cuts in Newfoundland, I didn't use them. Because every time I did, you were suddenly distanced from the whole thing. Perspective could be provided by Jim. I wanted to stay on as personal a level as I could simply because every time you tell somebody you're dealing with a series on political economy, their eyes glaze over. They think it doesn't mean anything to them. So what I wanted to do more than anything was to hit people between the eyes and say, "This is your life." Fifteen percent unemployment means very little in a world that's used to hearing about it, but one family's life story suddenly makes that fifteen percent unemployment real.

PART FOUR

IN BED WITH AN ELEPHANT

In Bed with an Elephant looks at the economic and political factors that have historically influenced the relationship between Canada and the United States. The attempts by prime ministers Macdonald, Laurier, Mackenzie King, Diefenbaker and Pearson to influence American economic policy are presented. They are especially timely in the light of the current free-trade debate. For teaching purposes, it might be useful to break the content covered into specific eras and then analyse the forces — political, social and economic — that influenced Canada's relations with the United States at a given time. An examination of Mulroney's current dealings with Washington would neatly cap off such a study.

59 min. 48 sec.

C 0186 101

CURRICULUM AREAS

Senior Social Studies, History, Economics, Government, Political Science, Business.

BACKGROUND READING

1. "Feature Report: Trade," *Canada and the World*, September 1986, pp. 13-29.
2. "Nationalism," *Canada and the World*, January 1978, pp. 18-23.
3. "U.S.-Canada Relations," *Canada and the World*, September 1978, pp. 12-22.
4. "Feature Report: Canada-U.S. Relations," *Canada and the World*, March 1983, pp. 11-21.
5. "Canadian Identity," *Canada and the World*, April 1975, pp. 12-23.

PRE-SCREENING ACTIVITIES

Have students brainstorm the following. List their responses.

- The advantages of living next door to the United States.
- The disadvantages of living next door to the United States.
- How Canadians are different from Americans.

Questions to focus students' viewing of the film

1. When did Canada have a series of wars with the United States?
2. What does Article 11 of the American Constitution state?
3. What were the objectives of Sir John A. Macdonald's National Policy?
4. Describe Macdonald's attitude towards the Americans.
5. Why did Laurier lose the 1911 election?
6. How did Hollywood movies stereotype Canadians?
7. How and why did Mackenzie King agree to the formation of a permanent joint board of defence?
8. How did World War II affect Canada's economy?
9. Why didn't Mackenzie King follow through with free-trade plans?
10. Who was C.D. Howe?
11. Why did the Americans begin investing heavily in Canada after World War II?
12. List all the ways in which John Diefenbaker came into conflict with U.S. presidents.
13. How did Diefenbaker try to break away from Canadian dependence on the U.S.?
14. Describe the Pearson-Johnson meeting in Texas. What was discussed? Why did Lyndon B. Johnson get extremely angry with Lester Pearson?
15. Why did Canada have a huge trade deficit with the U.S. during the 1960s?
16. What initiatives did Trudeau take that affected U.S. business concerns in Canada?

POST-SCREENING ACTIVITIES

1. Make a time line of people, events, and issues that highlight Canada's relations with the United States.
2. Write a report on how the U.S. became a dominant factor in economy.
3. Use the definition of a documentary film (p. 6) to explore the filmmaker's message and how he developed it (use of original footage, images, narration).
4. Prepare a scrapbook of articles from newspapers that help to identify the issues in the free-trade debate. Invite a keynote speaker to your class to explain the free-trade issue.
5. Write an editorial on the free-trade issue.

6. Do you think it is possible to sum up U.S.-Canada relations by analysing the personal relations between leaders?
7. Predict the state of U.S.-Canada relations by writing a report entitled "Canada-U.S. relations in 2010."
8. What factors will influence our relations with the United States?
9. Explore the stands taken by the major political parties regarding the free-trade issue.
10. Research the attitude towards free trade in your region of the country. Compare this with attitudes in other parts of Canada.

Debate Topics

- Canadians need not worry about American investment in Canada.
- Canada should join the United States.
- Loss of economic sovereignty will lead to annexation by the United States.
- Canada has resisted takeover by the U.S. and will continue to do so.
- Canadians are very different from Americans.
- It is only a matter of time before Canada becomes a part of the United States.
- Canada would suffer without U.S. investment.
- To maintain our standard of living, Canada must negotiate a free-trade agreement with the United States.

