

### C. Free Trade and Canadian Independence

Turning to the issue of independence and the perceived effect of the free trade agreement on Canada's sovereignty, there appears to have been little change in Canadians' perceptions of this issue since October. Table 10 shows that, as in October, respondents were asked whether they think that the free trade agreement would strengthen or weaken Canada's ability to play an independent role in the world.

Table 10

#### FREE TRADE AND CANADIAN INDEPENDENCE

	JUNE	AUGUST	OCTOBER	NOV./DEC.		
	1987	1987	1987	I	II	III
	%	%	%	%	%	%
<u>INDEPENDENCE</u>						
The free trade agreement will...						
Strengthen Canada's economy and thus enable it to continue to play an independent role in the world	--	--	43	38	40	42
Tie Canada so closely to the U.S. that it will weaken our ability to play an independent role in the world	--	--	56	61	59	58

A notable decrease (-5%) from October occurred during wave I in the number of people who feel the deal would strengthen Canada's position in the world. In wave III, however, this percentage has almost returned to the level that was found to exist in October. Despite this rebound, six-in-ten Canadians still hold the belief that the free trade deal would lead to a weakening of the independent role that Canada now enjoys in the world.