

canada.com

NEWSPAPERS

TELEVISION

CITIES

CHANNELS

CLASSIFIEDS

RADIO

SEARCHWORD:

go

Search the Web

go



YellowPages.ca

Canada 411

Tuesday, February 22, 2005

Pay a little, get a lot.

## NATIONAL POST

## WEATHER



Saskatoon

-20°

A few clouds

About nationalpost.com | Subscriber Exclusive

Welcome, John Nanos [Profile] [Logout]

## CLASSIFIEDS

- Find a job
- Find a car
- Find a home
- Obituaries
- Personals
- Find an ad

## THE POST TODAY

News  
Toronto  
Body & Health  
Editorials  
Letters  
Issues & Ideas  
Arts & Life  
Sports  
Financial Post  
FP Investing  
FP Market Data  
Toronto  
Columnists  
Diversions  
Section Scan  
7-Day Archive  
Online Extras  
Subscribe  
Newspaper Ads

## ELECTRONIC EDITION

## WEEKLY SECTIONS

Lovelorn  
G3  
Weddings  
Driver's Edge  
Post Movies  
FP Entrepreneur  
Weekend Post  
FP Weekend  
Travel  
Homes

## MONTHLY SECTIONS

NP Business  
Magazine  
Post Homes  
Magazine

## NATIONAL POST

Latest News

## Harper has more on his mind than budget

John Ivison

National Post

Tuesday, February 22, 2005

Ralph Goodale, the Finance Minister, has hinted at a "balanced approach" when he brings down his budget tomorrow, which probably means one that is equally vague in all of the government's priority spending areas.

We can expect large dollops of cash to be put in envelopes marked Kyoto, infrastructure, defence and child care, but the diabolic detail will be resolved only after a good deal more dithering.

For their part, the Conservatives have already indicated that, short of the inclusion of hot air emission credits, they will wish the budget bon voyage as it sails through the House.

1 | 2 | NEXT &gt;&gt;

ADVERTISEMENT

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <b>Bell Business<br/>Internet High<br/>Speed service</b>                              | <b>Mobility<br/>NEW Business<br/>Anytime plan</b> | <b>1,200 FREE<br/>long distance<br/>minutes</b> |
|  |   |   |

## MORE COLUMNS BY THIS WRITER

- :: 'Old white guy' takes the high road
- :: Decorous Harper disappoints opponents
- :: An embarrassment of federal riches
- :: Ontario picks up aggressive tactics
- :: Federal fortunes may feel bite

ADVERTISEMENT

Over 500  
top public  
and private  
Canadian  
companies.



---

**YOUR POST**

Subscriber services  
User Help  
Corrections  
Send us a news tip  
Letters:  
- To the editor  
- About your event  
- Site Feedback  
Mobile Headlines  
Daily Newsletter  
Contests  
Contact the Post  
Advertise

**SEARCH THE POST**

**GO**

**ADVANCED SEARCH**

---

**NATIONAL**

National news  
Global National  
Global Sunday  
Features

"The frank reality is that the public is not looking for a second election in less than a year, so we will not manufacture an election issue," said one senior Conservative.

Critics have taken issue with this strategy, arguing that showing the government their hand makes it impossible for the Opposition to bluff.

But the truth is, the Conservatives have more pressing issues to address than this budget, namely their first policy convention next month. "It is more relevant to the next election than the budget," said one source.

For Stephen Harper, the Conservative leader, it is at the front of his mind because he could conceivably lose the leadership in Montreal next month. While no contender has emerged, he knows that he will have to win support from more than 56% of delegates -- the amount he secured in last year's leadership vote against Belinda Stronach and Tony Clement. That may seem unlikely, with party insiders pitching his likely support at 80% of delegates. But, as was said of Ronald Reagan, he only won because he ran against Jimmy Carter -- if he'd run unopposed, he'd have lost.

Harper has been criticized for focusing on the gay marriage issue, at the expense of more traditional Conservative concerns like the economy and tax cuts. Resolutions on same-sex marriage and abortion will be brought up in Montreal, likely prompting old fault lines in the party to re-emerge.

Yet Harper has maintained that this is not because he wants to run a single-issue crusade but because the government has been inactive on almost every other front. He has said in the past that he would prefer the party not take a defined stance on moral issues, same-sex marriage excepted.


Still, Harper will continue to push hard on gay marriage, if for no other reason than he believes it is a vote-winner. Sources claim that the party's polling information shows the Liberals "plummeting" in Ontario, primarily on the same-sex issue and particularly among ethnic voters. It is notoriously hard to gauge the ethnic vote, so this claim is hard to verify but a recent SES poll did show the Conservatives up six points in Ontario and the Liberals down 10.

"There is a misunderstanding that our push to win the ethnic vote is restricted to this issue. It is not and we've done a lot of work on immigration, for example. But the Liberals have deliberately alienated part of their voter base and it is a bit of a gift for us," said a senior Conservative.

[More...](#)

1 | 2 | [NEXT >>](#)

 **Print Story**

 **Send to a Friend**

[Search canada.com](#) [About Us](#) [Advertise](#) [Site Map](#) [Privacy](#) [Terms](#) [FAQ](#) [Our Partners](#)

Copyright © 2005 CanWest Interactive Inc. All rights reserved.  
CanWest Interactive Inc. is an affiliate of [CanWest Global Communications Corp.](#)  
[Copyright & Permission Rules](#)

**canada.com**


[www.sprint.ca/free](http://www.sprint.ca/free)

**Home Phone Service**  
 Order online and receive  
 a **FREE VTech** phone


**FREE**  
**vtech**  
**phone**

**Order Now**

canada.com

▼ NEWSPAPERS

▼ TELEVISION

▼ CITIES

▼ CHANNELS

▼ CLASSIFIEDS

▼ RADIO

SEARCHWORD:

go

Search the Web

go

 YellowPages.ca

Canada 411

# SEARCH

## SEARCH

- » [Super Search](#)
- » [People Finder](#)
- » [Business Finder](#)
- » [French Search](#)
- » [OnLine Shopping](#)
- » [Careers](#)
- » [Autos](#)

## STORY

## Harper has more on his mind than budget

...Continued

&lt;&lt; PREVIOUS | 1 | 2

## ADVERTISEMENT

There remain fundamental hurdles for Harper and the Conservatives. Quebec remains stubbornly agnostic and the Conservative leader's personal numbers continue to trail those of the Prime Minister. Those kind of indicators have led to resignation in some quarters of the party that, even though Harper has earned the right to have a second crack at Martin, he is doomed to failure.

The Conservative leader is in danger of repeating the fate of British Labour leader, Neil Kinnock, who modernized a moribund party but was never able to convince voters he was the man to lead it to power. Last week, reports emerged from New Brunswick that Bernard Lord, the province's premier, is serious about stepping into the federal arena if Harper does choke next time around.

If he is to avoid that fate, he needs more time to build up his party, which is why, when Goodale rises tomorrow afternoon, Harper will probably be following Dorothy Parker's advice: If you don't knit, bring a book.

© National Post 2005

&lt;&lt; PREVIOUS | 1 | 2

 **Print Story** **Send to a Friend**
[Search canada.com](#) | [About Us](#) | [Advertise](#) | [Site Map](#) | [Privacy](#) | [Terms](#) | [FAQ](#) | [Our Partners](#)

# Dust off your old clubs

