

II. ATTENTIVENESS AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE CANADA-U.S. FTA

A. Attentiveness and Understanding

Overall, as Table 1 shows, Canadians feel free trade with the United States is a complex issue. Although almost half (46%) of the survey respondents feel that they are following the free trade discussions with the United States closely, only 28% feel that they understand the issue as well as they would like to.

Table 1

ATTENTIVENESS AND UNDERSTANDING

	FOLLOWING DISCUSSIONS ON FREE TRADE		UNDERSTAND THE ISSUE AS WELL		
	Closely	Not closely	Yes	No	
JUNE 1987	41	59	36	64	
AUGUST 1987	42	58	23	77	
OCTOBER 1987	46	54	N/A	N/A	
MAY 1988	46	54	28	72	
AUGUST 1988	46	54	28	72	

Notes: Numbers may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Table 1 also shows that over the past 14 months, Canadians have become only marginally more attentive to the discussions about free trade with the United States. Only the October 1987 survey, when the deal was first signed, records a greater proportion of the respondents indicating that they were following the discussions closely (56%). Results from both the May 1988 survey and this survey show that the percentage of respondents who say that they are following the free trade discussions closely has fallen 10% since October 1987.

One possible reason for this apparent lack of attentiveness to the free trade discussions may be that many Canadians are uncomfortable with their present level of understanding of free trade. As has been stated above, only 28% of respondents feel that they