



September 6, 2006

Nearly eight months after voters elected him to lead the country, Prime Minister Stephen Harper still seems to be suffering an image problem.

A whole bunch of Canadians just plain don't like him, although many of them have trouble explaining why.

In fact in recent polling, done by SES Research for the Sun, nearly 32% of people asked said they were unsure what they disliked about Harper while a little more than 28% of respondents couldn't say if there was anything they liked about the man.

A handful thought he was turning out to be a strong leader who listened to Canadians, but a mere 41 of the 1,000-plus people asked seemed to be impressed by one of his cornerstone policies -- reduction of the GST.

That was almost exactly the same number of people who liked Harper because he was a change from the Liberals.

Wow.

We Canadians must really be a tough lot to impress. Mind you, after we were brainwashed for a couple of years to believe that Harper and the Conservatives were scary people who would dismantle the Canadian way of life, maybe we simply can't see the progress that has been made since Harper and his government were sworn into office on Feb. 6.

Almost none of the people polled gave the PM credit for making progress -- finally -- on the softwood lumber deal with the U.S.

Only 17 of more than a thousand people paid attention to the way his government has been re-equipping and re-staffing the military. Even fewer credited him for improving relations with the States.

So what does it all mean?

Take away the hemming and hawing and the survey indicates that the Conservatives are pretty much back where they were on election day last January when it comes to popular support. In other words, they'd still have trouble electing enough members to form a majority.

Think about how that would translate into private life. You're hired into a new job on a probationary basis, make good on all your objectives but still can't get confirmed full-time. And when you ask why, you're told that the people who hired you don't really trust you.

Sure, you keep your word and get the job done. You're young, you listen, you have good moral values and are doing a good job. But they've got this ... this bad feeling.

Sheesh. Is it any wonder we have a tough time attracting "good people" into politics?