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Heading into Throne Speech, Canadians Sending Mixed Signals on Trudeau Government

While Liberals (33%) and Conservatives (32%) Tied in Popular Vote, Trudeau's Approval Remains High (53%) and 43% Believe Government Deserves Re-election

Toronto, ON, September 23, 2020 – With less than a week to go before the Trudeau Government is set to deliver an “ambitious” Speech from the Throne – thereby setting up a series of confidence votes and the potential for a fall election – Canadians are sending mixed signals about the government and what its chances at re-election might be.

On one hand, the national horserace is very close. If an election were held tomorrow, the Liberals (33%, -2) and Conservatives (32%, unchanged) would be tied in the national popular vote among decided voters, with the NDP (20%, +1), Green Party (8%, +1) Bloc (6%, -1) and other parties (1%, unchanged) trailing. Two in ten would either not vote (6%) or are unsure of how they would vote (14%).

On the other hand, the incumbent Liberal government remains strong on some underlying fundamentals, despite being in a minority position:

- A majority (53%) of Canadians continue to approve (13% strongly/41% somewhat) of the performance of the Liberal government under Justin Trudeau (up 1 point since August).
- Four in ten (43%) Canadians believe that the Liberal government under Justin Trudeau has done a good job and deserves to be re-elected. If everyone who felt this way voted for their Liberal candidate, the Liberals would enjoy a majority victory, even if 57% of Canadians believe that it is time for another party to take over in Ottawa.

Moreover, a closer look at the regional results shows that the Liberals have the advantage in the most seat-rich regions of the country, which would likely lead them back to a minority government similar in composition to the one we already have. Although it is very close, winning a plurality of seats is also in sight for the Conservatives and their new leader, Erin O'Toole.:

- In **Ontario**, the Liberals (40%) have an eight-point lead over the Conservatives (32%), while the NDP (19%), Greens (8%) and others (1%) fall behind.
- In **Quebec**, the Liberals (32%) have a slight advantage over the Bloc (28%), while the Conservatives (17%), NDP (15%), Green Party (7%) and others (1%) trail.
- In **British Columbia**, where the prospect of a provincial election looms, the federal NDP (30%), Conservatives (28%) and Liberals (28%) are in a tight three-way race, well ahead of the Greens (10%) and other parties (4%).
- In **Alberta**, the Tories (59%) enjoy a massive lead in the popular vote over the NDP (21%), Liberals (17%) and Green parties (4%).
- In **Saskatchewan and Manitoba**, the Conservative (50%) lead over the NDP (26%), Liberals (21%) and Greens (3%) is also very large.



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- In **Atlantic Canada**, the Liberals (43%) have a double-digit lead over the Conservatives (33%), NDP (14%), and Green Party (10%).

At some point before the next election, the gulf between the national vote and the underlying fundamentals will need to be reconciled one way or the other, and the upcoming Throne Speech offers an opportunity to do that.

Trudeau (39%) Top Pick for PM over O’Toole (32%), Singh (23%), Blanchet (7%)

Liberal leader Justin Trudeau (39%) also holds the advantage over newly-elected Conservative leader Erin O’Toole (32%) as the party leader Canadians believe would make the best prime minister. Interestingly, Jagmeet Singh, at 23%, is running slightly ahead of his party, while Yves-Francois Blanchet is the choice of 7% of Canadians, or 31% of Quebecers.

Thinking about the party leaders and their characteristics, Justin Trudeau leads main rival Erin O’Toole in each of the areas tested in the poll, demonstrating the work that Erin O’Toole will need to do in order to convince Canadians that he is the prime minister-in-waiting. This applies also to NDP leader Jagmeet Singh.

Table 1: Which major federal party best described by the following traits?

Attribute	Trudeau	O’Toole	Singh	Blanchet	None
Someone who is best to manage the COVID-19 crisis	42%	17%	9%	3%	29%
Best to manage during tough economic times	34%	23%	12%	4%	27%
Someone who will take action against climate change	32%	10%	21%	5%	32%
Someone whose values best represent my own	26%	16%	20%	5%	32%
Someone who will spend taxpayers’ money wisely	25%	20%	15%	4%	36%
Someone you can trust	25%	16%	19%	5%	35%

It is worth noting that “none of the above” was the leading choice on spending taxpayers’ money wisely, someone you can trust, and someone whose values best represent my own, suggesting that all leaders have work to do to convince Canadians that they possess these characteristics. Furthermore, despite his party’s relatively strong performance in the national numbers, Erin O’Toole clearly needs to make himself better known to voters.



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Trudeau's Approval Rating (53%) Slightly Higher than that of Governor General Payette (49%)

It is not often that the personal performance of the Governor General makes headlines in Canada, but recent reports of Julie Payette's spending habits and alleged toxic work environment have caused Canadians to give the Governor General a rather mixed performance assessment.

Reflecting on her job as Governor General of Canada, half (49%) of Canadians say they approve (5% strongly/45% somewhat) of Julie Payette's performance, while the other half (51%) disapprove (19% strongly/32% somewhat). Noteworthy is that strong disapproval of Governor General Payette's performance is nearly four times higher than strong approval.

The Governor General's performance ratings are strongest in British Columbia (56%), followed by Atlantic Canada (52%), Ontario (51%), Quebec (47%), Alberta (42%) and Saskatchewan and Manitoba (42%).

Politically, while six in ten Liberal (59%), NDP (56%) and Green (56%) voters approve of her performance, only 35% of Conservative voters say the same, while just 20% of Bloc voters approve.



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About the Study

These are some of the findings of an Ipsos poll conducted between September 11 and 14, 2020, on behalf of Global News. For this survey, a sample of 1,000 Canadians aged 18+ was interviewed online. Quotas and weighting were employed to ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the Canadian population according to census parameters. The precision of Ipsos online polls is measured using a credibility interval. In this case, the poll is accurate to within ± 3.5 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, had all Canadians aged 18+ been polled. The credibility interval will be wider among subsets of the population. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error, and measurement error.

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