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**Sommaire**

**Évaluation du nouveau gouvernement et attentes**

**29 juin 2006**

**Préparé pour le Bureau du Conseil privé**

**35035-065062/CY – Date de la passation du marché : 19 mai 2006**

**This report is also available in English on request**

# Aperçu

- Objectifs
- Méthodologie
- Principales conclusions
- Performance du gouvernement jusqu'à présent
- Attentes à l'égard du gouvernement
- Examen détaillé des grandes questions
- Autres questions d'intérêt

# Objectifs

- Mieux comprendre les points de vue de la population canadienne en ce qui concerne les enjeux les plus importants auxquels le pays est confronté.
- Déterminer les priorités des Canadiennes et des Canadiens en ce qui concerne les collectivités et ce que le gouvernement fédéral peut faire pour y répondre.
- Cerner les nouveaux enjeux et étudier les attitudes à cet égard.
- Pour déterminer ces enjeux, des questions clés ont été posées dans le cadre de cette étude :
  - Quels sont les plus importants défis que cette nation doit relever?
  - Quels sont les plus importants défis que les participants doivent relever?
  - Quel est le rôle du gouvernement?
  - Jusqu'à quel point la population canadienne est-elle au courant des réalisations du gouvernement par rapport à ses cinq priorités jusqu'à présent?
  - Comment les Canadiennes et les Canadiens ont-ils réagi à ces réalisations?
  - Quelles sont les attentes des Canadiennes et des Canadiens pour l'avenir?

# Méthodologie

- Série de rencontres de 12 groupes de discussion avec des Canadiennes et des Canadiens engagés de Kenora, Moncton, Montréal, Mississauga, Regina et Vancouver en juin 2006.
- Des questions spéciales de recrutement ont permis de s'assurer que tous les participants aux groupes sont des « Canadiennes et des Canadiens engagés » qui sont actifs dans leurs communautés et qui s'intéressent aux activités du gouvernement.



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**Faits saillants**

# Faits saillants

- La plupart des participants aux groupes de discussion, qu'ils appuient ou non le nouveau gouvernement, avaient l'impression que ce dernier avançait modestement dans son plan d'action.
- Malgré ce sentiment d'enthousiasme modéré, seuls quelques participants pouvaient identifier les cinq grandes priorités du gouvernement ou énumérer de façon précise et sans aide ses réalisations à ce jour. Lorsqu'on les incitait à le faire, la plupart des participants étaient en mesure de se rappeler de la réduction de la TPS à 6 %, de l'allocation annuelle de 1 200 \$ pour la garde d'enfants et, bien que personne n'ait mentionné directement la Loi fédérale sur l'imputabilité, de l'importance accrue accordée à l'imputabilité.
- La majorité des participants sont conscients du statut minoritaire du gouvernement.
- La plupart des participants font preuve d'un optimisme prudent quant à l'avenir; nombre d'entre eux estiment qu'il est plus prudent d'attendre et d'observer.

# Faits saillants : forces

- Voici quelques-unes des forces du gouvernement :
  - Simple et direct : annonce ce qu'il fera et fait ce qu'il annonce.
  - Aborder des questions complexes en agissant et en mettant l'accent sur des résultats clairs et pleins de bon sens qui sont importants aux yeux des particuliers.
  - Montrer les progrès et franchir les étapes une à la fois.
  - Adopter une approche de coopération, d'innovation et de bon sens en ce qui concerne les relations avec les Canadiens et les autres paliers de gouvernement.

# Faits saillants : faiblesses

- Voici quelques-unes des faiblesses :
  - Perception d'un rapprochement avec les États-Unis, en particulier avec la politique étrangère américaine, et préoccupations relatives à une diminution de l'indépendance du Canada consécutive à ce rapprochement.
  - Impression que le gouvernement prend peut-être des décisions fondées sur son statut minoritaire.
  - Degré de confidentialité accru illustré par la décision d'interdire aux médias de couvrir le rapatriement de membres des Forces canadiennes morts en Afghanistan et par les relations générales avec les médias d'information.

# Faits saillants : grandes questions

- Certaines questions tiennent le haut du pavé de l'opinion publique :
  - Les soins de santé demeurent une grande priorité, mais on perçoit un manque d'enthousiasme face au sujet. Pour leur part, ils semblaient moins pressés de parler des soins de santé que les groupes antérieurs. La plupart d'entre eux ont fait remarquer qu'il s'agit d'un problème à long terme qui ne sera pas facile à résoudre étant donné qu'il concerne plusieurs juridictions.
  - D'un autre côté, les participants ont parlé de la question de l'environnement avec beaucoup d'enthousiasme et l'ont qualifiée de cruciale. Il s'agit d'un domaine dans lequel le gouvernement pourrait réaliser des progrès réels et tangibles s'il y mettait des efforts et de l'attention.
  - La criminalité faisait également partie des grandes questions. La plupart des participants croient que des mesures raisonnablement rapides et simples pourraient être déployées pour améliorer le système judiciaire et rendre les communautés plus sûres pour les Canadiens.

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- L'imposition a été évoquée, mais à l'exception de la réduction de l'impôt sur le revenu, peu de participants étaient d'accord sur la nature ou l'importance des réductions d'impôt nécessaires. Il semble que les réductions d'impôt sont davantage synonymes « d'imputabilité du gouvernement » que de « répercussions économiques ».
- La compétence et l'imputabilité du gouvernement ont également été mentionnées parmi les grandes priorités et principes sous-jacents que le gouvernement devrait toujours respecter.
- Étonnamment, l'économie et/ou la création d'emploi ne font pas partie des « grandes questions ».

