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**SLID TEST 3B RESULTS:  
IMPACT OF NOTEBOOK**

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

In May 1993, SLID conducted a field test of its income interview (Test 3B). A traditional approach to collecting personal income was taken: a paper questionnaire was sent a few weeks prior to the interview for respondents to complete, followed by a telephone call from the interviewer to collect the information. However, the interviewer used computer-assisted interviewing (CAI) for the collection. Another difference was the inclusion of items on personal assets and debts.

SLID attempted a new approach to questionnaire design by adopting a "lighter" non-bureaucratic look to the form mailed to respondents. The questionnaire, called the SLID Notebook, also included more detailed information on each item for those needing it. Traditionally, this extra information has been provided in a guide separate from the questionnaire.

Another aspect of Test 3B which was different from Statistics Canada's traditional approach to the collection of personal income data was that the SLID Notebook was designed, to the extent possible, for respondents to directly copy information from their income tax return. Explicit references to particular lines on the tax return were listed in the Notebook.

The purpose of this document is to outline the results of an initial evaluation of the effectiveness of the SLID Notebook.



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## 1.

## INTRODUCTION

In May 1993 a test was conducted to evaluate the content and collection methods for data on income and wealth in the Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics (SLID). Data was collected by computer-assisted interviewing (CAI) and one of three collection methods depending on the respondent's preference.

Prior to each interview a questionnaire was sent (called the SLID Notebook). The purpose of the Notebook was to give the respondent time to gather the necessary documents and enter the requested amounts in the Notebook in preparation for the interview. In this way, the respondent would simply have to read out the amounts stated for each question while the interviewer entered them on the computer. Interview time was reduced, and, provided the other members of the household had completed the Notebook, it was easier for the respondent to supply their information over the telephone.

If the respondent had not completed the Notebook before the interview, the interviewer asked whether they could refer to their income tax return. The interviewer then asked them to state which type of tax return this would be (T1 General, T1 Special, T1 Short, or T1-65 plus). When reading out the questions, the interviewer could then direct the respondent to the specific line number (on the appropriate income tax return) which contained the required information.

If the respondent did not have their income tax return or did not wish to refer to it, the interviewer presented the questions in blocks, each block beginning with a general question and containing several related questions. If the respondent answered YES to the general question, the interviewer continued with the sub-questions. If the answer was NO, the interviewer went on to the next block of

questions. Information was therefore collected from each respondent using one of these three methods: the Notebook, income tax return, or block method.

The income and wealth interview comprises three main sections. The first section covers income and includes questions 1 to 35 (except question 25, which is not included in the calculation of total income). The other two sections are about wealth, namely assets (questions 40 to 43, 45, and 47 to 58) and debts (questions 44, 46, and 59 to 61). As questions 25 (net capital gains or losses), 36 (total income) and 37 to 39 (income tax payable) do not pertain to any of the three main sections, they are excluded from this analysis.

The aim of this report is to evaluate the different collection methods used (Notebook, income tax return and block questions). Section 2 examines respondents choice of method for various demographic variables and total income. Section 3 compares the response rates for each section of the questionnaire by method used. Section 4 looks at refusals, "don't knows", \$0.00 amounts, and out-of-range amounts (amounts considered possible but unusual) for each method. The precision of the amounts by method will be examined in the fifth part. The sixth section contains comments from respondents and interviewers on the collection methods used. Conclusions and recommendations are presented at the end.



**2. METHOD USED BY GENDER, AGE, PLACE OF RESIDENCE,  
NUMBER OF ADULTS IN HOUSEHOLD AND TOTAL INCOME**

A total of 1,963 individuals responded to the questions on income and wealth in May 1993. Based on the total number of respondents, the non-response rate was 33%. While all respondents received a Notebook before the interview, only 36.5% completed it. Almost half (46.2%) of the respondents chose the block question method, and answered the questions without using the Notebook or their tax return. It is demonstrated below that the block question method yielded less precise data than the other two methods.

**By gender (Table 1)**

Use of the Notebook was slightly more popular among women than among men, who more often preferred the block method.

**Table 1**  
**Preferred method by gender (%)**

<b>GENDER</b>	<b>METHOD</b>			<b>TOTAL</b>
	Notebook	Income tax return	Block	
Male	35.4	17.1	47.5	100.0
Female	37.5	17.5	45.0	100.0
Total	36.5	17.3	46.2	100.0

**By age (Table 2)**

The 45-to-54 age group showed the strongest preference for the Notebook method, followed by 35- to 44-year-olds. The block method was the most popular option in all other age groups.

