

**CANADIAN PRESS / LEGER MARKETING**

# **The Federal Political Landscape in Canada**

## **Report**

January 2004



## 1.0 Study Highlights

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- 49% of Canadians would re-elect the Liberal Party of Canada
- Half of Canadians are satisfied with Paul Martin as Prime Minister of Canada
- Paul Martin is the most popular Federal political figure in Canada
- Canadians show little interest in the Conservative Party's leadership race
- Stronach and Harper are neck and neck in the leadership race of the new party
- The Government of Canada should make the healthcare system its number one priority

## 2. Results

### 2.1 49% of Canadians would re-elect the Liberal Party of Canada

Voting intentions in Canada have changed only slightly since the summer of 2003. In fact, voting intentions for the Liberal Party of Canada have gone from 55% in June 2003 to 49% in January 2004. This drop has benefited both the NPD across Canada (from 10% in June 2003 to 15% in January 2004) and the Bloc Québécois (from 28% in June 2003 – Quebec only – to 39% in January 2004). Interestingly, the New Conservative Party would today garner less popular support (21%) than the combined voting intentions for the Canadian Alliance and the PC last June (26% combined).

The race would be very tight in four of the six Canadian regions polled. In Quebec, the Liberals would only have a 7% lead, which would place them neck and neck with the Bloc Québécois among francophone voters. In the Prairies, the Liberals lead by 11% over the CP, though a number of three-way battles with the NDP could further divide the vote. In Alberta, the CP leads by 13% over the Liberals, which could be an indication of heated battles to come, especially in and around Edmonton. Finally, British-Columbia would likely be the centre of a real three-way battle with the Liberal Party leading by 13% over the CP and the NDP.

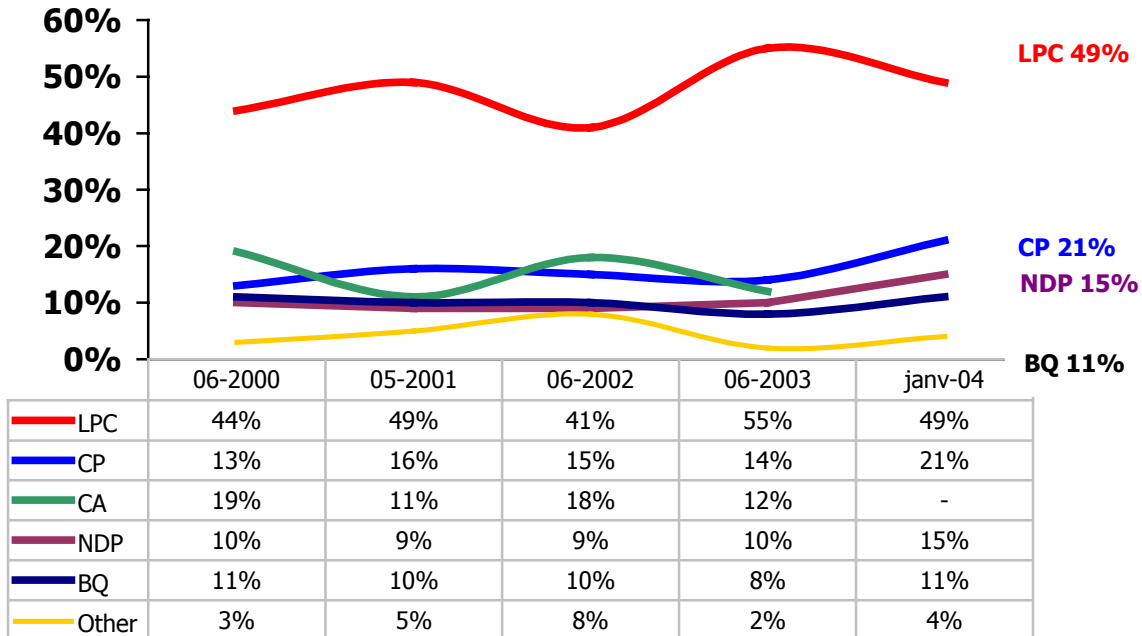
Ontario remains a Liberal bastion with a 35-point lead over the CP. Finally, the majority of respondents in the Atlantic Provinces would support the Liberals (54%), far ahead of the CP with 24%.

