

Saturday, April 12, 2008

Presented by



Tories hold on to poll lead

Liberal support also unchanged from 2006

Jack Aubry, Canwest News Service

Published: Saturday, April 12, 2008

OTTAWA - In a week when the Conservative government has taken heat for stalling parliamentary committees and Liberal leader Stephane Dion has been criticized for voting in favour of an immigration bill his party opposes, Canada's two major parties remain virtually unchanged in their battle for public support.

Conducted exclusively for Canwest News Service/Global National, a new Ipsos Reid poll shows the Conservatives frozen with 35% of the vote while the Liberals are at 30%, down three percentage points since the last survey in late March.

The NDP rose three percentage points to 16% support while the Green Party went up two points to 10%.

Despite the minor changes, the numbers indicate the parties remain close to their position at the time of the last election more than two years ago.

"It just doesn't seem to go anywhere," said Darrell Bricker, the president of Ipsos Reid Public Affairs.

"You know, as bad as Dion looked last week, it doesn't seem to matter. And as good as Harper looks on

the national stage sometimes, it doesn't really matter."

Another poll, conducted between April 4 and 9 by Nanos Research, showed the Liberals and Conservatives in a dead heat at 36% each nationally, but with the Liberals enjoying support of 50% of voters in Ontario. In Quebec the parties were tied for second at 23%, 12 points behind the Bloc Quebecois.

A poll published yesterday in La Presse showed the Tories at 36%, Liberals at 30% and NDP at 15%. The Conservatives were leading the Liberals in Quebec by 25% to 21%.

Mr. Bricker said potentially damaging stories such as the Lukiwski tape or the Mulroney-Schreiber affair may affect party support for a couple a weeks, but eventually they snap back to around the current numbers, which almost mirror the results of the last election. Conservatives held 36% while the Liberals trailed with 30% in the 2006 vote.

There has been continual speculation on Parliament Hill about the possibility of a June election.

But the unpromising polling numbers and well-publicized party problems for the Liberals in Quebec make the prospects appear unlikely.

The Ipsos poll indicated the Bloc maintained its lead in Quebec, holding 33% of public support compared to the Grits and the Tories, who are both 10 points behind at 23%.

In vote-rich Ontario, the Liberals continue to lead with 38% support with the Tories trailing with 34%, the NDP at 15% and the Greens at 12%.

The Tories lead in all provinces west of Ontario, with about 55% of support in Alberta, Saskatchewan

and Manitoba. In British Columbia, the Conservatives are at 43% while the Liberals hold 25%, the NDP 21% and the Green Party at 11%.

The survey, conducted Tuesday to Thursday, involved phone interviews with 1,000 adults. The national results are considered accurate to within 3.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, with the margin larger for regional findings.