



## NEWS RELEASE

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*THE NATIONAL ANGUS REID POLL*

**- THE POST-ELECTION LANDSCAPE -**

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## THE POST-ELECTION LANDSCAPE

As the Chretien Liberals begin their second mandate, most Canadian voters are broadly confident they will take the country in the right direction and most are also comfortable with the regionalized Parliament they collectively elected on June 2nd.

These are the main findings to emerge from a post-election National Angus Reid Poll conducted among 1,512 Canadians between June 23rd and 30th, 1997. The poll highlights include:

### ***Expectations for Overall Direction***

- By a margin of two to one – 59 percent versus 26 percent – Canadians believe the re-elected Chretien Liberal government is going to take the country "in the right direction over these next four years" (15% were unsure). This is consistent with voters' broad appraisal during the Liberals' first mandate (in April, before the election call, Canadians said the Liberal government was "on the right track" by a margin of 59% to 33%) and points to a continued lack of deep disaffection with this Liberal government. These post-election poll findings show a majority of voters in all major regions of the country expect the re-elected Liberal government to take the country in the right direction, and this expectation is shared by many opposition party supporters (including half of New Democrats and Reformers and four in ten BQ supporters). (Table 1)

### ***Priorities for the Liberals' Second Term***

- Canadians continue to highlight the unemployment problem as the main priority for the federal government. Asked a wide-open ended question on what they think should be the Chretien Liberals' main priorities in their second mandate, the voters' surveyed offered the following: (Table 2)
  - Jobs/unemployment was cited by over one-half (56%) of those polled as a key priority for the Liberals' second term and fully one in three (34%) named this as the top priority. Jobs emerged very high on the agenda

among voters from all regions of the country (especially those in Quebec and the Atlantic region) and among voters of all political stripes (especially BQers, least so Reformers).

- Well back in a second tier is national unity/Quebec (mentioned by 29% nationally); the deficit/debt (28% nationally, higher in B.C. and Alberta and among Reformers); health care (21%, rising to one in three Atlantic Canadians and New Democrats).
- In a third tier of priorities for the Chretien Liberals' second mandate the poll finds: the economy in general (mentioned by 16%); taxes and/or tax cuts (11% named this as a main priority, 18% of Reformers) and education (9%).
- A number of other issues were named by smaller numbers of Canadians as key priorities for the Chretien Liberals' second mandate. (Table 2)

### ***Views on Broad Regional Issues***

- Notwithstanding all of the attention which has been focussed on the historically regionalized vote Canadians delivered on June 2nd, voters themselves appear to be rather sanguine about this. Asked for their overall view on this, fully 53 percent of those surveyed said they interpreted the fact that the different regions of the country voted differently in this federal election to be "a good thing" versus 39 percent who saw it as "a bad thing" overall. Ontarians appear to be more disturbed by the phenomenon (voters here were evenly divided on this broad question) while six in ten voters in Alberta and Quebec described the regionalization in positive terms. With respect to voters' political party preference, six in ten or better of the Reformers and Blocquistes view the regionalized vote as a good thing whereas there is a lot less consensus among supporters of the traditional national parties. (Table 3)
- Finally, asked for their overall views on the Reform party's position on Quebec, almost one-half (47%) of Canadians surveyed described the party's position as "too hardline" (27% said it is "much too" hardline). One in three (31%) were satisfied that the Reform's position on Quebec is "about right" and only 5 percent described the new official opposition as "too

soft" on Quebec. Naturally, the Angus Reid Group's post-election poll finds some significant regional differences on these issues. The view in western Canada tends to be that the Reform's position is "about right" although there is a significant dissenting minority here, whereas in Ontario, Quebec and the Atlantic region, voters are more inclined to view Reform as "too hardline" on Quebec. Reformers themselves, not surprisingly, overwhelmingly describe the party's position on Quebec as appropriate (79% do so), while supporters of all other parties see the Reform's position on Quebec as too hardline. (Table 3)

### ***Survey Methodology***

This National Angus Reid Poll was conducted by telephone between June 23rd and 30th, 1997 among a representative cross-section of 1,512 Canadian adults.

The actual number of completed interviews in each region was as follows: B.C. - 202; Alberta - 135; Manitoba/Saskatchewan - 120; Ontario - 525; Quebec - 410; Atlantic - 122. These data were statistically weighted to ensure the sample's regional and age/sex composition reflects that of the actual Canadian population according to the 1991 and 1996 Census data.

With a national sample of 1,512, one can say with 95 percent certainty that the results are within  $\pm 2.5$  percentage points of what they would have been had the entire adult Canadian population been polled. The margin of error will be larger within regions and for other sub-groupings of the survey population.

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