# Considérations stratégiques

- Les Canadiens souhaitent que le gouvernement soit davantage ouvert et transparent, et qu'il partage volontiers les renseignements importants avec le public.
- Les « gouvernements » en général sont encore profondément perçus de façon négative et cynique. Il faut donc prendre des précautions pour s'assurer que les communications avec le public soient effectuées sur un ton optimiste, mais pas fanfaron. Il faut également éviter l'impression « qu'ils jouent à la politique » (en jetant le blâme sur les gouvernements précédents) et plutôt mettre l'accent sur la communication d'actions réalisables à court terme.

# Considérations stratégiques

- Peu importe qu'une politique soit conçue pour résoudre les questions les plus urgentes (soins de santé, environnement, criminalité, impôts ou une des questions de créneau/régionales auxquelles sont confrontés les Canadiens), les conclusions indiquent que quelques principes directeurs devraient encadrer l'élaboration des politiques :
  - Choix personnel (les participants souhaitent prendre des décisions et participer à l'élaboration des solutions en ce qui concerne le pays).
  - Indépendance du Canada (les participants veulent s'assurer que toutes les décisions, qu'elle soient nationales ou internationales, sont d'abord et avant tout prises dans l'intérêt du Canada).
  - Protection des Canadiens (santé, environnement, criminalité, terrorisme).
  - Efficacité du gouvernement (imputabilité, réduction du gaspillage, mise à exécution).



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## Executive Summary

### Canadians Assessment and Expectations of the New Government

June 29, 2006

Prepared for the Privy Council Office

35035-065062/CY – Award date: May 19, 2006

Ce rapport est aussi disponible en français sur demande



# Outline

- Objectives
- Methodology
- Key Findings
- Government Performance to Date
- Expectation of the Government
- A Detailed look at the Top Issues
- Other Issues of Interest

# Objectives

- Gain a better understanding of Canadians' views as to most important issues facing the country,
- Focus on Canadians' priorities for the communities they live in, and what the federal government can do to address these priorities.
- Identify emerging issues and explore attitudes surrounding these issues.
- To determine these issues, key questions were addressed in the study:
  - What are the most important issues facing the nation?
  - What are the most important issues facing participants themselves?
  - What is the role of government?
  - To what extent are Canadians aware of federal government accomplishments to date, as related to the government's five priorities?
  - How have they reacted to these accomplishments?
  - What are Canadians' expectations going forward?



# Methodology

- A series of twelve focus groups with Engaged Canadians in Kenora, Moncton, Montreal, Mississauga, Regina and Vancouver in June 2006.
- Special screener questions were used in recruiting respondents to ensure that all group participants are “Engaged Canadians” who participate in civic life and are interested in government activities.



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## Key Findings

# Key Findings

- Most focus group participants whether supportive or not of the new government felt that it was making modest progress on its agenda.
- Despite this measured sense of momentum, few could identify the Government's five key priorities or list specific accomplishments to date on an unaided basis. When prompted, most were able to recall the GST cutback to 6%, the \$1,200 childcare agreement and a increased focus on accountability although no specific reference was made to the Federal Accountability Act.
- Most participants are aware of the new government's minority status.
- Looking ahead, most participants are cautiously optimistic with many saying that a wait and see approach is probably warranted.



# Key Findings: Strengths

- Strengths of the new government include:
  - Straightforward: saying what it will do, and doing what it says.
  - Dealing with complex issues by acting and focussing on some clear commonsense deliverables that matter to individuals.
  - Showing progress, taking one step at a time.
  - Demonstrating cooperation, breakthroughs, and a commonsense approach to dealing with Canadians and other levels of government.

# Key Findings: Weaknesses

- Weaknesses include:
  - A perceived closeness to the United States, especially US foreign policy, and concern that this closeness may lead to decreased Canadian independence.
  - A perception that the government may be making decisions based on its minority status.
  - An increased level of secrecy exemplified by the decision not to allow news coverage of returning Canadian Forces members who died in Afghanistan and by overall relations with the news media.

# Key Findings: Key Issues

- Several issues rise to top of the public's agenda:
  - **Healthcare** remains a top priority but the participants seemed to sense a lack of momentum on the file. For their part they seemed to talk about healthcare with less urgency than in past groups most noting that it will be a long term fix and, as an issue that crosses jurisdictions, won't easily be solved.
  - The **environment** on the other hand was talked about with great enthusiasm and seen as a critical issue to address. One where real and tangible progress could be made if only there was some dedicated will and focus on the part of the government.
  - **Crime** was also a key issue where most felt that there were reasonably quick and easy initiatives that could be taken to improve the justice system and make communities safer for Canadians.



# Key Findings: Key Issues

- **Taxation** was raised but aside from lower income tax there was little consensus on what or how much tax relief was required. Tax reductions seem to say more about “government accountability” than they do about “economic generation”.
- **Good government** and accountability were also mentioned as a top priority and an underlying principle of the way governments should always conduct themselves.
- Notable for its absence among the “top issues” was the economy and/or job creation.



# Strategic Considerations

- Canadians desire a more open and transparent government, one that readily shares critical information with the public.
- Cynicism and negative perceptions of all “Government” still run deep and caution needs to be taken to ensure communications with the public are optimistic but not boastful. There is a need to avoid the perception that “they’re playing politics” (pointing blame at previous governments) and instead focus on communicating short-term, achievable actions.
- Regardless of whether policy is designed to address one of the most pressing issues: Healthcare; Environment; Crime; or Taxes or any of the numerous niche/regional issues facing Canadians, findings suggest several key principles should guide policy development:
  - Personal choice (participants want to make decisions and participate in the solutions facing the country).
  - Canadian independence (participants want to ensure that all decisions whether international or domestic are made first and foremost in the best interest of Canada).
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  - Effective government (accountability, reduction of waste, getting things done).



