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Canada's Liberals, Conservatives Tied, SES Poll Finds (Update1)

June 21 (Bloomberg) -- Canada's Conservative Party pulled back into a tie with the governing Liberal Party with one week left before the federal election, according to a poll by SES Research.

Both parties had the support of 33 percent of decided voters surveyed June 18-20. Prime Minister Paul Martin's Liberals fell 1 percentage point from the daily poll's last results Friday. Stephen Harper's Conservatives gained 4 points, SES reported on its Web site.

Conservative support picked up on Sunday when the campaign began to focus on bilingualism because the Conservatives said they would drop a law requiring that Air Canada provide all service in both English and French, Nanos said. The party had lost backing after issuing a news release that suggested Martin supported child pornography, prompting the prime minister to demand an apology, SES Chief Executive Nikita Nanos said in an interview. Harper refused to apologize.

The Conservatives ``changed the focus of the campaign by shifting off something on which they were on the defensive," he said.

Martin Top Choice

The poll found 19 percent of those surveyed were undecided, a drop of 2 percentage points from May 21.

Martin remained the top choice among voters who were asked who they thought would make the best prime minister. He got 28 percent compared with 24 percent for Harper.

Martin, 65, has tried with his campaign advertising to paint the 45-year-old Harper as someone who would alter Canada more than voters realize. One advertisement showed a gun pointing off screen, suggesting that Harper's opposition to the national gun registry would make the country more dangerous.

The New Democratic Party, led by former Toronto city councilor Jack Layton, was supported by 18 percent of respondents while the Bloc Quebecois, which runs candidates only in Quebec, received support from 12 percent.

The poll's margin of error is 4.1 percentage points. SES Research started with a sample of 600 and calls 200 random voters each day of the campaign, dropping the oldest sample of 200 with each new result. The survey was commissioned by Cable Public Affairs Channel, or CPAC.

SES said it will begin doubling its sample Wednesday to reduce the poll's margin of error.

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