

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

	JUNE 1987 %	AUGUST 1987 %	OCTOBER 1987 %	MAY 1988 %	AUGUST 1988 %
<u>FOLLOWING DISCUSSIONS ON FREE TRADE</u>					
Closely	41	42	56	46	46
Not closely	59	59	44	53	54
<u>UNDERSTAND THE ISSUE AS WELL</u>					
Yes	24	25	N/A	28	28
No	76	75	N/A	72	71

Note: 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