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## **Government Performance to Date**

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- Participants recruited were neither strongly supportive nor strongly opposed to the new government and the discussion reflected this with participants in all regions somewhat divided in their impressions of the new government. That said, regardless of the differences, most participants feel (although those opposed often agreed grudgingly) that the new government is moving forward and making modest progress on its agenda.
- While there is some sense of momentum and accomplishment, few could easily identify the Government's five key priorities or list specific accomplishments to date when asked.
- When prompted, most were able to recall the GST cutback to 6%, the \$1,200 childcare agreement and a greater focus on "cleaning up government spending."



# Government Performance to Date

- Most feel that it is too soon to tell whether the new government represents a real change in the way Ottawa does business, or whether in time the new government will come to resemble its predecessor in terms of cronyism and lack of concern for local issues. However, again there is a measured sense of optimism.



# Government Performance to Date: What they are doing well.

- For most participants positive government accomplishments focus more on the approach to governing rather than specific accomplishments to date.
- Notable among the “hows” is a belief that the government is straightforward and honest, doing what it says and saying what it plans to do.
- Others noted a more cooperative approach to dealing with other levels of government and Canadians at large. While previous administrations were viewed as more detached, this one is seen as somewhat more proactive, involved and, among supporters, dramatic in its approach to problems. Some participants express admiration for the perceived diligence and commitment of the new government.



# Government Performance to Date: What they are doing well.

- Participants are divided with some saying the arrival of the new government heralds significant change for the future, while others feel things will stay basically the same. Among those who think the new government has changed things, most think it is for the better. However, low awareness of the new government's activity on key policy areas precluded most participants from being definitively positive.



# Government Performance to Date: What they are doing wrong.

- Main criticisms of the new government centre around four key areas:
  - A perception that the Government’s agenda is too close to the United States agenda and the fear that this could diminish Canadian independence.
  - A lack of sympathy for those in need and the possibility of re-opening debate on several divisive social issues.
  - A government that acts secretly with an overemphasis on image-management and re-election.
  - A government that favours “big business” over the interest of average Canadians.



# Government Performance to Date: Pace of Change

- Lack of awareness of specific accomplishments leads some to believe little has really changed.
- For some, the slow pace of change simply represents politics as usual, they note that, typically, government moves rapidly only when a crisis occurs. Some of these participants also suggest that unless the government moves quickly to make and consolidate gains, it will actually lose ground.



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## **Expectations of the Government**



# Expectations of the Government

- Overall participants expect/hope that the new government will represent a “real change” in the way government and politics are conducted in the country.
- While participants may be divided on the direction the government should take in several key policy areas they are not divided in the principles they feel should govern government’s day-to-day conduct:
  - Government should be honest and straightforward - doing what it says and saying what it does.
  - Government should put the interests of Canadians first, both internationally when dealing with other governments and domestically when dealing with big business.
  - Government should show and provide citizens with choices and opportunities to participate in finding solutions to the problems facing the country.



# Most Important Issues for Engaged Canadians

- Although health care (wait times) are still a high priority for these participants, their expectations of real change on this front are relatively low compared to some other issues, because of the complexity of the health care issue and an apparent lack of progress over the last decade.
- By contrast, the environment emerges as a dynamic and important issue that has the potential to make a positive impact in many areas including:
  - improved health of Canadians through healthy foods, clean air, and clean water
  - economic growth through the development of new technologies and industries
  - stronger Canadian independence through the reduction in reliance on foreign fuels
- The environment is also seen as important in part because participants can point to specific, actionable policy initiatives via which they can contribute to solutions.



# Most Important Issues for Engaged Canadians

- Crime is also emerging as a serious issue, in some communities more than others, particularly where perceptions of incidence are increasing.
- Taxation, although still important, is discussed with much less urgency; participants seem to have lower expectations for the new government to act on this issue than on others.
- Participants also want good/effective government – but this is a process issue, not a policy issue, and ranks somewhat lower in terms of priorities for the new government.
- Notable in its absence from the brainstorming activities was much dialogue about the state of the economy. Generally speaking job creation, unemployment, wages, housing costs or any other typical indicators of economic anxiety were rarely mentioned. The exception was Montreal, where wages and job creation were discussed in some detail.



# Most Important Issues for Engaged Canadians

- During the “brainstorming” sessions, participants came up with a relatively short list of policy priorities that tended to be consistent across regions:
  - Health care and wait times (a “top 5” issue in 5 of 6 regions)
  - The environment (a “top 5” issue in 5 of 6 regions)
  - Crime (a “top 5” issue in 3 of 6 regions)
  - Taxation (a “top 5” issue in 3 of 6 regions)
  - Good government (a “top 5” issue in 2 of 6 regions)
  - Seniors and pension issues (a “top 5” issue in 2 of 6 regions)
  - Gas prices (a “top 5” issue in 2 of 6 regions)

# "Most Important Issues for Engaged Canadians"?

<b>Regina:</b>	Taxes, crime, health, government inefficiency
<b>Montreal:</b>	Environment, poverty, condition of women and children, national project
<b>Mississauga:</b>	Environment, health care and wait times, crime and justice, good government
<b>Vancouver:</b>	Taxation, environment, health care, Canada/US relations, natural resources
<b>Moncton:</b>	Wait times, seniors and pensions, crime, gas prices, environment
<b>Kenora:</b>	Health care and wait times, tax fairness, environment, fairness for the handicapped, and tied for fifth was education, gas prices, healthy food, and better pensions for seniors



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## **A Detailed Look at Top Issues**

- Healthcare as a top issue, is often defined in terms of:
  - Wait times;
  - Human resources and physical capital; and,
  - Healthy living and environmental considerations.
  
