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Harper Shuffles His Cabinet; Moves Bernier to Foreign Affairs

By Theophilos Argitis

Aug. 14 (Bloomberg) -- Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper shuffled his cabinet for the second time since taking office 18 months ago, as he tries to breathe new life into a minority government struggling to increase its popularity.

Defense Minister Gordon O'Connor will become the country's new revenue minister, according to a statement issued by the prime minister's office. Peter MacKay will leave foreign affairs to replace O'Connor at national defense. Industry Minister Maxime Bernier will replace MacKay, while Indian Affairs Minister Jim Prentice will replace Bernier.

Finance Minister Jim Flaherty keeps his portfolio.

Opinion surveys show Harper's party would again fail to win a majority of seats in Parliament if an election were held today. The Conservatives have support of 36 percent of Canadians, unchanged from the vote share the party got in last year's election, and the Liberals are backed by 33 percent of voters, according to a poll released today by SES Research.

The survey has a margin of error of 3.1 percentage points.

To contact the reporter on this story: Theophilos Argitis in Ottawa at targitis@bloomberg.net .

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