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Canada Conservatives Stem Poll Slide With Days Left in Campaign

By Alexandre Deslongchamps

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Oct. 9 (Bloomberg) -- Canadian Prime Minister [Stephen Harper](#)'s Conservative Party halted a drop in opinion polls that yesterday saw them hit their lowest level of support since the start of the campaign ahead of Oct. 14 elections.

The Conservatives climbed to 32 percent in a Harris-Decima [poll](#) conducted Oct. 5-8, from 31 percent when the same poll was taken Oct. 4-7. The Liberals, led by [Stephane Dion](#), are within 5 percentage points at 27 percent, the same as in the earlier survey. The poll's margin of error is 2.7 percentage points.

Both parties' standings were unchanged in a daily poll by Nanos Research for CPAC, with the Conservatives at 33 percent and the Liberals at 29 percent. The margin of error in the Nanos poll is 2.8 percentage points.

The Liberals, who have been as much as 15 percentage points behind the governing Conservatives since the campaign began on Sept. 7, narrowed the gap after Dion attacked Harper in debates, saying he doesn't have an adequate plan for the economy. Dion said yesterday that Conservatives "always mismanage the economy" because they don't understand the role of government during slowdowns or crises.

The Bank of Canada unexpectedly cut its key lending rate by a half percentage point on Oct. 8 to 2.5 percent, acting before its next scheduled decision and citing the global crisis in financial markets.

The Conservatives were 27 seats short of a majority in Canada's 308-seat Parliament when elections were called, so they had to rely on other parties to pass laws. Typically, it takes 38 to 40 percent of the popular vote to win enough electoral districts to control the legislature.

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