- Among these three major categories, wait times tend to be seen as having the most direct impacts on individual Canadians. Participants often relate personal experiences when they or those close to them have had to wait long periods for critical medical care.
  - The idea of imposing wait time guarantees is welcomed, although it is not entirely clear how this will be achieved. As such expectations in this area are low.
  - Setting and achieving modest goals, in perhaps a few key areas, may help boost perceptions that real progress is being made.
  - Increasing health related human resources / physical capital over the short-term and promoting healthy living and a cleaner environment over the long-term are seen as the best approaches to addressing Healthcare

# Healthcare (Con't)

- A perceived human resources shortage in the healthcare industry connects very directly to immigration and the acceptance of foreign credentials.
  - Participants don't necessarily understand the challenges associated with admitting foreign doctors to practice in Canada however the impact of Canadian doctors who relocate elsewhere in Canada or abroad is evident.
  - There is a sense that Canada is setting the bar too high for immigrant healthcare professionals to practice medicine at a time when their expertise is in great need.
  
- Steps to foster a healthier public are viewed as a positive way that government can improve the health of Canadians overall and ease the burden on the healthcare system.
  - Canadians perceive a variety of tools in this area (including tax credits for healthy lifestyle choices, taxes on unhealthy products like fast food and broad public awareness efforts to promote healthy living);
  - The public also connects progress on environmental issues that result in cleaner communities with a healthier public.

# The Environment

- The environment has emerged as a critical issue and is one that has direct linkages to several other key issues.
- The new government is not seen as particularly active on the environment, and some participants perceive this government as abandoning effective environmental programs (One Tonne Challenge, Kyoto).
- That said, the Kyoto Protocol generates little familiarity and among those familiar, it carries little meaning except as a symbol of the new government's lack of commitment to the environment.
- There is an emphasis on solutions that improve the quality of life in communities (with extension to the health of communities), are market-based, and promise economic growth.
- Winning environmental solutions go beyond the environment. For example, developing ethanol as a more competitive alternative to gas could:
  - Promote Canada's independence, and decrease reliance on foreign oil;
  - Promote Canadian industry generally, and in particular the Canadian farmer;
  - Contribute to cleaner communities and fewer greenhouse gas emissions;
  - Make Canada an environmental leader on the world stage.

- Crime is emerging as a major issue. A large number of participants have had direct experience with crime, and many feel unsafe in some parts of their communities.
- Crime is not generally viewed as a national issue. Instead, regional differences dominate discussion of crime: for example, participants in Vancouver and Montreal raise drugs and gangs; in Regina, it is petty street crime by unemployed youth; and in Kenora, Aboriginal crime is seen as the main issues.
- For most participants, young people with too much time on their hands are viewed as the typical perpetrators, and repeat offenders are particularly troublesome. The juvenile justice system is generally considered to be a “turnstile” where young offenders are set on a long-term track of crime.

# Crime (Con't)

- In addressing crime, the new government would be responding to the fears and anxieties of a significant proportion of the population. Personal safety, security of property, and the future of Canadian youth are all linked to a crime-free environment.
- On the downside, efforts to reduce crime often raise concerns about civil liberties and racial profiling. Cost is also an issue: developing new initiatives or overhauling the justice system brings funding questions.
- Nonetheless, participants are looking for policies that protect Canadians from crime. Many advocate a “get tough” solution of harsher sentencing, including a more punitive role for judges in enforcing sentencing guidelines, as well as a stiffening of penalties and increased police funding. Some want stricter control of access to guns.



# Crime (Con't)

- Participants also like solutions that involve helping young people to make good choices. Prevention programs that focus on increasing educational opportunities and providing activities for youth are popular with some. Others advocate increasing the availability of social workers and psychologists to help youth avoid criminal activity, and reforming the juvenile justice system to encourage rehabilitation of criminals.



# Taxes

- Taxation is a relevant issue for most participants, but few seemed to view excessive taxes as a major problem in Canada today, and little evidence exists for a consensus on lowering taxes.
- Participants do not expect to see significant reductions in taxation via current or future policy initiatives, and generally seem to view taxation as a complicated issue that lends itself to pie-in-the-sky promises.



## Taxes (Con't)

- Participants see both positive and negative effects of tax cuts. A link between expenditure review and good government is apparent here; participants want to avoid wasting tax money. Reducing the size of government would release funds for lowering taxes as well as increase government efficiency.
- They also want to have a clear idea of where their tax money goes.
- Conversely, some worry that lowering taxes – unless it is the taxes of lower-income Canadians – might cause vital services to suffer. They wonder where service cuts will appear if significant tax cuts are made.

# Taxes (Con't)

- Some participants, concerned about tax equity for lower income Canadians, suggest raising the cap on the lowest tax bracket and increasing taxes on wealthy Canadians and corporations to compensate. Furthermore, some would like to see tax exemptions for Aboriginal Canadians revisited.
- Unlike many other issues, participants do not generally talk about taxes in terms of personal choice. There was little evidence of an unprompted desire for more individual control over finances via tax cuts. For most the issue is “fairness” and putting everyone on an equal footing.
- Basically, participants want an efficient government that doesn't waste tax money. As such, tax reform policy should focus on clear benefits, coupled with transparency about any service reduction that results.



# Good Government/Accountability

- Democratic reform is not clearly understood by most participants, despite awareness of recent government proposals for fixed elections and Senate reform. That said, participants do express concern about diminishing voter turnout as well as relative disinterest in the democratic process.
- There is a recognition that political awareness is excessively low among Canadians. Many cite cynicism about the process, disinterest and political apathy as reasons, as well as blaming a lack of in-depth political information available in the media. Issues of representation for less populous regions are also of concern for some participants.



