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A CONVERSATION WITH DR. PETER LIEFTINCK

WASHINGTON, D.C.

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CONVERSATIONS ABOUT GEORGE WOODS
AND THE WORLD BANK

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OLIVER: May we begin our conversation by my asking if you would say a bit about your background, the war years, your work with the Dutch government and how you came to the Bank and the Fund in the first place.

LIEFTINCK: I mentioned in passing already that I spent the war years in German Concentration Camps, first in Buechenwald, later in what today is Poland — very cold winters, but fortunately I survived.

It happened one day in one of these camps that I saw a guard dropping a newspaper. You may imagine that, after so many years of isolation and no intellectual feeding, as soon as the man had turned his back and disappeared, I ran to the place where he dropped that paper and picked it up. I hid it under my jacket, my prisoner's jacket, and I went back to my barracks and opened the paper. It was a small, local paper, and imagine I found in that paper a little paragraph about a conference at Bretton Woods by the enemies (German papers spoke of "the enemies") where they had decided to establish after the war a World Bank and an International Monetary Fund. This episode was late in the fall of '44; it was after Bretton Woods.

OLIVER: That was an extraordinary incident wasn't it?

LIEFTINCK: Now, I was a man of confidence with a group of prisoners

which entitled me to write to the International Red Cross in Geneva, and I wrote to Geneva to request as much information on that Bretton Woods conference as they could obtain. Three months later, I received a Red Cross package in camp. Imagine almost starving, or really starving, and receiving a package of something. I opened the package: no food, no cigarettes, but papers, documents; the minutes and the conclusions of the Bretton Woods conference.

OLIVER: That's amazing also. That was food for thought.

LIEFTINCK: That was food for thought. I started studying those papers. I started lecturing to my co-prisoners. Then, in June '45, I came back to Holland and was invited to join the first post-war cabinet as a minister. I accepted with great personal hesitation. After 4 1/2 years, you don't feel well prepared to be a Finance Minister of a country that had been looted out: it was in a most terrible shape both financially and economically, but it was my mentality that somebody had to do this job, so let me try. In that capacity of Finance Minister, when Holland joined the World Bank and the Monetary Fund, I had to present the agreements to the House to be ratified. At that occasion, it became clear that I knew more about Bretton Woods than anybody in all of Holland.

OLIVER: Because you had read more papers.

LIEFTINCK: Because I had read all the papers and studied them and digested them. As minister of one of the members governments, I automatically became a Governor of the World Bank. For seven years of my tenure as Finance Minister, I was a Governor of the World Bank, and

that meant that once a year I attended the Annual Meeting. I attended the Inaugural Meeting at Savannah at the end of February, beginning of March, '46 and I attended all the meetings after. As a governor, I got to know Eugene Black who, soon after the inauguration of the Bank, became President. I negotiated with him the World Bank reconstruction loan to the Netherlands of \$200 million dollars. He took an interest in the creation of Indonesia, and he was interested in whether the World Bank could be helpful in giving Indonesia a start in development.

In the course of our contacts, I mentioned to Gene Black that, when I had completed my work in Holland, I would like to work in the international field. He must have kept that in mind, because, in June '52, when I was in my ministerial cabinet in the Hague, I received a telephone call from Washington. Gene Black was speaking. He said, "Peter, you once told me that when you give up your present function, you might want to work in the international field. Is that still true?" I said, "Yes".

"I am looking for somebody as my representative to be willing to go to Turkey, because I have big problems with Turkey. We have made a number of loans to Turkey, and nothing happens. The projects do not start; there is no disbursement. I also have trouble because the Turks have not settled their war debts. They were not participants in the war, but they had contracted loans during the war years, and they are in default. I cannot continue making loans to a country that is in default. I need somebody who is willing to go to Turkey as my representative, not just for a visit but to supervise the execution of

the loans we have made and of the projects we have financed and to give some guidance on how to manage their international affairs." "Well," I said, "if you think I could do that. . .," and we agreed in principal that I would go into the World Bank."

It was the year of the elections of '52. After the elections, the cabinet always resigns and gives the Queen the opportunity of appointing a new Premier. I told my Prime Minister that I would not be available after the election. I will not continue in this fashion; I am going to join the World Bank. So I became special representative of the President of the World Bank in Turkey. I worked there for two years — from September '52 to September '54; then it came to an end.

