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Canadians hungry for change, new poll finds

CTV.ca News Staff

With speculation running rampant Prime Minister Paul Martin is primed for an election call, a new poll suggests voters have soured on his federal Liberal Party.

According to a new poll by SES Canada Research, support for the Liberals is at 40 per cent among decided voters -- a drop of eight per cent since the company's last poll 90 days earlier.

As a result, all the other parties picked up the Liberals' flagging support, half of which went to the new Conservative Party of Canada which now registers 27 per cent.

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The NDP is third with 17 per cent and the Bloc Quebecois registered 12 per cent support.

And, the pollsters warn, the Liberals should be wary of feeling at all comfortable with their waning lead.

"The Liberals can take little comfort in their current lead over the Conservatives, SES President Nikita Nanos said in a statement.

That's because the survey found that, at the time of the poll, 50 per cent of voters were eager for a change of government. Only 28 per cent of voters thought Martin deserves to be re-elected.

These latest numbers echo the findings of other recent polls, including one released by Environics last Friday.

According to the Environics survey, the Liberals are at 39 per cent support nationally, compared with 29 per cent for the Conservatives and 19 per cent for



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the NDP.

The 12-point drop since its last poll five months ago, "is the lowest level earned by the federal Liberals since their 38 per cent popular vote in the 1997 federal election," Environics said.

Despite the gloomy electoral prospect painted by the polls, speculation is running high Martin is set to drop the writ soon.

The focus now is on an election call in early May, with voting scheduled for June 14.




Since federal elections are traditionally held on Mondays, the other dates being bandied about are June 7 and June 21.

But a G8 summit on June 8 makes the 7th seem unlikely. And on June 20, Quebec will be going to the polls for a number of referenda, complicating the timing of another trip to the polls.

Pundits are closely watching the prime minister's cabinet dinner in Ottawa on Monday, anticipating a signal from Martin or his ministers regarding the election plan.

Monday's SES survey of 1,000 randomly-selected voters was conducted by telephone between April 20th and 25th. Its aggregate results are considered accurate within 3.1 per cent, 19 times out of 20.

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