# Good Government/Accountability (Con't)

- There is some limited recognition that the new government was elected in part on a platform of accountability. It seems any efforts to expand democracy and make processes more transparent would be well received. This may be the case particularly in rural or Western areas that traditionally see their needs being ignored in the political process.

# Good Government/Accountability (Con't)

- To rectify low voter turnout, participants propose a range of solutions:
  - Less personal choice: Mandatory voting, with cash incentives for participating, or fines for those who fail to vote.
  - More personal choice: More frequent elections, and referenda for important national issues; a longer voting window (up to a week); more polling stations, with increased accessibility for the elderly.
- Online voting is also appealing to some participants, due to convenience. However, security concerns preclude it being seen as a viable option by most.
- Some participants were aware of the new government's plans for fixed elections, and supported these as a way to keep officials somewhat more accountable.



# Good Government/Accountability (Con't)

- Participants believe that the role of the federal government is to run the country and avoid over-spending, by treating bureaucracy like a company and budgeting accordingly. A smaller federal government is an asset by this view, because it is easier to control. Expenditure review is a necessity and should be an on-going part of the way government runs.
- Government waste (including funding of own-language classes for immigrants; bilingualism; the gun registry) and poor government service delivery are cited as candidates for expenditure review. Participants believe solving waste would provide extra funding for other priorities.

# Good Government/Accountability (Con't)

- Stopping waste of tax money through government inefficiency is always popular, and the new government is well positioned to take on this role. Many participants express some optimism that the new government will “clean things up”, including via expenditure review.
- The Auditor General is widely admired, and participants advocate a continuing role for an independent auditor at “arm’s length” from the government, to carry out annual audits.
- In terms of concrete solutions, participants suggest making better use of tax dollars, by linking taxes to specific initiatives. For example using the gas tax to invest in infrastructure such as roads.
- Some participants also recommend that money be transferred back to the provinces to facilitate easier monitoring.



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**Other Issues of Interest**



# Other Issues of Interest

- Please note that the remaining issues covered in this report were **not** discussed in all centers.



# Seniors

- Participants are aware of the aging population, and the likely future burden of increasing numbers of elderly on the social net.
- Participants suggest taking steps to make it easier for immediate families to take on caring for seniors. For example, these might include incentives for “granny suites” and home living arrangements, as opposed to subsidized elderly care in formal settings.



# Fiscal Imbalance

- Not all participants were clear on the meaning of the term “fiscal imbalance”. Just a handful understood that it referred to equalization payments. Some thought it meant the federal government taxing at a lower rate in order to provide more leeway in taxation to the provinces. Others thought it might refer to avoiding running a deficit.
- Participants express little concern with federal government redistributing money to the provinces, or directly spending in the area of infrastructure and post-secondary education.
- They believe it is appropriate for the federal government to increase access to education by providing loans and bursaries and keeping costs down, perhaps even offering free university education.



# Encouraging Canadians to Save Money

- Despite recognizing this as an important issue, generally speaking participants do not see Canadians as money savers. Living beyond our means, a lack of foresight, and the high cost of living are seen as contributing factors to the increasing inability to save money.
- Participants suggest public awareness initiatives to teach people to save money. They also propose placing some restrictions on the ease of obtaining credit, and providing incentives for saving money.

# Aboriginal Issues

- Participants express concerns with the current state of Aboriginal affairs. Poor conditions on reserve, insufficient housing, no sewers and bad water are often cited. Welfare dependency and disincentives to working; poor leadership on reserve (including inequity in distribution of funds); out-dated governance structure in administering the Indian Act; the need to settle land claims; lack of employment on reserve; and a lack of education and hope for the future for youth are also listed as contributing factors.
- Most participants focus on the need for better quality education and job training programs as the most efficacious solutions for Aboriginals, in addition to providing more employment opportunities. Participants point to the unrealistically high standards set by new mines and casinos that effectively block Native youth from these job openings.



# Aboriginal Issues (Con't)

- Settling land claims in a timely way is also considered to be an important part of the solution. However, self-government is not widely supported; instead, participants suggest using a structure like that of municipal government.

# Broadcast Regulations

- Participants understand issues surrounding regulation of TV content as having to do with censorship, pornography or general inappropriate content. Some participants favour regulation (“too much garbage on TV”) while others oppose (“it’s easy to change the channel”).
- Participants are divided over the protection of Canadian content, focusing more on the subsidizing and support of Canadian programming development than on the restriction of American content.
- For these participants, no government solutions are proposed as regulation is not a burning issue.



# Foreign Ownership

- Participants generally support foreign ownership, but not without limits. As long as tax dollars stay in Canada, they are not terribly concerned about foreign ownership. That said, some express a preference for supporting Canadian business and “buying Canadian” when prices and products are comparable.
- Participants want the federal government to maintain some controls over foreign investment.

# The CBC

- Participants hold generally positive attitudes toward the CBC and favour maintaining it, both as a public service and as a news and sports channel. Some also express feelings of loyalty to the station as a Canadian institution.
- Participants point to the cost and questions of objectivity with a few seeing the CBC as a tool for the government to use in disseminating its message. However, a willingness to pay the price for the tradition of the CBC also emerged.

- A few participants were aware of the plan to cut back on the number of flight attendants. Primary concern centered on safety; participants want enough flight attendants to ensure proper evacuation.
- In terms of foreign airlines operating domestic flights in Canada, most participants support competition and cite the advantages of competition and business incentives.
- Although some participants felt it would be a shame to lose Air Canada, most are unconcerned.
- For these participants, no government solutions were proposed. Aviation is not a burning issue.



