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# NEWS

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Mon, February 2, 2004

## Liberals at top of polls But Canucks not 'thrilled' with performance

By BILL RODGERS, OTTAWA BUREAU CHIEF

OTTAWA -- Canadians give Paul Martin's government an average grade, but their love affair with the Liberals continues unabated, according to a SES/Sun Media poll. The survey of 1,000 Canadians taken from Jan. 26-29 shows 35% rate the new Martin government's performance as average, while another 23% are undecided.

"Half of Canadians aren't really hot on this government," said SES president Nik Nanos. He believes it could be a vulnerability as Martin's Grits head into an election later this year.

"People like Paul Martin and ... the Liberals compared to the Conservative Party ... but they're not as thrilled about the actual performance of the Liberal government."

### THRONE SPEECH CRUCIAL

Nanos said it is critical for Martin to tackle the issue in the new session of Parliament. adding the Throne Speech today is "very important" to turn around performance results.

The poll showed only 6% of Canadians believe the government is doing a very good job, 24% said the performance was somewhat good and 13% rated it as poor or very poor.

When asked who would make the best prime minister, the survey put Paul Martin at the top by a whopping 50%. Lagging far behind at 8% were Conservative leadership candidate Stephen Harper and NDP leader Jack Layton at 5%. Another 26% were undecided, and 6% didn't like

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any of the current leaders.

If an election were held today, the poll gives the Grits 48% of popular support, the Tories 23% and the NDP 15%. The Bloc Quebecois is at 11% nationally, based on its support in Quebec, and the Green Party is at 3%.

A separate poll conducted by Leger Marketing Jan. 22-27 paints a similar picture. In the Leger survey, 36% of the 1,500 Canadians polled said they would vote Liberal, 16% Conservative, 11% NDP and 8% Bloc Quebecois.

But 26% wouldn't or couldn't answer. When that 26% was redistributed among the parties, the Grits came in at 49% and the Tories at 21%, results close to the SES/Sun Media poll.

## RESULTS PROMISING

Conservative House leader Loyola Hearn thinks the poll results are promising.

"Our party's at 23% when nobody knows who's going to lead it. They really haven't seen our policies yet," he said of the new party.

The SES/Sun Media poll is accurate to within 3.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

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## HOW WE'D VOTE TODAY

SES Research poll of 1,000 Canadians taken Jan. 26-29, 2004

LIBERAL: 48%

CONSERVATIVE: 23%

NDP: 15%

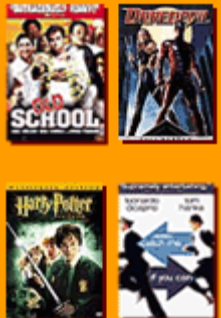
BLOC: 11%

GREEN: 3%

\*Accurate to within 3.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20

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