

ontario election 2007

McGuinty says he's fine with voters' decision, whatever it is

Craig Pearson, CanWest News Service

BARRIE — Premier Dalton McGuinty said Tuesday he will accept what voters choose, including a minority government — which a new poll suggests is likely.

But at a campaign stop in Barrie, McGuinty said he will stick to his plan of emphasizing his favourite topics, such as education and health care.

"The electorate will do its own thing in its own course, and that's fine by me," McGuinty said. "They have the responsibility to come to understand the issues and get out and vote. My responsibility is to continue to present to them both our record of achievement and to continue to invite them as we move forward together."

Yet heading into the second half of the Ontario election, a just released poll suggests not as many voters as last time want to join the Liberals.

An SES Research-Sun Media poll indicates that with two weeks remaining in the provincial campaign, the Liberals are stalled with 41% support, the Progressive Conservatives with 33%, the New Democratic Party with 18, and the Green Party with eight.

Would McGuinty be satisfied with a minority government?

"I am looking for as much support as I can possibly get," he said.

The poll of voting-age Ontarians indicates last week's televised debate did little to sway public opinion.

The survey of 500 voting-aged Ontarians was conducted between Friday, a day after the debate, and Sunday.

The numbers are within one point of where they were when SES last polled in late August.

About 20% of respondents believe the Conservatives' John Tory won the debate, 15% said McGuinty won and 5% gave it to the NDP's Howard Hampton.

Almost 16% said none of the leaders won and 44% were uncertain.