

B. Support/Opposition to the Free Trade Agreement

The overall support levels for the FTA have remained unchanged since December 1987. As Table 3 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 %	AUG- UST 1987 %	OCTO- BER 1987 %	NOV /DEC I II III % % %	MAY 1988 %	AUG- UST 1988 %	CONFID- ENCE INTERVAL ±%
GOOD IDEA/ SUPPORT FREE TRADE AGREEMENT							
National average	50	50	48	46 46 51	51	50	3.4
British Columbia	63	52	57	62 59 64	45	50	8.7
Prairies	47	50	49	44 49 50	50	46	5.8
Ontario	41	37	37	33 32 35	40	39	5.8
Balance of Ontario	38	34	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 65	67	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 5% 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.