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Despite Hotel Loan Scandal***

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and 56% Want a Judicial Inquiry***

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Chrétien Should Resign***

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is Being Wasted on Hotel Loan Scandal and that it's Time to
Move On***



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Toronto, ON – A new Ipsos-Reid/Globe and Mail/CTV poll shows that the Prime Minister's approval rating (52%) and support for the Liberal party (48%) has not been hurt despite increasingly strong attacks by the opposition over the Prime Minister's involvement in the Auberge Grand-Mère loan scandal. In fact, support for the Liberals has increased 4 points since early March 2001. While the issue has not hurt the PM or his party, Canadians want the PM to clear the air. Three quarters (78%) agree that Chrétien should "release all of his personal papers that relate to this issue" and 56% agree say that "an independent judicial inquiry should be set up to investigate the allegations against the Prime Minister". Meanwhile, three quarters (76%) of Canadians say the Prime Minister should not resign as a result of the hotel loan scandal and an even greater number (81%) agree that "we're wasting far too much time talking about this issue - it's time to move on to other things".

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These are the findings of an Ipsos-Reid/Globe and Mail/CTV poll conducted between March 27th and March 29th, 2001. The poll is based on a randomly selected sample of 1003 adult Canadians. With a sample of this size, the results are considered accurate to within ± 3.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, 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. 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 1996 Census data.



Liberal Support (48%) Rises and PM's Approval (52%) Strong Despite Hotel Loan Scandal

Despite the continued controversy surrounding the Prime Minister's business dealings in Shawinigan, support for the Liberals (48%) has increased four points since early March 2001 (44%). Meanwhile, none of the opposition parties has made any gains. Support for the Alliance is holding steady at 19%, while support for the PCs is up marginally (1 point - within the margin of error) to 15%. As the NDP searches for a new direction, its support has fallen 4 points to 7%. In Québec, the Bloc has gained 5 points since early March and is now at 37%.

Similarly, on a personal level, Jean Chrétien's approval rating has not been hurt by the allegations of wrong-doing. A majority (52%) of Canadians say they approve of the job he is doing as Prime Minister, unchanged since the last sounding in October 2000. Meanwhile, Stockwell Day's approval rating, currently at 32%, has plummeted 21 points since October 2000 (53%) when he was essentially tied with the Prime Minister. In sharp contrast, Joe Clark's approval rating has jumped 13 points over the same period to 58% and his approval is now the highest of all party leaders. Alexa McDonough's approval rating (47%) is up marginally (1 point - within the margin of error) while within Québec, Gilles Duceppe's approval rating (52%) is down marginally (1 point - within the margin of error).

But Canadians Want PM to Clear the Air as 78% Say Chrétien Should Release All His Personal Papers that Relate to this Issue and 56% Want a Judicial Inquiry

While so far Chrétien and the Liberals have not been hurt by the "Shawinigan Affair", the public would like the PM to clear the air. Three quarters (78%) agree with the statement "the Prime Minister should release all of his personal papers that relate to this issue", including a

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majority (56%) who "strongly agree" (another 22% "somewhat agree"). A smaller and less intense number of Canadians (56%) agree that "an independent judicial inquiry should be set up to investigate the allegations against the Prime Minister". This includes one third (32%) who "strongly agree" and a quarter (24%) who "somewhat agree". Meanwhile, a significant minority (42%) disagree that a judicial inquiry should be set up, with one quarter (23%) who "strongly disagree" and one in five (19%) who "somewhat disagree".

- Calls for the PM to release his personal papers is high across all provinces but is highest in Alberta (86%) and lowest in Ontario (76%).
- Calls for a judicial inquiry are highest in Alberta (67%) and Québec (60%) and lowest in B.C. (50%), Saskatchewan/Manitoba (53%) and Ontario (54%).
- Canadians under 55 (58%) are more likely than those aged 55 and over (52%) to agree that a judicial inquiry should be set up.

Despite Some Critics, Three Quarters (76%) Do Not Think Chrétien Should Resign

Despite suggestions made by some of the Prime Minister's critics, three quarters (76%) of Canadians disagree that "the Prime Minister should resign immediately because of these charges". Canadians feel strongly about this with almost a majority (49%) who say they "strongly disagree" that the Prime Minister should resign. Another quarter (27%) "somewhat disagree". Only one in five (22%) Canadians agree that the PM should resign.

Overall, Canadians are divided about whether the Prime Minister was only doing what a good MP does or whether he abused his power when he lobbied for a loan on behalf of a hotel in his riding. Just less than half (49%) say that "the Prime Minister was only doing what



a good MP does for his constituents and that this is being blown out of proportion by the opposition parties for political purposes". In contrast, 46% say that "the Prime Minister has abused his power in lobbying for this loan and that his involvement was way beyond that of a regular MP trying to help his constituents".

- Residents of Québec (66%) are least likely to say the PM should not resign while residents of Ontario (83%) are most likely to say he should not resign.
- Women (78%) are more likely than men (73%) to say the PM should not resign.
- Canadians under 55 (78%) are more likely than those aged 55+ (71%) to say Chrétien should not resign.
- A majority of residents in Ontario (54%), Atlantic Canada (55%) and B.C. (54%) say the Prime Minister was only doing "what a good MP does". In contrast, a majority of residents in Alberta (65%), and Saskatchewan/Manitoba (50%) say the Prime Minister "abused his power". Québecers are split with 49% saying he abused his power and 45% saying he was just being a good MP.
- Men (50%) are more likely than women (41%) to say the PM "abused his power".

Overwhelming Majority (81%) of Canadians Say Too Much Time is Being Wasted on Hotel Loan Scandal and that it's Time to Move On

Overall and despite the last few days of heated debate in the Commons, an overwhelming majority (81%) of Canadians agree that "with all of the important issues facing Canada these days, we're wasting far too much time talking about this issue - it's time to move on to other things". Canadians feel very strongly that it's time to move on, with a full six in ten (61%) who "strongly agree" while another one in five (20%) "somewhat agree". Only 17% disagree

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that too much time is being wasted and that it's time to move on (8% "somewhat disagree", 9% "strongly disagree").

- More than eight in ten residents of every province except Alberta (73%) say that it is time to move on.
- Women (86%) are more likely than men (76%) to say that it's time to move on.

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For more information on this news release, please contact:

***John Wright
Senior Vice- President
Public Affairs
Ipsos-Reid
(416) 324-2900***

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