

 [Print this article](#)

[Close This Window](#)

## Gomery report to sway voters: poll

Mon Oct 31, 2005 11:40 AM EST

By David Ljunggren

OTTAWA (Reuters) - A long-awaited report into the sponsorship scandal will have a big impact at the next federal election and unfavorable revelations could bring down the Liberals, according to a poll released on Monday.

Judge John Gomery, who has been probing how C\$100 million from a federal sponsorship fund was funneled to Liberal-friendly firms, will release an initial report at 10 a.m. on Tuesday.

A poll by SES Research showed that fully 19 percent of Canadians would wait for Gomery's conclusions before deciding how they would vote.

"The November 1 Gomery Report and the reaction to it will be a critical factor in the outcome of the next election," SES said in a commentary.

Prime Minister Paul Martin has promised to call an election within 30 days of Gomery's second and final report, due on February 1 next year.

Looking at committed voters only, SES said public backing for the Liberals was at 40 percent compared to 28 percent for the Conservatives.

The New Democrats, who are keeping the Liberals in power, were at 15 percent.

"There's room for us. (This) demonstrates the government is still vulnerable, and rightly so, on what happened in the sponsorship scandal," said John Williams, a Conservative MP.

Gomery heard allegations that Liberal officials in Quebec demanded kickbacks in return for government contracts.

Martin, who will react to the report at a news conference on Tuesday, insists he had nothing to do with the scandal and blamed a small group of rogue Liberals. Opposition critics point out that he was the minister responsible for Quebec at the time.

If the probe finds Martin was involved in the wrongdoing, it could add to the damage for the Liberals, who have 133 of the 308 seats in the House of Commons.

The Conservatives, who narrowly failed to bring down Martin over the scandal, are already suggesting the Gomery report will be little better than a whitewash.

"The Gomery commission was never given a mandate to name names and lay blame and therefore we know that at best it's going to be a weak report tomorrow," said Williams.

"The Liberals (are saying) 'This is a process problem, it's not a political problem', which is absolutely false. This was a huge political problem involving politicians right up to the highest level in the land," he told Reuters.

The sponsorship program -- designed to boost the image of federalism in Quebec -- was set up by the government of former prime minister Jean Chretien.

Chretien, who clashed with Gomery on the witness stand, is an arch-rival of Martin's and openly questioned the need for the inquiry in the first place.

---

© Reuters 2005. All rights reserved. Republication or redistribution of Reuters content, including by caching, framing or similar means, is expressly prohibited without the prior written consent of Reuters. Reuters and the Reuters sphere logo are registered trademarks and trademarks of the Reuters group of companies around the world.

[Close This Window](#)