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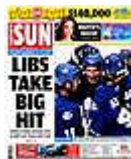
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Wed, November 16 / 05

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News Canada

Wed, November 16, 2005

NDP capitalize on drop for Liberals

New Sun Media-SES poll shows national support for Harper's Conservatives has stalled

By **KATHLEEN HARRIS**, OTTAWA BUREAU



- Boilin' at Grits
- Report: Grits took cash from mutual fund firm
- Layton wavers on vote

OTTAWA -- The Gomery report has delivered a six-point blow to the governing Grits, with the NDP benefiting from the spending scandal.

A Sun Media-SES Research poll shows support for the Liberals now stands at 34%, down from 40% just days before Justice John Gomery tabled his blistering report on Nov. 1. The NDP climbed five points to 20% while the Conservatives are stalled at 28%.

SES president Nik Nanos said the figures -- which compare support across the country on Oct. 27 with Nov. 13 -- show NDP Leader Jack Layton has capitalized on the scandal and the fragile minority Parliament.

"It makes him look like a force to be reckoned with, like a player, and at the centre of things. His numbers have gone up as a result," Nanos said.

"What do we see? Stephen Harper responding to Jack Layton's plan as opposed to Stephen Harper in the driver's seat."

NDP spokesman Brad
Lavigne said Canadians
can no longer "hold their
nose" and vote Liberal.

"With the stinging



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indictment of Justice Gomery's report, traditional Liberal voters have had it and are finding a very warm and comfortable home with Jack Layton and the NDP," he said.

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Conservative MP and campaign co-chair John Reynolds was unfazed by his party's lack of movement, insisting numbers will climb as candidates hit the hustings.

"The campaign is the issue here. People will take seriously who they're going to vote for, whether it's Paul Martin or Stephen Harper," he said.

A Pollara poll for Reuters released yesterday offered virtually identical results. That survey, done Nov. 7-13, put the Grits at 36%, the Tories at 28% and the NDP at 20%. It also shows the Bloc Quebecois with a lead of 64% to 23% over the Liberals in Quebec.

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