

other hand, few (11%) feel the change will hurt the talks. The plurality (46%) feel the shuffle will neither improve nor harm the negotiations. Indeed, net assessment -- subtracting harm from improvement -- is positive (+31). Those who have graduated university (-4) as well as those who reside in Ontario (-9) are less likely to be positively impressed by the action. Skepticism is particularly marked in Metro Toronto (net measure of +15 compared to the national average of +31). This would tend to suggest a general feeling that the shuffle amounted to an improvement in the prospects for government performance generally.

#### D. Normative Concerns

Conceptions of the importance of the provincial role in trade negotiations -- ostensibly an exclusive federal jurisdiction -- were also probed. There is a remarkable consensus that the importance of any free trade agreement is so high that it ought to involve the provinces. Just one in 10 Canadians would argue in favour of a unilateral federal initiative even if the provinces were opposed, for example. There is a slight weakening (-3) in support for this position since April. Fully 42% think that the pursuit of any such agreement must be approved by all provinces. This represents a gain of +5 since April. Another 40% (-3) think that it should meet the approval of a majority of provinces in some way. This view is more strongly held in Quebec (+6), but there is a pragmatic recognition that this may be easier said than done. Canadians recognize that it will be difficult to negotiate a deal which is satisfactory to all the provincial, labour and business interests involved. Almost 6 in 10 are skeptical that the government will ever be able to please everyone.

A second process concern had to do with any fiduciary responsibility to inform Canadians about what the government is prepared to negotiate. Fully 68% concur that the government should keep them informed, despite any potential advantage accrued to the Americans. Thirty-one percent (31%) on the other hand, think that the government should keep fairly quiet about its negotiations. This consensus appears to extend across all provinces. Men, or those who have graduated from university, are somewhat more likely (+8) to concede that there may be grounds for secrecy than their counterparts.