Question: *If federal elections were held today, for which political party would you vote for, would it be for the...*

n=1500	Before Distribution N=1500	After Distribution =1115	Atlantic Provinces	Quebec	Ontario	Prairies	Alberta	British Columbia
...The Liberal Party	36 %	49 %	54 %	46 %	57 %	42 %	40 %	39 %
...The new Conservative Party	16 %	21 %	24 %	6 %	22 %	31 %	53 %	26 %
...The New Democratic Party (NDP)	11 %	15 %	16 %	7 %	18 %	18 %	5 %	26 %
...The Bloc Québécois	8 %	11 %	-	39 %	-	-	-	-
Other	3 %	4 %	6 %	2 %	3 %	9 %	2 %	10 %
Would spoil ballot	1 %	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Would not vote	8 %	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Don't know	13 %	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Refusal	4 %	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Distribution of undecided voters was done proportionately to voting intentions.

**Evolution of Voting Intentions  
June 2000 - January 2004**



## 2.2 Nearly half of Canadians are satisfied with Paul Martin

In all, 48% of the Canadians interviewed say they are satisfied with Paul Martin's performance as Prime Minister of Canada, whereas 35% of respondents had no view on the matter judging it was probably too early to form an opinion. It is noteworthy that Paul Martin obtains his highest score in Quebec (56%), with satisfaction with his performance tending to drop as we move away from Ontario towards the West.

Question: *Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with Paul Martin's performance as Prime Minister of Canada?*

n=1500	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Don't know
Atlantic Provinces	45 %	10 %	43 %
Quebec	56 %	19 %	24 %
Ontario	51 %	13 %	34 %
Prairies	43 %	16 %	38 %
Alberta	39 %	14 %	46 %
British Columbia	38 %	18 %	42 %
Canada	48 %	15 %	35 %

Note: The complement to 100% represents those who refused to answer

## 2.3 Paul Martin has the highest awareness and remains the most popular political figure on the federal scene

Paul Martin remains the most popular political figure on the federal scene: 49% of respondents have a positive opinion of him. Among leadership candidates to the CP, Stephen Harper ranks first with 17% of respondents having a good opinion of him, followed by Belinda Stronach at 15% and Tony Clement at 10%. In the west, Stephen Harper remains the most popular candidate for leader of the CP, with positive opinions on his candidacy reaching 33% in Alberta (18% in the Prairies and 20% in British Columbia.) In Ontario, it's a tight race between the three following candidates: Clement with 18%, Harper with 17% and Stronach with 14%.

In Quebec, 49% of respondents have a good opinion of Gilles Duceppe, and Paul Martin obtains a score of 57%, the highest in all of Canada.

Question: *Do you have a GOOD OPINION, a BAD OPINION or YOU DO NOT KNOW...?*

n=1500	Good opinion	Bad opinion	Don't know candidate
...Paul Martin	49 %	14 %	35 %
...Gilles Duceppe (Quebec only)	49 %	20 %	27 %
...Stephen Harper	17 %	12 %	69 %
...Belinda Stronach	15 %	8 %	76 %
...Jack Layton	12 %	7 %	79 %
...Tony Clement	10 %	5 %	83 %

Note: The complement to 100% represents those who refused to answer

## 2.4 Canadians are not very interested in the leadership race of the new Conservative Party

While close to one in three Canadians (32%) say they are following the Conservative Party's leadership race with interest, another 39% admit following the race with only little interest. A quarter of Canadians (24%) admits not following the race at all.

The CP's leadership race is of the least interest in Quebec (17% follow with interest, 40% with little interest, and 40% do not follow the race at all), while the Prairies and Alberta are the two regions where this event is followed with the most interest.

Question: *Will you follow the leadership race for the New Conservative Party of Canada with INTEREST, LITTLE INTEREST or you will not follow the race AT ALL?*

n=1500	Total	Atlantic Provinces	Quebec	Ontario	Prairies	Alberta	British Columbia
...with interest	32 %	42 %	17 %	35 %	42 %	41 %	28 %
...with little interest	39 %	41 %	40 %	39 %	36 %	35 %	47 %
...Not at all	24 %	13 %	40 %	22 %	15 %	18 %	19 %
Don't know	4 %	3 %	1 %	4 %	5 %	5 %	5 %

Note: The complement to 100% represents those who refused to answer

## 2.5 According to Canadians, Stronach and Harper should head the party

In all, 18% of Canadians believe that Stephen Harper would make the best leader of the new Conservative Party, though an equal proportion (18%) would choose Belinda Stronach. With a 10-point gap, Tony Clement closes the race with 8%. It is noteworthy that 44% of Canadians have no opinion on the subject.

