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Mon 20 Oct 2008 | 10:12 EDT

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# Polls diverge on fortunes of Canada Conservatives

Wed Oct 8, 2008 4:14pm EDT

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OTTAWA (Reuters) - A new poll released on Wednesday showed the Conservative lead in the Canadian election campaign continuing to shrink while two others covering a similar period showed it widening again.

Concern over the economy appears in any case to have bitten sharply into the Conservative support but what is unclear is whether the slide has been checked.

A Harris-Decima/Canadian Press survey put the Conservatives at 31 percent, unchanged from their survey the day before, but the Liberals up 1 point at 27 percent. It had the left-of-center New Democratic Party (NDP) at 20 percent.

An Ekos automated telephone poll released on Tuesday night, however, had the Conservative lead growing again to 9 percentage points from the 7 that Ekos had reported a day earlier.

Ekos showed the Conservatives at 34 percent, the Liberals at 25 percent and the NDP at 20 percent, and said voters seemed neither to want to give Conservative Prime Minister Stephen Harper a majority in Parliament nor to elect Liberal leader Stephane Dion.

"Canadians seem stuck between repellent poles," said Ekos President Frank Graves.

"There is limited enthusiasm for a Tory majority, or even a Tory government. But the obvious alternative -- a Dion government -- hardly seems appetizing either for most Canadians."

A Nanos Research poll had the gap up slightly to 4 points from what had been the campaign's smallest margin of 3 points the day before. It had the Conservatives at 33 percent, the Liberals at 29 percent and the NDP at 20.

Nanos said Harper maintained a comfortable advantage on who voters thought would make the best prime minister. He was picked by 33 percent, the NDP's Jack Layton by 20 percent and Dion by 17 percent. **Continued...**

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