At that time, the World Bank started taking an interest in Syria and Jordan and to a limited extent also in Lebanon. Before becoming active in such a country, at that time, the World Bank sent a general economic survey mission to explore the resources, make some planning for development, and then fit in one or more special projects. I was already in the Middle East in my work in Turkey, and I was asked by the World Bank to handle the General Economic Survey Mission to Syria. I performed that function. It took about 9 months. Then I went to Jordan for the same purpose. Next I landed in Lebanon for the establishment of a planning organization, but, at that time, there was a vacancy on the Bank Board to be occupied by the Dutch group and its associates, which, at that time were Yugoslavia and Israel. So, I performed these functions in Syria and Jordan and spent a few months in Lebanon, and then in '54-55 I came to Washington.

At that time, Gene Black was still President, and I continued working there during the Presidency of George Woods. I finally retired in '74 from the World Bank, so I served 19 years as an Executive Director. I continued in the Monetary Fund for four more years, until '78, and that was the end of my work in the Fund.

OLIVER: You must have been second only to Luis Machado of Cuba in the longevity with which you served as an Executive Director.

LIEFTINCK: Machado was the Dean of the Bank Board for many years. He had a long tenure in the Bank. I succeeded him as Dean and I served as Dean of the Board for many years. In a way, it was exceptional. As you know, most Executive Directors perform between lower and higher jobs. They mostly remain in the public service in other international organizations and in higher functions, or they become members of their own national governments. I was already 53 years old when I joined the Board of the Bank. I was over 70 when I retired. I enjoyed that work very much, but for me it was rather the end of a career than a mid period.

OLIVER: You were with the University before World War II.

LIEFTINCK: Yes I was Professor of Economics at the Erasmus University in Rotterdam from '33 to the outbreak of the war.

OLIVER: Well, I would say you had a long and noble career.

LIEFTINCK: Very interesting, very interesting. The most fascinating experience I had as an Executive Director with the World Bank was the assignment about which perhaps Sim Alderwereld has spoken to you. I don't know whether he has mentioned it.

OLIVER: You tell me, and I will tell you whether he has or not.

LIEFTINCK: Pakistan.

OLIVER: We didn't talk very much about Pakistan, and I would like to learn more.

LIEFTINCK: Well, that again has a history. I think it was in '60 that, through the good offices of the World Bank, the Indus Water Treaty was concluded between India and Pakistan -- separation of old British India into two independent states. The friction between them necessitated an arrangement with respect to the waters of the Indus and its tributaries. There was an awful quarrel between India and Pakistan on the subject, because the frontier runs through the whole water system that irrigates parts of India and Pakistan. It almost led to a war between India and Pakistan, but through good intermediaries and the good services of the World Bank, an agreement was reached between the two countries, the Indus Water Agreement. (Here I must pay tribute to Bill Iliff, who later was knighted -- I think in immediate connection with the work on this agreement. He was a great negotiator and conciliator, and he managed to bring the two countries to agreement in the water treaty.)

Already, at the time of the conclusion of that treaty, Pakistan had made it clear to the World Bank and to a number of friendly countries that unless they were assisted in the development of the waters of the mainstem of the Indus River, the partition of the waters would be insufficient to keep their population alive and allow for further development of the country; so the Bank's involvement did not

end with the Indus Water Treaty but led to further conversations between the Bank and Pakistan about further development of the resources which had been practically cut off by that partition.

Pakistan thought that the only way to satisfy their water needs would be to build a dam across the Indus river, comparable to the Nile-Aswan Dam. The Indus had tremendous water, but the World Bank was reluctant. They had made a preliminary survey and doubted whether it was technically feasible and economically justifiable. But the Pakistani continued to insist. There was for a number of years an unsolved dispute between the Bank and Pakistan. Finally, President Ayub of Pakistan and George Woods, President of the World Bank, endeavored to solve the dispute and decided on a course to solve it.

They agreed on the appointment of what they called an independent expert to write a report, to make a study of the technical feasibility and economic justification of a dam across Indus, and, at the same time, following that, to make a study of the economic development of the water and power resources of Pakistan. George Woods invited me to undertake that study. I accepted. He gave me as terms of reference five lines for which the Bank put up \$5 million, and Woods said, "Now you go ahead. We want you to submit a report on the feasibility of Tarabella and the justification of the dam within one year. You can take some more time in the full study of the water and power development."