**Table 2**  
**Preferred method by age group (%)**

<b>AGE GROUP</b>	<b>METHOD</b>			<b>TOTAL</b>
	Notebook	Income tax return	Block	
15-24	33.2	11.3	55.5	100.0
25-34	32.7	19.6	47.7	100.0
35-44	41.1	20.6	38.3	100.0
45-54	45.0	19.7	35.3	100.0
55-64	36.8	17.1	46.1	100.0
65-74	30.5	16.5	53.0	100.0
75+	32.0	7.0	61.0	100.0
<b>TOTAL</b>	36.5	17.3	46.2	100.0

**By place of residence (Table 3)**

The Notebook was somewhat more popular in Newfoundland than in Southern Ontario. In Ontario, 23% of respondents referred to their tax returns when answering the survey, while in Newfoundland fewer than 10% opted for this method. Over half the respondents in Newfoundland chose the block method, declining the Notebook and tax return options.

**Table 3**

**Methods used by place of residence (%)**

<b>PLACE OF RESIDENCE</b>	<b>METHOD</b>			<b>TOTAL</b>
	Notebook	Income tax return	Block	
Newfoundland	37.1	9.9	53.0	100.0
Southern Ontario	36.0	23.0	41.0	100.0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>36.5</b>	<b>17.3</b>	<b>46.2</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**By number of adults in household (Table 4)**

By cross-tabulating the number of adults in the household with interview method preferences, it can be shown which segment of the population is most likely to select each method and whether all members of the household will select the same method. It can be shown that gender, age and marital status will influence the individual's choice of method.

In households with only one adult, 55.8% of the households selected the block method. Among all one-adult households, 30.2% were single persons 15 to 34 years of age; respondents in this age group were out more often and less cooperative. As well, over a quarter of the one-adult households consisted of persons 65 or over. These individuals generally had fewer sources of income and probably felt less need to complete the Notebook. Another factor: many senior citizens may not file tax returns or they don't fill them out themselves.

In households with two adults, the block method was preferred by the largest group (38.9%), but almost as many (36.1%) chose the Notebook. The tax return method was clearly the least popular (7.1%) among households containing three or more adults, and the block method was chosen by one-third of the households in this group. Two or more methods were used in over 25% of the households containing three or more adults.

**Table 4**

**Methods used by number of adults\* in household (%)**

<b>NUMBER OF ADULTS* IN HOUSEHOLD</b>	<b>METHOD</b>				
	Notebook	Income Tax Return	Block	More than one method	Total
1	22.1	22.1	55.8	---	100.0
2	36.1	13.5	38.9	11.5	100.0
3	31.8	7.1	34.7	26.4	100.0

\* Adults are defined as persons 15 years of age or over. The number of adults is not necessarily equal to the number of respondents.

**By total income (Table 5)**

Respondents' preference for the block method was inversely proportionate to total income. Respondents earning under \$30,000 generally opted for the block method (47.2%), and 60% of that number reported no more than two separate sources of income. More respondents reporting income between \$30,000 and \$59,999 (43.7%) used the Notebook than those earning under \$30,000 (37.5%). The tax return option was selected much more frequently by middle income earners than

persons making under \$30,000 (24.5% versus 15.1%). About half the respondents earning \$60,000 or more used the Notebook. As well, more people in this income bracket chose the tax return option (33.9%).

**Table 5**  
**Methods used by total income\* (%)**

<b>TOTAL INCOME*</b>	<b>METHOD</b>			<b>TOTAL</b>
	Notebook	Income tax return	Block	
1,000-9,999	38.7	10.5	50.8	100.0
10,000-19,999	35.2	17.6	47.2	100.0
20,000-29,999	38.4	22.5	39.1	100.0
30,000-39,999	42.2	25.3	32.5	100.0
40,000-49,999	45.7	23.6	30.7	100.0
50,000-59,999	43.5	24.2	32.3	100.0
60,000 or more	49.2	33.9	16.9	100.0
<b>TOTAL</b>	39.2	17.7	43.1	100.0
<b>Average income</b>	<b>\$20,697</b>	<b>\$25,827</b>	<b>\$15,896</b>	<b>\$19,538</b>

\* Excluding income of persons for whom no amount was recorded (refusal, "don't know" or out-of-range amount (possible but unusual)).