# Passports

- Participants express some resignation to the inevitability of tougher passport laws in the U.S. Positive and negative effects are expected.
- On the upside, participants believe the new laws will assist in tightening national security and preventing terrorism.
- On the downside, they believe that traffic and thus trade between the US and Canada will slow as a result of the laws. They are also leery of allowing the US to “dictate” Canadian border policy.



# Foreign Credentials

- Participants are generally opposed to the idea of making it harder to immigrate to Canada. They cite the length of time and the educational requirements necessary for immigration as reasons that it is difficult enough.
- They also mention the potential for importing crime and the desirability of screening candidates carefully, as well as the importance of utilizing the skills of immigrants already in Canada.



# Foreign Credentials (Con't)

- Participants suggest offering incentives for Canadians to have more children, thereby releasing Canada from dependence on immigration.
- Some suggest preventing immigrant doctors from practicing in Canada, although others disagree.



# Same-sex Marriage

- The idea that same sex marriage might be re-visited by Parliament was welcomed by a few, decried by a few, and described as a needless distraction by most.



# US-Canada Relations

- Only a handful of participants are interested in promoting or tightening US-Canada relations. By and large, participants are sceptical of involvement with the US and view closer relations as a negative.
- Some mentioned that campaigns that focus on negative outcomes are inappropriate for the government, in terms of terrorism and gun control.



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**Study Materials**



# Moderator's Guide – Group 1

## INTRODUCTION (5 Minutes)

### ➤ Explain to participants:

- Ipsos-Reid Group
- the length of session (2 hours)
- taping of the discussion
- one-way mirror and colleagues viewing in back room
- results are confidential and reported in aggregate/individuals are not identified/participation is voluntary/
- the role of moderator is to ask questions, timekeeper, objective/no vested interest
- role of participants: not expected to be experts, no need to reach consensus, speak openly and frankly about opinions, no right/wrong answers
- Get participants to introduce themselves and their occupation/hobbies etc...

### ➤ WARM UP (15 Minutes)

- First of all, just thinking about an average day or week, what are some of the things that worry or concern you in your everyday life?
- And thinking of the ones which government might or could have a role, do you think they play the role they should? Should they do more? Less?
- Thinking now not just about your community but about the country as a whole, I would like you to tell me what you think are the biggest challenges facing Canada today?
- What do you think are the biggest challenges facing the Federal Government?
- Can you tell me what you've seen, read or heard about the Federal Government most recently?

# Moderator's Guide – Group 1

## ➤ **STUDY RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

- Gauge perceptions of most important issues facing the country.
- Determine priorities as they relate to communities and how the federal government can best address these priorities. What difference the federal government can make in individual communities.
- Gauge Awareness of the existing government agenda,
- Assess perceived government performance, big picture issues facing the country (including challenges and ideas), and practical day to day concerns

## ➤ **OVERALL ASSESSMENT (20 Minutes)**

- **As most of you probably know Canada has a new Prime Minister, a new Federal Cabinet and a new government agenda.**
- **I want you to take a few minutes and on a piece of paper I want you to write down 2 to 3 words that describe this new government. (Allow a couple of minutes).**
- **Okay let's go around the table and see what we've got [MODERATOR PROBE FOR SIMILARITIES/DIFFERENCES ETC]**
- Overall how would you rate this new Government's performance to date? What are your impressions thus far?
- Do you get the impression that this Government is taking a different approach than the previous in how it is getting things done?
- Do you get the feeling that things have changed in Ottawa or rather is it simply the status quo with a different party leading? What specifically makes you say this – [MODERATOR PROBE FOR SPECIFICS]?



# Moderator's Guide – Group 1

## ➤ **OVERALL ASSESSMENT (20 Minutes) (con't)**

- What can you tell me about the new Government's agenda? Can you name a few things that they have done/ they plan on doing?
- Some people have told me they expect immediate and dramatic changes because Canada has some urgent issues to deal with and other people have told me they expect a steady, long-term, incremental approach because we can't change everything over night. What do you think?

## **[MODERATOR READ]**

- In its most recent Speech from the Throne, the federal government set out a road map of what it would like to get done during the first part of its mandate. This road map focused on 5 specific priority areas; can you name any of these priority areas?
- Prompt for: Accountability, GST, Crime, Child Care, Fiscal Imbalance/Health Care

## **[MODERATOR READ AFTER INITIAL DISCUSSION]**

- In fact the five key priority areas were:
  1. Restoring accountability to Ottawa
  2. Lower taxes
  3. Tackling crime
  4. Universal choice in childcare
  5. A patient wait time guarantee

# Moderator's Guide – Group 1

- **The Government has also vowed to deal with the fiscal imbalance**
  - How would you rate the government's performance to date in dealing with these issues? Why do you say this?
  - Let's talk specifically about taxes for a few minutes. Consider for a moment all the taxes you pay i.e., property taxes, sales taxes, income taxes or various other taxes such as taxes paid on investments or government user fees, now let's assume for a second that the federal government wanted to do more in terms of lowering Canadians tax burden, what specifically should be done?
  - If you had to tackle only one tax area, which one would you lower and why?
  - \*\*\*\* If property taxes mentioned, explore appeal/interest in possibility of writing off all/portion of property taxes....doable? Worthwhile? What are the long term benefits? Who would benefit most from this?
  