OLIVER: You were an Executive Director at the time?

LIEFTINCK: I was an Executive Director. It was very unusual.

OLIVER: Very unusual.

LIEFTINCK: Very unusual that an Executive Director was given a function of that character. I felt very honored.

OLIVER: You retained your seat as Executive Director?

LIEFTINCK: Yes, yes. I spent about three years on that subject: one year to prepare the main report of Tarabella and a second year to study development of the water resources. The Bank decided to make the report available in book form. The report was 24 volumes.

OLIVER: I hope you didn't write every word!

LIEFTINCK: No, no, no. How did I tackle the problem? I recruited very capable staff members of the World Bank, among whom was Bob Sadov, an agricultural economist. I hired three big consultant firms, and agreed to a contract with them to make some studies. One was Alexander Gibbs and Partners, London. Another was Stone and Webster for the Electric Power part of the study. The third one was Illico, a Dutch agricultural development firm. We established headquarters at Lahore.

The study was coordinated by Alexander Gibbs and my team. I instructed these consultant firms what to do and how to do it. We coordinated the research, and, after a year, we brought out a report which came out favorable. The investment required \$800 million dollars. The economic return would be about 8 percent. That was acceptable. On that basis, the World Bank undertook to finance the project together with a number of contributing countries -- Britain and the Netherlands and a few other countries. India also participated.

The money became available and the project was executed. When the tenders were opened, the combined total amount for which the various contractors undertook to do the work was just under \$800 million.

OLIVER: \$800 million?

LIEFTINCK: And the project was executed rapidly and successfully. Some mishaps occurred in the construction period. Under pressure of the agriculturalists, they opened the dams too early, and that caused damage, so additional costs were incurred. But on the whole, it did very well from the start. Millions of acres were better irrigated than before, and a huge power plant was built which provides most of Pakistan with power. You may imagine that, when the price of energy during the oil crisis went up 4 to 6 fold, energy comparable with the hydro power of that plant became so expensive that if one could attribute to the hydro power of Tarabella the same price as the new energy price, the return became tremendous.

OLIVER: It turned out to be a very good investment.

LIEFTINCK: It turned out to be an excellent investment. Well, nobody could have foreseen that.

OLIVER: Inflation sometimes does that if you have fixed interest.

LIEFTINCK: I remain always very grateful to George Woods that he gave me that assignment. It was a fascinating experience. I travelled every three months to Lahore, presided over meetings with the consultants and worked together here in Washington with the group of immediate collaborators. As a matter of fact, I had to conduct public relations with the Pakistani government and authorities, the Water and

Power Resources Administration.

OLIVER: I understand that the Bank had already been interested in lending to India and Pakistan, but that George Woods as a person was particularly interested in India and Pakistan.

LIEFTINCK: Yes, he was. As I mentioned before you put on the machine, George Woods introduced non-project lending to India.

OLIVER: Did George Woods do it or did Bernie Bell do it or did the two do it between them?

LIEFTINCK: Well, who on the side of the staff proposed it, I don't know. It could have been Bernie Bell, but I never researched who did it. I do remember that George Wood put the proposal to the Board to make a non-project loan -- a general purpose loan, as it was called -- to India. I was rather unhappy about it. The Charter of the Bank says that, as a rule, the Bank should make project loans and only in exceptional cases do otherwise. I didn't feel that the case of India was a very strong one. India was in need of assistance. Of that there is no doubt. But whether the World Bank should finance spare parts and things like that -- machinery or even raw materials -- not attached to specific projects just to fill a gap in the payment capacity of the country's foreign exchange availability, that I felt was not the right thing to do.

OLIVER: Had you studied the international lending during the inter-war period yourself so that you had some sympathy for the framers of the Bretton Woods agreements when they said that loans should be predominately for the purpose of projects?

LIEFTINCK: Yes, I had studied the history of the Bank and the Fund and the separation of the functions as intended by the founding fathers. They felt that balance-of-payments financing should remain Fund business and should be short term, not longer than 3 - 5 years. The World Bank should finance developmental projects. They should be bankable projects. They should add to the foreign-exchange earning capacity or save foreign-exchange expenditures. Preferably (I am not so much in favor of import substitution financing) they should add to the foreign-exchange earning capacity of the developing countries. I would like to apply these rules rather strictly, and so I thought that the Bank should not deviate from the original purpose and intention: it's financing should be attached to specific projects.