According to our results, Belinda Stronach appears to be the “eastern candidate” since she leads in the Atlantic Provinces, Quebec and Ontario. For his part, Stephen Harper is without a doubt “the western candidate”, especially in Alberta and British Columbia. Ontario is a three-way battle with a margin of only 3% separating the leading candidate Belinda Stronach (16%), from third place candidate Tony Clement (13%.) Finally, the Prairies are divided between Harper (23%) and Stronach (22%).

When we look at the impact leadership candidates for the new Conservative Party could have on the voting intention, variations are relatively small. Belinda Stronach would be able to obtain 17% of the vote, Stephen Harper 14% and Tony Clement 11%. With overall voting intentions for the PC at 21% (shown in Section 2.1), none of the candidates, to date, are able to do better or as well as the voting intentions for their party once their name is added to our voting intention question.

Question: *Which of the following political personalities would make the best leader for the New Conservative Party of Canada? Is it...?*

N= 1500	Total	Atlantic Provinces	Quebec	Ontario	Prairies	Alberta	British Columbia
...Stephen Harper	18 %	9 %	12 %	15 %	23 %	37 %	23 %
...Belinda Stronach	18 %	24 %	20 %	16 %	22 %	14 %	18 %
... Tony Clement	8 %	8 %	5 %	13 %	4 %	2 %	2 %
Other	5 %	4 %	8 %	5 %	4 %	4 %	4 %
None	6 %	6 %	10 %	4 %	3 %	4 %	4 %
Don't know	44 %	46 %	43 %	46 %	40 %	37 %	47 %

Note: The complement to 100% represents those who refused to answer

Question: *Now, if the New Conservative Party of Canada was headed by (...), which of the following political parties would you vote for if federal elections were held today, would it be for...*

N = 1500	CP Voting Intentions	Atlantic Provinces	Quebec	Ontario	Prairies	Alberta	British Columbia
... Stephen Harper	14 %	10 %	4 %	15 %	19 %	29 %	17 %
... Belinda Stronach	17 %	17 %	7 %	18 %	30 %	22 %	20 %
... Tony Clement	11 %	13 %	3 %	13 %	17 %	21 %	9 %

## 2.6 Investing in the healthcare system remains a priority for Canadians

Among the following choices, half (51%) of Canadians claim that the Government of Canada's priority should be to invest more in the healthcare system and social programs, while 15% of respondents prefer lowering income taxes, 14% prefer redistribution revenues to the provinces, and 11% prefer debt reduction.

Question: *In your opinion, which of the following issues must be a priority for the Government of Canada? Is it...?*

	Total	Atlantic Provinces	Quebec	Ontario	Prairies	Alberta	British Columbia
...Investing more in healthcare and social programs	51 %	63 %	51 %	53 %	43 %	36 %	55 %
...Reducing income taxes	15 %	10 %	13 %	16 %	17 %	26 %	11 %
... Redistributing revenues to the provinces	14 %	11 %	22 %	10 %	15 %	16 %	11 %
... Reducing the debt	11 %	6 %	10 %	13 %	11 %	9 %	10 %
Other	4 %	7 %	1 %	3 %	5 %	4 %	9 %
Don't know	4 %	2 %	1 %	4 %	7 %	8 %	3 %

Note: The complement to 100% represents those who refused to answer

### **3.0 Methodology**

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This study was conducted by Leger Marketing through telephone interviews among a representative sample of 1500 English- or French-speaking Canadians, 18 years of age or older.

The interviews were conducted from our Montreal and Winnipeg call centres between January 22 and January 27, 2004. Up to ten call-backs were made in the case of non-response.

Using data from Statistics Canada, the results were weighted according to geographic location, gender and language spoken at home to ensure a sample representative of the entire Canadian adult population. In the end, the maximum margin of error obtained for a sample of 1500 respondents is of  $\pm 2.5$ , 19 times out of 20.