

GROUP EXTERNAL PERCEPTION

Performance in 1990 : Assessment by Mr. Prideaux

In my view, the Group's standing has improved in the last year, although it is harder to be certain that the performance will necessarily have fed through to the communities in which we operate, where the point of control is more likely to be with operating companies rather than the Group.

At the Group level, I would cite the Chairman's knighthood, the defeat of Goldsmith, the successful demergers, the prices achieved for the disposals, and the investment attraction of an assured dividend at this stage in the cycle as factors which have improved our standing.

Judging by the MORI tracking study amongst investors carried out in the autumn of 1990, the message about growth potential in tobacco does seem to have got through, with tobacco regarded more favourably than insurance for the first time ever. Outside the investment community, there has been public recognition of our role in inner city work from Ken Clarke and also of our approach to Europe in general and monetary union in particular.

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