OLIVER: Did the whole Indian negotiation create quite a bit of discussion at the level of the Executive Directors?

LIEFTINCK: Not too much. Not too much. No. As a matter of fact, the Indian representative, and representatives of other developing countries were very much in favor. They saw an opening which they could make use of later themselves. The British were sympathetic toward India. The American Executive Director -- I wouldn't be surprised if George Woods talked to him before he submitted the proposal to the Board.

OLIVER: It would have been a politic thing to do, I suppose.

LIEFTINCK: Yes, yes. So there was not much opposition. I remember I raised the problem and said, "Is this the right use of the Bank's resources? What end-use supervision is possible in this case? What

institution building is attached to this kind of lending?" (I think it is important that the World Bank assist in institution building by setting organizational requirements in connection with the execution of projects.) These were my main objections to it. I don't remember a fight in the Board. There were critics and critical observations. OLIVER: Were there ever what would you call fights on the Board -- real controversies, differences of opinion?

LIEFTINCK: No. There were some political problems sometimes. I remember the World Bank made a loan to Egypt for the enlargement of the Suez Canal, and I was requested by Israel, one of my countries, to oppose that project, because an international organization of which Israel is a member should have the guarantee that the project should be beneficial not only to the country involved but to all member countries; and Israel was refused the use of the Suez Canal.

OLIVER: Would that have been considered a political objection, or an economic objection?

LIEFTINCK: It was a political objection. Yes. So I raised this objection as a matter of fact, and I asked my own authorities, the Dutch authorities, how they felt about it. We are a sea-faring nation, and we like an enlargement of the Suez Canal, whoever finances it. So, in my speech, I mentioned the objections of Israel, but I supported the World Bank.

OLIVER: There was an article in the New York Times shortly before the Rio conference in 1967 which alleged that George Woods was having some difficulties with his Board and with some of his senior staff. May I

ask you about that?

LIEFTINCK: I have difficulty remembering that. There were people among the staff who did not like general purpose lending, and they may have spoken up. I don't know. Among them, I have very many contacts. I have very good relationships with the staff; they often spoke openly to me about the Board. I remember there were a number of staff who didn't like this at all, but I don't remember a general apprehension on the side of the staff, or a dispute between the staff and George Woods. There could have been, I don't know.

In connection with IDA lending, I think George Woods was rather generous toward India. IDA funds were directed more towards India and less to Latin American countries. That might have caused some apprehensions. I'm not sure about it. Would you care for another cup of tea?

OLIVER: No, thank you. I think I have enough tea.

LIEFTINCK: George Woods was very sensitive to everything that related to the United States government, not because of the World Bank itself, but IDA was highly dependent on the IDA contributions by the United States. Other countries had made it clear that if the United States did not pay its share into IDA replenishments, they would not do it either. So that made George, in my opinion, very sensitive not to displease the United States government. When he got a signal from the United States government that he should not make a loan or not make a special kind of loan, he was ready to respond -- perhaps more than staff wanted. I take from outside of the Bank operations an

illustration of his sensitivity.

In those years, Pierre Paul Schweitzer, who was the Managing Director of the Fund, felt strongly that something should be done to mix the various nationalities and races among the staff in the Fund and that some joint recreational facility might be helpful. Such things more often existed in Europe than here. So he sponsored strongly the creation the Bretton Woods Recreational Center. (It is a beautiful recreation center which has become a great success and which really serves the purpose. They have a wonderful arrangement that the contribution varies according to salary, so a secretary can be a member for a few dollars a month, while a higher paid Executive Director has to pay \$40-50 dollars a month.)

Schweitzer contacted George Woods, and said this should be done by the Bank and Fund together. Many of the staff members know each other. They are befriended. But George Woods turned him down. He said that if the Congress finds out that Bank money has been used for an investment in a recreation center, "I will get in trouble with the Congress and the Administration, and that will hurt my capacity to raise money for IDA."

OLIVER: I think he was probably right, don't you?

LIEFTINCK: Well, there was that childish criticism in the Administration and the Congress that they already felt the salaries were higher than U. S. civil servant salaries. They might have criticized Bank participation, although the fact is that the total investment was less than a million dollars.

