

### C. Provincial Impact

Although several individuals abstained from giving their opinion on whether Quebec would fare better or worse under a free trade agreement, most believed the agreement would worsen Quebec's prospects. The fear of American domination in their own community seemed to predispose attitudes. The perceived economic clout of the United States preoccupied most who believed that although the government may still be run by Quebecers, they thought Americans would be dictating from the background.

The majority of those who believed the free trade deal would be a bad thing for Quebec, completely reversed their opinion when considering the impact it could have on the province's hydro-electric power industry. By way of review, the June nation-wide telephone survey results showed that 69% of Quebecers think that their electric power industry would be better off under free trade. Consistent with this finding, the majority of focus group participants believed that free trade would provide a "golden opportunity" for Quebec to overcome the present Canadian and American barriers for exporting more hydro-electric power to the United States. Almost everyone in the two groups could appreciate the likely benefits for Quebec and participants believed that their expertise was well-known, and that Quebec was perceived as a world leader in this area.

Very few could see any positive results for the manufacturing or service industries. Fear of losing natural resources, of not being able to compete with the giant American corporations, and of loss of jobs to the United States were top-of-mind concerns. One individual also feared the loss of government health care services in Canada as a result of greater American presence. Many believed that labour was less costly in the United States than in Quebec and that therefore, jobs would be lost to a more cost-competitive labour market.

A minority (mostly young, middle SES males, and professionals) felt that Quebec companies could be competitive in specialized goods and services exports, creating new jobs for Quebecers and new growth opportunities for indigenous Quebec corporations.