Quotations from the film for discussion

"How do we protect our political and economic interests as a people while living next door to the most powerful nation in the world?"

— James Laxer

"Geography has made us neighbors, history has made us friends, economics has made us partners, and necessity has made us allies. Those, who nature has so joined together, let no man put asunder."

— John Kennedy

President of the United States (1960-1963)

"None of these measures was particularly revolutionary. In fact every major industrialized country, including the United States, has restrictions on foreign control, yet each of these measures drew anger from south of the border, including opposition from the U.S. government, but the fact is that most of the opposition came from Canadian business."

— James Laxer

“We are in some ways closer to the United States and more tied in with them, than Poland or Hungary are with the Soviet Union. We are more in their orbit than they are because they, after all, have the disadvantage of difference in speech and difference in religion, which makes a very great difference. English-speaking Canadians have neither of these.”

— George Grant
Philosopher

THE FILMMAKER: KENT MARTIN

Q: What sort of stand does *In Bed With An Elephant* take?

A: Either we decide to be a country and have integrity and make decisions that are for us and the nation, or we throw in the towel and join the United States. It depends what the people want. But I don't think we can continue playing this kind of wishy-washy back and forth — what you see in Canadian history. For example, Mulroney's in power now and he'll probably be followed by the politics of more nationalism. More than likely. We tend to keep going back and forth between kind of cozying up to the Americans and then creating distance, and cozying up again and creating the distance again. It just becomes a wheel that goes round and round.

We don't have to be anti-American to be ourselves. We just have to recognize what the United States is and that, like any other country in the world, they're out for their own interests. And why shouldn't they be? We have to learn not to expect them to do things out of the goodness of their heart — to kind of expect them to negotiate a free trade deal that doesn't favor them. They're bound to negotiate a deal that favors them. That's how they got to be the most powerful nation in the world.

PART FIVE

AT THE CROSSROADS

The final film in this series zeroes in on the hard decisions Canada will have to make as the global economy changes. These choices are discussed in the light of our economic past, the emergence of new technologies, the role of government, our proximity to the United States, foreign ownership of the Canadian economy, and our ability to be competitive. Japan, Sweden and France are presented as countries that have tried to combine the creation of wealth with social cohesion.

58 min. 23 sec.

C 0187 087

CURRICULUM AREAS

History, Senior Social Studies, Economics, Political Science.

BACKGROUND READING

1. “Feature Report: Industry,” *Canada and the World*, October 1981, pp. 11-20.
2. “The Next Decade,” *Canada and the World*, December 1979, pp. 10-21.
3. “Feature Report: Trends,” *Canada and the World*.
4. “Feature Report: Work,” *Canada and the World*, January 1984, pp. 13-25.
5. “U.S.-Canada Relations,” *Canada and the World*, September 1978, pp. 12-22.
6. “Feature Report: Trade,” *Canada and the World*, September 1986, pp. 13-29.
7. “Feature Report: Canada-U.S. Relations,” *Canada and the World*, March 1983, pp. 11-21.

PRE-SCREENING ACTIVITIES

Brainstorm the following questions with your class. List their responses.

- Ask your students what free trade means to them.
- Ask them whether they think free trade with the U.S. is a good idea.

Questions to focus students' viewing of the film

1. Why is the demand for our resources declining?
2. What are the implications of having 30% of our economy foreign-controlled?
3. Why did previous prime ministers resist a free-trade agreement with the United States?
4. Is the threat of U.S. protectionism the prime reason why Canada is moving towards free trade?
5. List the reasons why Canada is moving towards free trade.
6. How did the following people in the film respond to the free-trade issue?
 - Atlantic fishermen
 - Prairie farmers
 - Union leader Bob White
 - Business people
7. What are non-tariff barriers?
8. What are cultural industries?
9. What is GATT?
10. Why does the film suggest long-term planning is so important? How have the economies of France and Sweden demonstrated this?
11. What areas of specialization has France chosen?
12. In what areas does the film suggest that Canada is a world leader?
13. Why did the Swedes focus on automation?
14. What does the term *co-determination* mean?
15. Why is it vital to spend money on education now?