- **BRAINSTORMING EXERCISE (20 Minutes)**
  - **Ok, now I'd like us to do a little brainstorming exercise – Let's spend the next 15 or 20 minutes listing issues you personally think need addressing. These don't necessarily have to be issues that are specific to Canada, they might be International issues – that is things that need fixing in the world, they could be national issues - things that need addressing in Canada or they could be local issues – issues that are specific to your community.**
  - I don't want to spend too much time focusing on the reasons why you've chosen any specific issue; we'll do that later on.
  - **[MODERATOR PROMPT FOR VARIOUS AND LIST ALL ISSUES MENTIONED ON FLIP HART.]**



# Moderator's Guide – Group 1

## ➤ ISSUE PRIORITIZATION (20 Minutes)

- Now that we have listed all the issues of concern to us, I would like us to spend the next 15 or 20 minutes prioritizing them. That is, I'd like us to figure out which of the following issues are high priority, medium priority and low priority.
- I'm going to hand each of you a series of 5 stickers and I'd like you to get up and put your stickers next to the issue(s) you see as most important. You can spread your stickers out as you choose (i.e., all five stickers next to one issue or spread out over five)

## ➤ FEDERAL GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES (40 MINUTES)

- Let's now focus on those issues we've identified as being of high importance.
- [MODERATOR LIST HIGH IMPORTANCE ISSUES] – are these local, national, or international issues?
- Which ones do you think the federal government can have an impact on? And how?
- What specific actions should/could the federal government take to address this issue? Why should it be considered a priority for the federal government? Who will benefit from this action?
- And how would you rate the government's performance to date in dealing with these specific issues? Good/Bad? Why



# Moderator's Guide – Group 1

## [MODERATOR – HAND OUT MOCK SPEECH FROM THE THRONE EXERCISE]

- Now that we've had a chance to discuss these issues, I would like you to complete one final exercise before we wrap things up for the evening.
- I'm going to hand out a piece of paper and I'd like you to fill in the blanks. I'd like you to list the next five priorities the federal government should address in its next Speech from the Throne.

- The government will [ \_\_\_\_\_ ] by [ \_\_\_\_\_ ]
- The government will [ \_\_\_\_\_ ] by [ \_\_\_\_\_ ]
- The government will [ \_\_\_\_\_ ] by [ \_\_\_\_\_ ]
- The government will [ \_\_\_\_\_ ] by [ \_\_\_\_\_ ]

## ➤ CONCLUSION [5 Minutes]

- Can the Government realistically accomplish all the things we talked about today?
- Any final comments?



# Moderator's Guide – Group 2

## ➤ **INTRODUCTION (5 Minutes)**

### ➤ **Explain to participants:**

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- Get participants to introduce themselves and their occupation/hobbies etc...

## ➤ **WARM UP (15 Minutes)**

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# Moderator's Guide – Group 2

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# Moderator's Guide – Group 2

## ➤ **OVERALL ASSESSMENT (20 Minutes) (con't)**

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## **[MODERATOR READ AFTER INITIAL DISCUSSION]**

- In fact the five key priority areas were:
- Restoring accountability to Ottawa
- Lower taxes
- Tackling crime
- Universal choice in childcare
- A patient wait time guarantee
- The Government has also vowed to deal with the fiscal imbalance
- How would you rate the government's performance to date in dealing with these issues to date? Why do you say this?

# Moderator's Guide – Group 2

## ➤ ISSUES SCAN [75 Minutes]

- OK, I'D NOW LIKE TO SPEND THE REMAINDER OF THE GROUP DISCUSSING A SERIES OF SPECIFIC ISSUES THAT MAY OR MAYNOT POTENTIALLY BE SEEN AS PRIORITY ISSUES FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO ADDRESS. I DON'T WANT TO SPEND TOO MUCH TIME DEBATING WHETHER THEY ARE OR ARE NOT WORTHY OF THE GOVERNMENT'S ATTENTION – WE CAN DO THIS AT THE END OF OUR DISCUSSION, RATHER I'D LIKE TO FOCUS ON EACH OF THEM INDIVIDUALLY AND GAIN A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF YOUR VIEWS FOR EACH.
- \*\*\*\* NOTE WE WILL COVER OFF A MINIMUM OF FIVE SPECIFIC ISSUES FROM THE FOLLOWING WHICH WERE NOT COVERED OFF IN THE FIRST GROUP. [MODERATOR MAKE SURE TO VARY ISSUES FROM ONE LOCATION TO THE NEXT]

## [MODERATOR MAKE SURE TO RANDOMIZE ORDER OF PRESENTATION IN EACH CITY] HOW ABOUT:

### ➤ The Environment

- What are some of the concerns you have about the environment as it relates to your specific community? Are there any environmental issues that your community specifically is currently faced with? What are they? What needs to happen to address them? Do you get the impression that things are going to get better/worse? What makes you say that?
- And now thinking about the country as a whole and the state of the environment, what are some of the issues that concern you? What needs to happen to address them? Do you get the impression that things are going to get better/worse? What makes you say that?
- What are some tangible/specific things people could do to improve the environment?

# Moderator's Guide – Group 2

## ➤ The Environment (con't)

- What are some of the things you already do/steps you've already taken to improve the environment?
- Do you think people are willing to take steps to improve the environment even if it means it's going to cost them money?
- Give me examples of steps taken that would/could cost money? What about as it relates to the price of gas? Would you be willing to pay more per litre if you knew it meant the additional costs would be used to improve the environment? How much more would people be willing pay to make a difference, i.e. 10 cents more for a litre of gas?

## ➤ Democratic Reform

- How would you characterize the state of our democracy in Canada? And why do you say this?
- What do you think of when I say the words “democratic institutions”? What comes to mind?
- Do you get the impression that Canada's democratic institutions need to change? Why? Why not? What specifically would you change?
- We've heard a lot lately about democratic reform - what does this mean to you?
- Is this the type of thing that should be dealt with on a case by case basis as issues arise or rather is it something that needs to be addressed more comprehensively i.e.,
  - a) tied to constitutional renewal,
  - b) done piecemeal and over time
- What are your views on Senate Reform? Do you think it's necessary? How should it occur?
- Are there any other types of reform you can think of?
- How many people around the table regularly vote in civic, provincial or federal elections? The voter turn out in last federal election was roughly 65%, what steps if any could the federal government take in order to help increase voter turnout in future elections?



