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NEWS

Saturday, September 13, 2003

NDP's popularity grows

Federal party gains five points in three months, says poll

By BILL RODGERS, SUN OTTAWA BUREAU

OTTAWA -- The popularity of the federal New Democratic Party has jumped five points over the past three months and the Liberals are down 6%, a national SES/Sun Media poll suggests.

Support for the NDP under new leader Jack Layton shows growth in every area of the country except Alberta and Quebec.

The poll of 1,000 Canadians taken from Aug. 24 to Sept. 2 shows the Liberals continue to enjoy a commanding lead with 46% of committed voter support.

The Tories trail with 19%, followed by the NDP with 15%, the Canadian Alliance with 13% and Quebec's Bloc Quebecois at 8%.

The biggest spurt in growth for the NDP comes in British Columbia, where the party now has 26% of committed voter support.

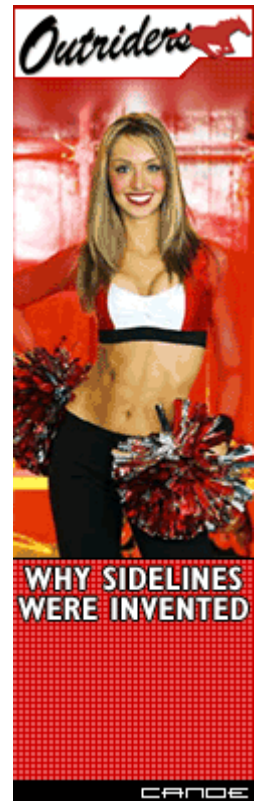
It continues to enjoy its highest popularity in its Saskatchewan-Manitoba base.

"The switching of voters from Liberals to the NDP may be a precursor of a future trend as Liberal voters perceive Paul Martin to be taking the party more to the right," said Nik Nanos, president and CEO of SES/Canada Research Inc.

"Paul Martin has this very corporate image and I'm sure there are a lot of soft Liberals who could vote either Liberal or NDP who might be a little uncomfortable with that."

Stephen Harper's Canadian Alliance continues to maintain its stranglehold in Alberta at 53% but has slipped to just 8% in vote-rich Ontario.

The Tories are at 21% in Ontario while the governing Liberals lead with a whopping





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56%.

The Grits' lowest support is in the West, where they stand at 22% in Alberta and 27% in Manitoba and Saskatchewan.

The national poll is accurate to within 3.1%, plus or minus, 19 times out of 20.

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