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# News Canada

Thu, November 16, 2006

## Tories losing favour Sun poll shows unhappy Quebecers have Harper's team tied with Grits



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By **ALAN FINDLAY**, OTTAWA BUREAU



OTTAWA -- Public support for Canada's Conservative government has fallen back into a statistical tie with the leaderless Liberals, a Sun Media-SES Research poll shows.

"The results show a statistical dead heat," SES president Nik Nanos said. "What we see is a slide in support for the Conservatives specifically concentrated in Quebec."

The Conservatives' strong electoral support in Quebec has all but evaporated in the past 10 weeks and dropped to 12% of decided voters -- compared to 26% in late August.

The Conservatives won 10 seats in Quebec last January with 24.6% of the province's popular vote.

Nationwide, the Tories kept 34% of committed voters' support, compared to 32% for the Liberals, 16% for the NDP, 13% for the Bloc Quebecois and 5% for the Greens.

Nanos warns the Liberals not to pop the champagne corks just yet, however.

The Quebec support falling away from the Tories is landing back in the Bloc camp, with half of the province's committed backers now behind Gilles Duceppe's party -- up from 42% in August.

"It speaks to the fact Stephen Harper was able to connect with soft

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nationalist supporters (last election)," Nanos said. "I think what this also means is if Gilles Duceppe is looking at these numbers, he might be thinking, 'I want an election sooner than later.'"

Since the last SES poll released Aug. 25, nationwide support for the Tories and New Democrats has fallen 2% for each party while the Grits' backing has grown 2%.

The Conservatives' support appears to have risen significantly in the West, however, with a 5% boost to 48% since the summer. Their popularity in Ontario looks to have sagged by a percentage point compared to a Liberal gain of two points and a two-point drop for the NDP.

The Sun Media-SES Research poll surveyed 884 eligible committed voters Nov. 5-9. The nationwide results are considered accurate to within 3.3 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

Another national poll, released yesterday, showed the Liberals with a slim lead over the Tories for the first time in almost a year -- but within the survey's 3.1-percentage-point margin of error.

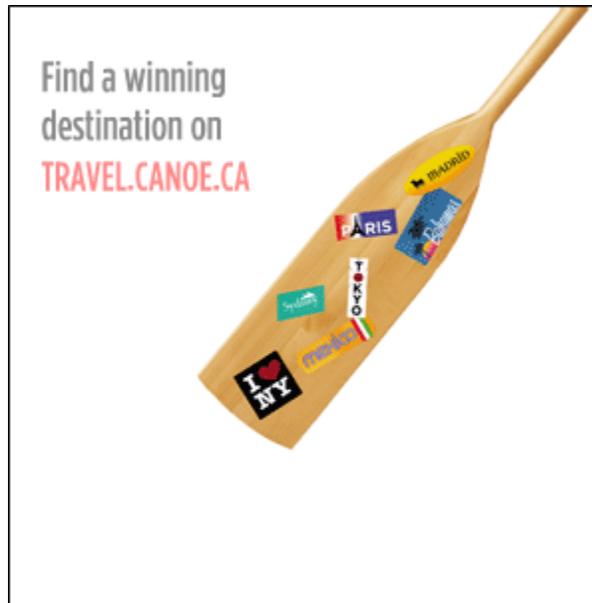
The Decima poll, conducted Nov. 9-13, pegged the Liberals at 33% support, the Conservatives at 31%, the NDP at 15% and the Greens at 10%.

### AFGHAN MISSION

These results come as support for Canada's role in the NATO-led Afghanistan mission likewise appears to be flagging. The mission is especially unpopular in Quebec.

A second sore point among Quebecers has been the Tories' lack of action on the environment, particularly toward meeting Kyoto commitments on climate change.

Those two issues have erased gains from the GST and cleaning up government.  
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