

Support for the FTA has not changed significantly in the Atlantic region or the Prairies over the past year. After having bottomed out in mid-Fall at 32% support among Torontonians, there were signs of recovery in December 1987 in Torontonians' support for the FTA. The May 1988 survey data show that this apparent recovery was sustained over the next six months such that the level of support among Torontonians is consistent with the Ontario average. Residents of Ontario do, however, continue to express lower levels of support than the national average (40% vs 51%).

It is also notable that respondents who are familiar with the deal's contents are more supportive of the deal than those who are not familiar at all with the contents.

D. Likelihood of Changing Opinion

Given that overall levels of support for the FTA have remained relatively stable over the past year, it is not surprising to find that most Canadians (56%) believe themselves to be "not very likely" or "not at all likely" to change their current opinions on this issue. While a majority in all regions of the country report that they are unlikely to change their opinions regarding the Agreement, Ontario residents are the most steadfast in their views and Quebecers are least so (61% and 50% of residents of these provinces respectively say they are not likely to change their views).

In order to measure support volatility, a new variable was created by combining responses to the questions dealing with support for free trade and the likelihood of changing opinion on this issue. The following summarizes how the "Volatility of Support" variable was derived, indicating the various categories of supporter/opponent and describing the views held by those respondents included within each category.