B. Support/Opposition to the Free Trade Agreement

The overall support levels for the FTA have remained unchanged since December 1987. As Table 2 illustrates, the variations in support levels have occurred on the regional level as opposed to the aggregate national level. Among Canadians overall, the real movement has been among those who oppose the deal.

Table 3

SUPPORT FOR FREE TRADE BY REGION

	JUNE 1987 %	AUGUST 1987 %	OCTOBER 1987 %	NOV DEC I	NOV DEC II	NOV DEC III	MAY 1988 %	AUGUST 1988 %	CONFIDENCE INTERVAL ±%
GOOD IDEA/ SUPPORT FREE TRADE AGREEMENT									
National average	50	50	48	46	46	51	51	50	2.4
British Columbia	63	52	57	62	59	65	65	50	8.7
Prairies	47	50	49	44	49	50	50	46	5.8
Ontario	41	37	37	34	32	35	40	39	5.8
Balance of Ontario	38	38	35	33	32	32	39	39	6.8
Toronto	47	43	42	33	32	42	42	39	10.3
Quebec	52	64	59	56	55	63	62	64	5.8
Atlantic region	51	45	49	48	48	49	51	48	5.0

Opposition to the FTA has declined from 43% in May to 39% in August, while support is unchanged. While this decline does not represent a major shift in public attitudes toward the deal, it does appear to indicate that the volatility of the opposition to the deal is somewhat greater than is the support. The current drop in opposition has not lead to an increase in support for the deal, but has meant that a greater number of respondents in August as compared to past surveys appear to have taken a more neutral stand on the FTA. This situation is indicated by the increase of 2% since May 1988 in the number of people who say they have no opinion about the FTA.

Notably, there has been no change in the percentage of respondents who strongly oppose (11%) the FTA despite the decline in the overall opposition.