**3. RESPONSE RATE FOR EACH QUESTION BY METHOD**

**All questions (income, assets and debts) (Table 6)**

On average, respondents who used their income tax returns to answer questions reported the greatest number of income sources with a valid amount. The average number of sources was somewhat lower among persons using the Notebook, but

this number was still higher than the average number of responses from the block question group. It was easier for respondents using the block method to answer NO to a series of questions grouped together under a general question. Individuals who chose this method may not have wanted to devote much time to the survey. It is also possible that this group did not take the time to complete the Notebook because they had little or no income, assets or debts, could not read, or did not understand how to complete the Notebook. Also, they may have felt the interview was too long and did not give the interviewer their full attention. Thus it is not surprising that the survey indicated fewer income sources for these respondents.

**Table 6**

**Average number of valid amounts by section and method**

<b>METHOD</b>	<b>AVERAGE NUMBER OF VALID AMOUNTS*</b>			
	<b>INCOME</b>	<b>ASSETS</b>	<b>DEBTS</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Notebook	2.5	2.3	0.8	5.6
Income tax return	2.9	2.2	1.0	6.1
Block	2.0	1.5	0.6	4.1
<b>TOTAL</b>	2.4	1.9	0.7	5.0

\* Excluding persons who replied YES to the question but refused to give an amount, said they didn't know, gave amount \$0.00, or gave an amount that was possible but unusual. If the amounts that were possible but unusual are included, the average number of affirmative replies was 5.8 for the Notebook, 6.2 for the tax return, and 4.2 for the block method, for an average of 5.1.

### **By section**

Examining the average number of valid responses in each questionnaire section (income, assets and debts) reveals the same pattern, ie. a higher average number for persons who used the Notebook or tax return method.

Some sources of income or wealth were reported by a large number of persons, for example, wages and salaries before deductions (59.3%), home equity (48.4%), and car value (50.8%). In contrast, for some questions very few respondents reported an amount. Only 0.1% of individuals answered YES to the questions regarding Quebec family allowance, birth allowance and mother's allowance and net income from partnerships. But because the sample was drawn from Southern Ontario and Newfoundland, it is not surprising that so few respondents reported income from Quebec family allowance, birth allowance and mother's allowance. As for net income from partnerships, few people understand this concept, which is taken directly from the tax return.

### **Valid amounts by method (Table 7)**

As the block question method was preferred by the largest number of respondents, one might have expected to receive the largest number of valid amounts from that group. But in fact, the largest number of valid amounts was generated by the Notebook method, followed by the block and tax return methods. The Notebook yielded 41.1% of all valid amounts, followed by the block method at 38.0%. This suggests that respondents who used the Notebook had more income sources and more diversified wealth (and it was therefore easier for them to complete the Notebook). Another reason could be that these individuals had time to think about each question and reported income sources that they might have forgotten if they had not completed the Notebook.

If the three methods had been used equally, the distribution of valid responses would be 38.2% for the tax return method and just 26.1% for the block method. Valid responses from the Notebook method would have amounted to 35.7% of all responses.

**Table 7**

**Valid amounts by method (number and %)**

METHOD	VALID AMOUNTS							
	INCOME		ASSETS		DEBTS		TOTAL	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Notebook	1830	39.5	1621	43.2	592	41.0	4043	41.1
Income tax return	967	20.9	761	20.3	323	22.3	2051	20.9
Block	1836	39.6	1371	36.5	531	36.7	3738	38.0
TOTAL	4633	100.0	3753	100.0	1446	100.0	9832	100.0

The method preferred by the respondent had little influence on the proportion of valid amounts provided in each section of the questionnaire. The Notebook method yielded the highest proportion of valid responses in the assets and debts sections, while in the income section the proportions were the same for the block and Notebook method. Income was reported equally well by block method users as Notebook users, but in the wealth section, affirmative responses with valid amounts were fewer among those who opted for the block method.

Respondents who used the block method answered the questions in the income section without too much difficulty because this concept is perhaps more familiar. But for the questions on wealth, respondents who completed the Notebook may



have taken the time to read the definitions and examples, thus understanding the concepts and being better prepared to answer. For the respondents who selected the block or tax return method, it was much more difficult to complete the interview.

If all three methods had been used equally, the greatest number of valid responses by section of the questionnaire would have come from the tax return method. For each of the three sections, the tax return method would produce between 37% and 40% of all valid responses, the Notebook method would produce between 34% and 38%, and the block method would account for only 25% to 27% of all valid responses. The Notebook and tax return methods therefore appear to give the highest quality data.

