

and deciding whether or not it is in Canada's best interests to sign the agreement." The two basic considerations which people said should guide the government in any such determination were:

1. Evidence of a consensus among Canadians, and
2. Making a decision based on what's best for Canada and not what may appear to be politically expedient.

There was a consensus evident among the group participants that if the government rejected signing an agreement based on assessments of its merits relative to these criteria, they would likely be supportive of such a move and not really concerned about such a decision.

#### D. Dimension of Change

A majority were of the view that a Canada-U.S. free trade agreement was likely to be a major change over the long term, but that the evidence of this change would appear gradually over time. Expressions of this perception of gradualness included statements such as, "It would be so gradual you wouldn't realize it's happening," and even more graphically, "Niagara Falls won't start running uphill." Nevertheless, some of the participants in the Ontario groups who were opposed to free trade did express concern and anxiety about the possibility of very significant, short term-employment effects for Canada in general and Ontario in particular.