POST-SCREENING ACTIVITIES

1. Write a report on how free trade may affect the region you live in.
2. Make a list of recommendations for government as they prepare to decide which route the Canadian economy should take.
3. Using a world almanac, compare and contrast Canada's economy with that of the United States, Japan or Sweden.
4. Write a report on new technology and how it is used by industry to increase efficiency.
5. Tour a sawmill, mine, or manufacturing plant.
6. Find out who Canada's trading partners are. What do they buy from us?

7. Write an article describing what the economy of the city or town that you live in will be like in the year 2000.
8. Do you think Canada is at an economic crossroads? Write a research essay expressing your point of view.

Debate topics

- Canada will ultimately benefit from a free-trade agreement with the United States.
- The Canadian government should control foreign investment.
- Canada's regional differences make central planning impossible.

Quotations from the film for discussion

"I remember saying for years that it doesn't matter how much government mismanagement we have, it doesn't matter if we have eleven governments trying to run this country into the ground. I was wrong. They did."

— John Crispo
Economist

"One percent of Japan is foreign-owned. Two percent of the United States is foreign-owned. Two percent of France is foreign-owned. Three percent of Great Britain is foreign-owned. And we Canadians have already got 30 percent of our country foreign-owned."

— Mel Hurtig
Publisher

"I am all for reducing tariffs, but when you start getting into the world of non-tariff barriers and say that you want to eliminate all of these things, well a non-tariff barrier is not an economic barrier — a non-tariff barrier is a political barrier. It's something that a province or a nation has decided, you know, that it wants to do in order to protect a certain segment of the economy that it considers vital."

— Eric Kierans
Professor, Writer

"As a farmer, free trade is not going to do me a whole lot of good because, like grain production, we produce one crop a year. Some parts of the world produce two. We maybe can't compete against Australia, for instance, in wheat production. Maybe we can't compete against the United States and some of the warmer climates in livestock production, but we also have to recognize that if we aren't producing that food, we are going to be at the mercy of these countries. And if that's the decision of our people

in this country, that they don't want to produce food, then let's go for free trade."

— Rudy Kiest
Farmer

"It would encourage Canadian companies to be more productive, to find better ways of doing things. It gives us a tremendous window on the world and I think the feeling is, among people who I listen to on the subject, that if we can't compete with the United States, we really can't compete globally at all. So it may be a necessary evil."

— Barbara Caldwell
Clothing manufacturer

THE FILMMAKER: MOIRA SIMPSON

Q: What did you try to express in *At the Crossroads*?

A: So many people say the economy isn't about them, and they don't relate it to their own lives. I wanted Canadians right across the country to feel that Canada was in the film, geographically. I also wanted Canadians — whether they were businesspersons, farmers, working in a factory, or whatever — to see that it was about their lives. It's really important to me, although I did think it was important not to just have those people involved in it. I also wanted the people who were in the mainstream of making political and economic decisions for the country.

Q: Did the people you interviewed, before and after you started formulating your ideas, generally feel that Canada was indeed at an economic crossroads?

A: The people I was talking to realize there are some real problems in the Canadian economy, but it's important to me that we don't appear to be a failure because, as someone in the film says, "we're not a nation of losers." Of course we're not. I think I've put a lot of success stories in the film. I didn't want to be down on us, saying, "we don't know how to do anything well; we're incompetent; we don't know what we're doing." We're a very proud and successful country in many ways. I think everybody I talked to was really concerned about the problems in the economy and felt that something must be done. A line that I've always liked in the narration is, "We

can always muddle through or we can make some hard choices." I think that was the feeling — that we are at the crossroads, and it really is time that we made some choices and didn't just try to muddle through. But I don't know ... no one has a crystal ball.

RECKONING

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- PART IV**
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- PART V**
At the Crossroads
C 0187 087 58 min. 23 sec.

The *Reckoning* series is available on 16 mm film for loan or purchase and on videocassette for rental (VHS format only) or purchase (any format). Please contact your nearest NFB Regional Centre for booking or purchase information.

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