#### **4. REFUSALS, "DON'T KNOWS" AND OUT-OF-RANGE AMOUNTS**

##### **Questions**

No respondents refused to answer a question on income, assets or debts. One said they did not know whether they were an owner (Notebook), and another did not know whether they had any registered retirement savings plans (RRSPs) (block). In the first case, the interviewer may have recorded a "don't know" response at the wrong time even though the respondent said either YES or NO. In the second case, the person may not have known whether they had an RRSP, especially if they were replying for another person.

## **Amounts**

A total of 1,130 amounts were excluded. "Don't knows" represented 41.8% of the exclusions, zero amounts, 27.7%, refusals, 16.1%, and out-of-range amounts, 14.4%. It is plausible that the zero amounts were the result of errors by the interviewer rather than the respondent. While intending to press the down arrow to go to the next question, the interviewer may have hit ENTER instead, thus recording YES for this question without entering an amount. It is also possible that the respondent answered YES to the question but refused to give an amount or said they didn't know, and that the interviewer forgot to press F5 or F6. Therefore, these answers are not considered in the analysis below. As for out-of-range amounts, they are not necessarily incorrect, but they are outside the limits set for this survey. Given the large number of valid responses (9,832), it is felt that a relatively small proportion of refusals (182), "don't knows" (472) and out-of-range amounts (163) were received.

### **By section (Table 8)**

Almost half of the exclusions (refusals, "don't knows" and out-of-range amounts) were in the assets section, even this section contained only 14 questions. Of the 3,753 valid responses in this section, refusals (85) and out-of-range amounts (74) were relatively rare, although the number of "don't knows" was higher (220). This section contained the question that elicited more refusals and "don't knows" than any other question in the questionnaire. Half of all refusals and more than one-quarter of the "don't knows" in the assets section were given for the question about bank balances, guaranteed investment certificates and other savings.

The section on debts also yielded a significant number of refusals and "don't knows". This section contained only five questions but it accounted for 25.8% of

the refusals, 9.5% of the "don't knows", and 28.2% of the out-of-range amounts. In this section, the question on credit card balances, time-payment plans and other consumer credit accounts obtained the highest number of refusals (19) and "don't knows" (12). Considering the total number of valid responses in this section (1,446), the number of exclusions was relatively high.

In the income section, the number of refusals (50), "don't knows" (207) and out-of-range amounts (43) was low compared with the total valid responses (4,633). The highest number of refusals in this section (14) was given for the question about wages and salaries before deductions. The largest numbers of "don't knows" (30 to 36) were given for the questions on bank interest, Canada Savings Bonds, other bonds and investment certificates, GST credits, and wages and salaries before deductions.

**Table 8**

**Refusals, missing responses and out-of-range amounts by question**

SECTION	Refusals		"Don't know"		Out-of-range amounts		TOTAL	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Income	50	27.5	207	43.9	43	26.4	300	36.7
Assets	85	46.7	220	46.6	74	45.4	379	46.4
Debts	47	25.8	45	9.5	46	28.2	138	16.9
<b>TOTAL</b>	182	100.0	472	100.0	163	100.0	817	100.0

**By method (Table 9)**

Most exclusions were generated by persons using the block method. Therefore, to minimize the number of exclusions, the block method should be improved, since it accounted for so many of them. As for refusals, these were higher in number and proportion among persons who completed the Notebook than for those who opted for the tax return method. On the other hand, missing answers were more common among individuals using the tax return than those who completed the Notebook.

Although the same limits were set for the three methods, there were more out-of-range amounts among Notebook users. This does not necessarily mean that these amounts are incorrect, but rather that they are unusual enough to fall outside the set limits. Thus these responses are not an indication of the quality of data collected through the Notebook method. They merely indicate that the limits should be revised.

**Table 9**

**Refusals, missing responses and out-of-range amounts by method**

METHOD	Refusals		"Don't know"		Out-of-range amounts		TOTAL	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Notebook	35	19.2	32	6.8	83	50.9	150	18.4
Income tax return	9	5.0	77	16.3	36	22.1	122	14.9
Block	138	75.8	363	76.9	44	27.0	545	66.7
<b>TOTAL</b>	182	100.0	472	100.0	163	100.0	817	100.0

Given that the three methods are not used equally, it is difficult to conclude from this table which is the best approach. If we assume that the three methods are used equally, two-thirds would arise using the block method, 21% would come from the Notebook method and only 12% would come from the tax return method. These results are not surprising given that people who took the time to complete the Notebook or retrieve their tax return to answer the questions were probably more favourable to answering the survey, and therefore refused less often.