OLIVER: Could you comment on the tranquility, or lack of tranquility, of the meetings of the Board per se. I know the number of meetings increased in the second half of the Woods administration because there was more business to do. As the IDA replenishment issue became more difficult toward the end of '67, were the meetings of the Board conducted with the same degree of tranquility as they had been when Gene Black was president, or did they change somewhat?

LIEFTINCK: I think it depended at that time, and it has continued to depend to a large extent, on the personalities of the Executive Directors. If you have Executive Directors who consider this a sinecure, a pleasant period of their lives, and they live in Washington and are not with other international organizations, they don't care much; they don't participate fully in the policy making. If you have ambitious, highly interested people who come from the development assistance administrations in their own countries and take a very keen interest in developing countries and talk about the New World Order and all those idealistic things, they become vocal in the Board. They press their views. So it depends in a particular generation exactly what people are on the board.

OLIVER: Of course.

LIEFTINCK: Gene Black had a little more of an autocratic way of presiding than George Woods, who had a more democratic way. So it may be that under George Woods, there was more awareness by the members of the Board of the needs of development financing than during the earlier years. That brought to a certain extent different people on the Board

and it brought a chairman who was more democratic than Gene Black.

I had the highest regard for Gene Black, but it was considered a little unusual to go against Gene Black, to quarrel with him. George Woods did not give the impression of a man who would take it amiss if you expressed a different opinion, so I do think that discussions may have been more lively under George Woods. I personally experienced both periods, and I don't think it changed very much. I always participated in the discussions and took a very great interest also in the method of project appraisal and project comparison and development planning and so forth. I always commented on the staff reports and on the project policies, but I don't remember more intense discussions or more differences of opinion appearing under George Woods than Gene Black.

OLIVER: How about under Robert McNamara, were there any changes? The number and the variety of projects were increasing.

LIEFTINCK: Well, as a matter of fact, there was a tremendous change. (Do you mind if I smoke?) I got to know Bob McNamara quite well. When he assumed his presidency, at one of the first meetings he presided over, he proposed an addition of 150 staff in the budget -- to 850. This was completely new to the Bank under Gene Black and George Woods. There was some increase of staff, but always very limited -- 20-30 a year, a little more, but all of a sudden not 150 new staff. And it was not well substantiated.

I took the position that I was surprised by this jump in the staff. I thought it would not matter much if we agreed on an increase

of 75, and after half a year with full justification, an additional 75, but we would not make that large a jump at once. His reaction in the chair was, "Mr. Liefstinck, if you think that way, I can't run this institution." He was rough. He said the Board had to accept it "because it has to follow my intentions and my policies." After the meeting, I went to his office. "This is not the way to cooperate. In these matters, I am rather conservative. I have always fought overstaffing and bureaucracy in my own country. I think that is a primary task. The Board has to share the responsibilities of how we spent money for operational organizations, and, I must say, your justification of the proposal, I didn't feel, was satisfactory." We had a friendly talk, and he said, "Well, I want to double in a few years the total volume of lending. The needs in the world are tremendous."

The bank entered into the financing of family planning and primary education and dealing with urbanization problems, which had very little immediate economic impact on the country. In the broader framework, indeed, these were projects which perhaps deserved support, but not, in my opinion, from the World Bank. These were not bankable projects, so I was very reluctant to give my support to all these innovations. There were many innovations which I could support, but they embraced everything; whatever needed financing, McNamara was ready to give full consideration to it. He set targets for the amounts to be lent each following year, and staff had to meet these targets. They had to give projects a better appearance than they really deserved. My

contact with the staff alerted me that there were people who felt that their professional integrity was at stake: if they did not produce the required amount of lending, they were out of favor.

OLIVER: It sounds like the change between George Woods and Robert McNamara was larger than the change between Gene Black and George Woods.

LIEFTINCK: Oh, they are not to be compared.

OLIVER: I think you commented earlier (before I turned on the machine) that not a whole lot happened during the five years that George Woods was President.

LIEFTINCK: Not very much by way of innovations. The most important innovation was, as a matter of fact, in non-project lending. There were many cases, but the principal one we have talked about.

OLIVER: Were there other cases beside the Indian case that we should talk about?

