

FEDERAL POLITICAL SCENE

LATE OCTOBER 2000

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(8%) Marginalized***

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Wake Fades -- Alliance Rebounds With Momentum Up 8 Points
To reach Highest Support Levels Yet***

***But "Head to Head" Liberal vs. Alliance Simulation (first asked
in early October Ipsos-Reid Survey) Show Liberals (56%)
Maintain Large Lead Over Alliance (37%), and 52% Continue to
Believe Government Deserves to be Re-Elected***



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Toronto, Ontario -- The latest CTV/Globe and Mail/Ipsos-Reid federal election survey shows that the race has tightened up considerably through the first week of campaigning. While the Liberals (45%, down 7%) continue to hold a comfortable lead, the Canadian Alliance (28%, up 8%) has clearly built up some early momentum. The NDP (8%, unchanged), PCs (8% unchanged) and BQ (9%, down 1%) remain well behind the leaders.

The survey also shows that this election has become a two-horse race featuring the Liberals and the Canadian Alliance (and in Quebec the Liberals and BQ). As predicted in a simulated head-to-head contest between the two parties that we featured in an October 1st release, the Alliance (37%) tends to move up under this scenario, but the Liberals (56%) appear able to maintain a comfortable lead.

On a regional basis, the Alliance has made significant gains in Western Canada. They now lead in B.C. (47% vs. 38% for the Liberals) and Alberta (59% vs. 30% for the Liberals), and are gaining momentum in Manitoba/Saskatchewan (32% vs. 39% for the Liberals). Perhaps the most interesting change in the survey is that the Alliance is now clearly competitive in Ontario. Their support in this province has increased 9 points to 28% while the Liberals have dropped 9 points to 51%. Moreover, they are closing in on the magic number of "30%" which suggests that they have potential to win some seats in this province.

In Quebec, the Liberals (43%) continue to lead, with the BQ (37%) holding steady. However, the Alliance (at 11%) appears to becoming a factor while the PCs sit at 6%, and the NDP at 4%.

The analysis of leadership approval shows that the race is tighter among the leaders than it is among the parties. On a national basis, Alliance Leader Stockwell Day (53%, up 4 points) narrowly out-points Prime Minister Jean Chrétien (52%, down 2 points) in terms of leadership approval. The Prime Minister's personal approval is now at its lowest level since just before the 1997 election when he reached a low of 52%. Meanwhile, Joe Clark (45% up 4 points) and Alexa McDonough (46%, up 1 point) show signs of trending up.

Perhaps the most important indicator of the current dynamics of the campaign is what we refer to as "momentum". In other words, has your opinion of a particular leader and party improved or worsened over the last few weeks. Our survey shows that the Liberals and Chrétien clearly are experiencing negative momentum. The percentage of respondents who say their opinion of Jean Chrétien and the Liberals has "worsened" (39%) is 25 points higher than the percentage who say their opinion of him has improved (14%). In contrast, the

Alliance and their leader Stockwell Day are benefiting from positive momentum, with the percentage who say their opinion has "improved" (28%) 10 points higher than the percentage who say their opinion has "worsened" (18%).

These are the findings of an Ipsos-Reid/Globe and Mail/CTV poll conducted between October 19th and October 25th, 2000. The poll is based on a randomly selected sample of 1,502 adult Canadians. The results are accurate to within ± 2.5 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what they would have been had the entire Canadian population been surveyed. The margin of error will be larger within regions and for other sub-groupings of the survey population. The data were statistically weighted to ensure the sample's regional and age/sex composition reflects that of the actual Canadian population according to the 1996 Census data.

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Prime Minister Chrétien kicked off the campaign by telling voters that the choice was clear: Liberals or the Alliance. The survey results suggest that this is in fact the case as the Liberals (45%) and the Alliance (28%) square off while the PCs (8%) and the NDP (8%) remain marginalized. In Québec the race is on between the Bloc (37%) and the Liberals (43%) with the Alliance (11%), PCs (6%), and the NDP (4%) trailing far behind.

Liberal support remains concentrated in the east, with its highest support in Atlantic Canada (53%) followed by Ontario (51%) and Quebec (43%). While still strong in Canada's most populous province, the Liberals seem to be losing ground in Ontario, dropping 9 points since the start of the election. However the Liberals (61%) have maintained their lead in the head to head simulation with the Alliance (33%).

In contrast to the Liberals, Alliance support remains largely concentrated in the west. Alberta remains the Alliance's stronghold (59%) with BC not far behind (47%). In Ontario, Alliance support has risen 9 points to 28% but is still below the 30% threshold.

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Saskatchewan and Manitoba remains the only region of the country where there is a close race. The Liberals (39%) currently lead the region but the Alliance is close behind at 32%. Moreover, it is the only region where a party other than the Liberals or the Alliance is competitive, with the NDP receiving 23% support.

Liberals Fall 7 Points in Early Election Days as Post-Trudeau Wake Fades -- Alliance Rebounds with Momentum Up 8 Points to Reach Highest Support Levels Yet

As the 'halo effect' of Trudeau's death begins to fade, the Liberals (45%) slip back to the level of support they received in September 2000 (44%). In contrast, the support for the Alliance has risen to its highest point yet (28%), three points above their previous high in September 2000 (25%).

Underlying this shift is an increase in negative momentum (net -25) for the Liberals as the percentage of Canadians who say their opinion of Jean Chrétien and the Liberals has "worsened" (39%) is now 25 points higher than those who say their opinion has "improved" (14%). Meanwhile, the Alliance is showing positive momentum (net +10), with the number of Canadians who say their opinion of Stockwell Day and the Alliance has "improved" (28%) 10 points higher than the percentage who say their opinion has "worsened" (18%).

Momentum is essentially static for Alexa McDonough and the NDP (net 0, 10% improved, 10% worsened) while the negative momentum Joe Clark had in July 2000 (net -17) has almost evaporated (net -2). Current data shows that the percentage who say that their opinion of Clark and the PCs has "improved" (15%) is now only 2 points behind the percentage who say their opinion has "worsened" (17%).

Overall leader approval for Stockwell Day has increased four points since early October to 53% and he is now on par with Jean Chrétien whose own approval rating (52%) has slipped

marginally (2 points - within the margin of error). Approval of Joe Clark has risen four points to 45% while Alexa McDonough's approval rating is virtually unchanged at 46%. In Québec, Bloc Québécois leader Gilles Duceppe's approval rating (53%) has risen four points since September.

But "Head to Head" Liberal vs. Alliance Simulation (first asked in early October Ipsos-Reid Survey) Show Liberals (56%) Maintain Large Lead Over Alliance (37%), and 52% Continue to Believe Government Deserves to be Re-Elected

With a two party race seemingly in the cards, Ipsos-Reid asked voters to "imagine for a minute that you can only vote for the Alliance or the Liberals". In this instance, a clear majority (56%) would vote for the Liberals while 37% would choose the Alliance. These results are virtually identical to results obtained prior to the election call in early October (56% Liberal, 36% Alliance) and shows that regardless of the recent shifts in support, Liberals are still in a position of strength over the Alliance. Reinforcing this point is the finding that a majority (52%) of Canadians say the Liberals deserve to be re-elected while 45% say they do not, a result that has stayed consistent since July 2000.

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