As for "don't knows", the distribution would be different, but again the block method would account for the largest proportion (60%). The tax return method would account for 34% and the Notebook, only 7%. Again, this is not surprising given that people who filled out the Notebook had more time to consider each source whereas those who used the tax return would not do so until the interviewer asked the question. As well, not all information is on the tax return.

Finally, the proportion of out-of-range amounts (falling outside the ranges set for the system's edits) is higher for people using the Notebook (43%) than those using the tax return method (39%) or block method (18%). It may be that the amounts given by people completing the Notebook are in fact valid because they have taken more time over it. It may also be that the amounts were improperly entered onto the computer.

By assuming that the three methods are used equally, it is easier to draw conclusions about which method is the best. After analyzing refusals, "don't knows" and out-of-range amounts it appears that the Notebook and the tax return methods give the best quality data.

## **5. PRECISION OF RESPONSES BY METHOD**

Response precision differs according to the method. Three levels of precision were identified: amounts including cents (\$1,512.34), amounts rounded to the nearest dollar (\$1,512.00), and amounts rounded to the nearest ten dollars (\$1,510.00).

Of the valid amounts provided for all questions, 12.5% included cents, 30.0% were rounded to the nearest dollar, and 37.7% were rounded to the nearest ten dollars. For all levels, response precision was higher when respondents used the Notebook or tax return. As response precision for Notebook users was almost as high as for tax return users, most respondents who completed the Notebook probably referred to their tax returns. Amounts provided by block respondents were much less exact. This is not surprising, as block respondents had to answer from memory, while Notebook and tax return respondents referred to actual records. This indicates that Notebook users spent some time and effort preparing for the interview and may have referred to their records.

### **Questionnaire section**

Response precision also varied from section to section within the questionnaire. Amounts provided for income were much more precise than for wealth. In the income section, one-quarter of the amounts were exact to the cent, 60% to the dollar, and 70% to the nearest ten dollars. The proportion of amounts accurate to the nearest ten dollars was almost 90% among respondents using the Notebook or tax return. Still, a very high proportion of amounts provided by block respondents--50%--were specified to the nearest ten dollars.

**Table 10**

**Proportion of valid amounts with cents,  
rounded to nearest dollar and nearest ten dollars  
by method and questionnaire section (%)**

<b>METHOD</b>	<b>With cents</b>	<b>Rounded to dollar</b>	<b>Rounded to ten dollars</b>
<b>OVERALL QUESTIONNAIRE</b>			
Notebook	17.8	36.7	43.1
Income tax return	19.6	38.1	45.2
Block	2.8	18.3	27.8
<b>TOTAL</b>	12.5	30.0	37.7
<b>INCOME</b>			
Notebook	37.9	76.6	86.1
Income tax return	41.0	77.9	88.4
Block	5.3	35.8	50.9
<b>TOTAL</b>	25.6	60.7	72.6
<b>ASSETS</b>			
Notebook	1.3	3.2	5.7
Income tax return	0.5	2.4	5.9
Block	0.2	0.9	4.6
<b>TOTAL</b>	0.7	2.2	5.3
<b>DEBTS</b>			
Notebook	1.0	5.1	12.5
Income tax return	0.6	3.1	8.4
Block	0.4	2.8	7.9
<b>TOTAL</b>	0.7	3.8	9.9

In the section on assets, the precision of the figures given, even to the nearest ten dollars, was low for all methods. Precision was slightly better, but still modest, in the debts section. These results were predictable because some questions on assets and debts were difficult to respond to without extensive research, and respondents could give only approximate amounts.

**6. USE OF THE NOTEBOOK**

Interviewers asked the last respondent in each household several questions concerning the Notebook. Regarding the question as to why the respondent did or did not use the Notebook, it was observed in the field that interviewers often indulged in interpretation. Interpreters were not told to read out the possible answers; they were instructed to let the respondent reply in their own words, then to interpret the answer. Of the 306 Notebook respondents who answered these questions, many said they wanted to help or do their part, and they thought they were required to complete the Notebook. Respondents were allowed to give more than one reason.