LIEFTINCK: That I don't remember. The Indian case sticks in my mind. George Woods, as a matter of fact was very anxious to get IDA to function, to raise sufficient funds for IDA. That took a lot of his time, more time, as a matter of fact than he ought to have spent.

OLIVER: There was no controversy about the beginning of IDA, really?

LIEFTINCK: No, No controversy. None at all.

OLIVER: Not much about the First Replenishment. It was the Second Replenishment which was quite controversial, I think.

LIEFTINCK: Well, it was difficult to get the contributions which the Bank wanted. It had to be shown to the governments. . . .

OLIVER: Yes, quite right. Did you personally feel that the request for the Second Replenishment where George Woods really wanted a billion dollars a year was increasing the replenishment levels too fast?

LIEFTINCK: Well, I wondered whether the Bank staff could manage a thorough study of sufficient projects to reach that level. I was afraid that, by the approach of the replenishments, the Bank would become too liberal. One of the principals that was adopted when we created IDA was that the same criteria which were applied to World Bank lending would be applied to IDA lending, and I wondered whether the Bank was sufficiently equipped to increase the volume of IDA credits to a high amount without watering down the strength of the projects. I felt, on the other hand that there were tremendous needs for easy loans, and I supported my government -- as a matter of fact I supported it very strongly -- maximizing the IDA replenishments.

OLIVER: I think that the Dutch government, both in the World Bank and in the Development Assistance Committee of OECD, has always been with the Scandinavian countries in wanting to do as much as feasible in the way of official government assistance. So your concern was primarily similar to that in the later McNamara years: you weren't sure of quality projects could really be found to satisfy that level of increases.

LIEFTINCK: Exactly.

OLIVER: Did you have support from other Executive Directors on this?

LIEFTINCK: Developing countries Executive Directors, as a matter of fact, wanted the maximum. The Executive Directors of the industrial

countries got their instructions from their governments according to the willingness of their governments to make large IDA contributions. They just followed the instructions of their governments. They did not, perhaps, less than I, share the concern for the integrity and quality of the World Bank as a bank.

OLIVER: I understand.

LIEFTINCK: I didn't want the bank to become just a channel for generosity.

OLIVER: Well, are there other questions about this period that I should have asked you and have not asked? I've been keeping you busy answering questions for over an hour.

LIEFTINCK: I don't think so.

OLIVER: I certainly feel that I have a flavor of the times that I have been asking you about, and I have a fair idea of your own views on the subjects. I can well understand why you were elected an Executive Director for so many years, and I can well understand why you had the affection and esteem of your colleagues on the Board as well as the good will of the senior staff with whom the Executive Directors had occasional contact.

LIEFTINCK: Yes, a very good relationship was established. Also, my personal relations with Gene Black and George Woods and, finally, with McNamara were very good. They appreciated my very keen interest in the institutions. In the time of my association with McNamara, we had one thing in common: McNamara was originally an accountant. He had a great career as an accountant, and I wondered, when we entered that period of

rapid inflation, should we not introduce into the World Bank inflation accounting. I once made a speech on that subject, and I remember that McNamara was very much interested; he didn't see how to do it but he felt there was a need to give this some consideration.

OLIVER: That might have made some projects infeasible that otherwise looked feasible.

LIEFTINCK: Yes.

OLIVER: So he was interested, but he wasn't willing to recommend it?

LIEFTINCK: No, no, no.

OLIVER: Well the problems of disinflation are sometimes almost as great as the problems of inflation.

LIEFTINCK: That's true, but we have not yet reached that stage of disinflation.

OLIVER: I should have thought that some of the problems of the large debts of some of the developing countries, particularly in Latin America, are worse because of the disinflation; or, to put it another way, their apparent ability to keep up with their debts through export earnings was artificial in the sense that the value of the export earnings was being calculated at a different price level.

LIEFTINCK: That is true, but I wouldn't call that disinflation. A declining world price level, particularly for raw materials, is very, very damaging to developing countries, overindebted as they are. That is very true.

OLIVER: I guess instead of calling that disinflation I should have just said a slow-down in the rate of inflation.

LIEFTINCK: Yes. Yes.

OLIVER: Well sir you have been very generous with your time, and I am grateful indeed — not only for your time, but for the opportunity to meet you.

LIEFTINCK: Well, thank you. I enjoyed our discussion. It brought back to me a situation in which I have been very involved and to which I have given much of my time and energy.