

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A. The Meaning of Freer Trade

For Canadians, it is "freer trade if possible, but not necessarily free trade with the United States." Overall perceptions of the importance of trade to Canada's economic future remained high in the the period between April and June, and the clear majority (78%) of all Canadians continue to believe that it is a good idea to enter into some type of more open trade agreement with the United States. The data indicate a slight movement from the extreme positive pole of assessment (-6) since April 1986.

Table 1

POSITIONS ON A MORE OPEN TRADE AGREEMENT WITH THE UNITED STATES

	<u>TOTAL</u> %	<u>NET CHANGE</u> <u>FROM APRIL 1986</u>
A Very Good Idea	12	-6
A Good Idea	66	+6
A Bad Idea	19	-3
A Very Bad Idea	2	-2

Freer trade, however, does not necessarily imply a specific agreement with the United States. Assessments of the larger impacts of free trade with the United States on Canada remain divided. In general, 53% of all Canadians would argue that free or freer trade could increase export opportunities, create jobs and stimulate the expansion of the Canadian economy, comparable to 55% of a similar view in April of 1986. The balance -- 44% (+2) -- think that not having free trade is better for the Canadian economy.

Despite high levels of awareness of the cedar shakes and shingles controversy (81%) Canadians continue to be unconvinced by the need for urgency in negotiating the general shape of any more open trade agreement. The majority (57%) have remained consistent in their view that there is little or no immediate urgency.