**Table 11**

**Reasons for using or not using the Notebook**

<b>Did you use the carnet?</b>	<b>Why?</b>	<b>#</b>
Yes (306)	Wanted to help/do their share	137
	Thought they were required to reply	111
	Thought the survey was interesting	22
	Thought it would not take much time	15
	Other reasons	19
No (588)	Did not receive the carnet	247
	Did not have time	140
	Forgot to complete it	72
	It looked too difficult	36
	It was too long	20
	Did not have their tax return	15
	Other reasons	123



Individuals who had not used the Notebook were asked if they would complete it if they were selected for another survey. Most (315) said they would. Those who said they would not complete it gave various reasons. Only 10 said they would be more inclined to complete the Notebook if changes were made.

**Table 12**

**Reasons for not wishing to use the Notebook in future**

<b>Would you complete the Notebook if you were selected for another survey?</b>	<b>Why?</b>	<b>#</b>
Yes (315)		
Maybe (156)		
No (109)	I am not interested	37
	I see nothing in it for me	20
	I would probably not have the time	18
	I would not know how to complete it	16
	Other reasons	38

Interviewers also commented on the methods used. Some said the Notebook had no effect on the response rate in Newfoundland. In Toronto it was reported that the effect of the Notebook was unknown. Eleven of the 17 interviewers said most respondents did not like the Notebook and did not use it. Interviewers had been instructed to encourage participants to complete the Notebook and call them again later. Interviewers preferred the Notebook method because it was faster and it enabled them to avoid asking delicate questions, which made the experience more agreeable for both parties.

Some respondents commented that the Notebook looked costly, while others found it too lengthy and intimidating. Some said it could be condensed to one page. In fact, the majority of respondents who filled out the Notebook took less than 15 minutes to do it.

Of all the respondents who filled out the Notebook, 69% used their tax return, 32% used their T4 slips and 24% referred to bank statements. However, the interviewers felt they obtained a higher response rate when respondents referred to their tax records.

Although opinions differ, it appears generally that respondents did not like the Notebook and declined to use it. Several were intimidated by its length. Given the unpopularity and low utilization rate of the Notebook, the cost of using it may not be justified. More respondents might use it if it were condensed.

## **7. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is not clear that the Notebook worked well, as just over one-third of respondents elected this option. We should determine why so few participants completed it and if more individuals could be encouraged to do so.

Interviewers' comments and the replies to questions concerning the use of the Notebook indicate that it would be difficult to persuade more respondents to use the Notebook. Although some individuals inevitably will try to avoid being interviewed by saying, truthfully or untruthfully, that they did not receive the Notebook, every effort should be made to ensure that all participants receive a Notebook before the interview phase begins. If all respondents who did not receive a Notebook had actually received and completed it, we would have had fewer "don't knows" and refusals to provide amounts, and the information we

received would have been more accurate. Notebook users reported a relatively large number of amounts, and about 40% of the amounts reported in the income section were precise to the cent. Few refusals and "don't knows" were registered for this group.

The income tax return method, which was chosen by 17% of respondents, also produced very good results. This option yielded the highest number of sources of income, assets and debts. The number of refusals to provide an amount was even lower than for the Notebook (9 versus 35), while the number of "don't knows" was over twice as high (77 versus 32). These responses were very seldom heard from the tax return group.

It is recommended that these three methods be retained, but the block question method requires modification. The Notebook and tax return methods together yield precise data and very low rates of refusal and "don't know" replies. The Notebook should also be condensed, but the tax return method seems to require no adjustments. Responses appeared to be accurate, but they should be checked against tax records.

The block question method should be revised. The rates of refusals and "don't knows" were relatively high and the data received were less exact. On the other hand, this method yields some data and, even if these data are less precise, it provided as much data on income as did the Notebook. The questionnaire should contain only one block of questions (on self-employed workers' income), and all other questions should be asked separately, especially if the survey does not include questions on wealth every year.

In conclusion, the Notebook should be retained but condensed. The tax return method should also be retained, but the contact letter should promote this option

by encouraging respondents to have their tax returns on hand for the interview. Finally, the block question method also accounted for some data, but they were of lower quality. Except for the block of questions on self-employment, all questions should be presented directly.

All amounts falling outside the set limits should be checked to ensure that they are possible although unusual, and not totally unrealistic. If they are indeed considered possible but unusual, the upper limits should be revised to include more of these amounts in the acceptable range, especially for the section on assets.