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## Harper Says Conservatives Ready For Election

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Montreal, Quebec (AHN) - Prime Minister Stephen Harper said Wednesday the Conservative party is ready for an election should the Liberal party be successful in bringing down the Canadian government.

Harper said, quoted by CanWest News Service, "They'll never again be able to say that I wrote off Quebec... Our party and our organizations are getting stronger in all parts of Quebec, including Montreal. After the next election, our minister for Montreal will be a Montreal MP."

The prime minister was at a Conservative fundraising event attended by 2,300 party members who paid \$150 each for a dinner plate.

His confidence of a Tory poll victory stems from Canada's handling of the financial crisis. "Thanks to our good management, Canada was the last country to go into recession and will come out of it with one of the strongest economies on the planet. We were not elected despite the crisis, but because of it, because no other party comes close to us in managing the economy," Harper said.

The Liberals have been challenging the Tories to subject the country to another federal election over the issue of employment benefits.

Although the Conservatives are weak in Quebec, the latest national survey made by Nanos Research showed that Harper is leading over Liberal leader Michael Ignatieff in four leadership indicators. The survey covered 1,001 Canadians done via telephone on the last week of April.

Harper got a 28 percent approval rating for trust, 34 percent for competence, 30 percent for vision for Canada and 92 percent as his leadership index score. In contrast, Ignatieff secured 19 percent, 23 percent, 23 percent and 65 percent for the same indicators. The Conservative leader showed increase in all four indicators compared to a similar survey made by Nanos in February, while the Liberal leader registered a one percent decline for trust and leadership index score and remained constant for competence and vision for Canada.

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