# Moderator's Guide – Group 2

## ➤ **Democratic Reform (con't)**

- What specifically are some of the reasons why people do not exercise their right to vote?
- How common do you think it is for people not to vote because it is simply not convenient for them to do so? (lack of time/travelling, work, unaware of advance polls etc....)
- Do you think having the polls open for a longer period of time- say a few days – maybe Sunday/Monday (such as in Italy) would help this ?

## ➤ **Expenditure Review**

- Overall role of Government
- In your opinion, is government too big/too small?
- Do you get the impression that the federal government wastes a lot of money? What specifically leads you to believe that? Is your impression that things have been getting better/worse lately or is it status quo?
- Are your tax dollars spent well? What would be a better use of your tax dollars?
- Overall satisfaction with services delivered by the federal government?
- In your opinion thinking of the various levels of government, which one would you say does the best job of delivering services to you? Why do you say this? Can you give me specific examples?
- Do people care what level of government collects taxes/ pays for services?
- Do you think the government should continuously be examining its spending or is this the type of thing that should be done on a periodic basis?

# Moderator's Guide – Group 2

## ➤ Justice

- Do you feel safe?
- Is your community safe? What makes you say that?
- Is crime on the rise or decline? Again, what specifically gives you that impression?
- How about in your community
- Across Canada
- In your opinion, what type of crime specifically is of most concern? And why do you think this type of crime has a tendency to occur? What are the drivers/causes?
- How about drugs? Is there a problem with drug related crime in your community?
- What about gangs?
- What type worries you the most? Is most prevalent in your community specifically? Can you give me specific examples? What impact has it had in your community? What could/should the federal government do to help deal with this/these types of crime?
- Are penalties harsh enough? Some people say we need to get tougher on crime because it is escalating, others tend to think things are ok as it is and that current penalties are sufficient, which of these two views are you most likely to share and why?
- Do we need more police?
- Is youth crime under control? Are youth penalties severe enough?

## ➤ Patient Wait Times Guarantee

- Now let's talk a little about the health care system in Canada, what are some of your concerns as they relate to the current state of the health care system? And do you have any concerns about the future of the health care system? And what should/needs to be done now in the near future in order to remedy this situation? What should the federal government be doing?
- Recently the Government has talked a lot about a "Patient Wait Time Guarantee" what do you think they mean by this? What are your expectations? Is this something that's doable/realistic? How long do you think it will take before this comes into effect?

# Moderator's Guide – Group 2

## ➤ **Fiscal Imbalance**

- Recently the Government and various provincial governments have spoken a great deal about the “Fiscal Imbalance.” Have you heard about this at all?
- What are they talking about? Do you think there’s a fiscal imbalance? Why do you say this?
- How should the federal government go about solving/resolving the fiscal imbalance?
- What would solve it?
- What is the Government of Canada’s role in provincial areas such as education
- In Education, should the government invest in research or people
- Economic union: awareness, definition,
- How do we link economic union (provincial trade barriers) to the lives of average Canadians

## ➤ **Economic**

- Are you under the impression that most Canadians are in the habit of saving money for future plans? What makes you say that? Why don’t people save money?
- What would it take to increase saving?
- Is there anything the Government could do to encourage people to save money? What are some of the things specifically that the government could do? Probe for support for incentives, i.e. interest deductibility

## ➤ **Aboriginals**

- What is your impression of the living conditions among aboriginal communities in Canada (reserves)?
- What are the main issues facing aboriginal Canadians today?
- Is there anything specifically that the federal government can do to help deal with these issues?
- Probe awareness of Governance issues, Disputes (eg, Caledonia),
- What should be done?



# Moderator's Guide – Group 2

## ➤ Regulations

- Television Content: Is this something the federal government should be focussing on? Why/ Why not?
- How important is it to protect Canadian content vs. giving people choice to watch US or other shows? What are some of the possible repercussions of not regulating the industry?
- Do people think it's okay to watch shows like The Sopranos? Deadwood? Six feet under? Big Love?
- Let's use the Super Bowl for instance, U.S. ads vs. Canadian ads. Should people be given the opportunity to watch the American ads if they want to?
  - Are they okay with the product, but not the means by which some people acquire it (i.e. through "grey market")

## ➤ Foreign Ownership

- How do you feel about foreign companies operating in Canada? How about when it comes to companies that are typically seen as "Canadian" such as Tim Horton's or the Bay for example – any problems with foreigners owning these companies? Why? Is this something the government should get involved in? why?
- Why are certain companies seen as typically "Canadian" is it simply a factor of who owns them or is it something else? If something else – what specifically?
- If you had to choose between two companies offering the same service (i.e., cable companies/telephone companies) one of which was Canadian owned the other Foreign owned which of the two would you choose? What factors would drive your choice – convenience/cost/options etc?



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## ➤ The CBC

- What should CBC's mandate be?
- Does/should the CBC corner the market on all things Canadian – i.e., Is it okay if Hockey Night in Canada is on CTV?
- What is the best public broadcaster model : cable only, specialty, PBS model, status quo
- Currently the CBC is broadcast to all whether you have cable or not, what about the possibility of making the CBC only available on basic cable? Good idea/bad idea and why do you say this? What are some of the advantages/disadvantages of this approach?

## ➤ Aviation

- Are there enough flight attendants on flights:
- What are your views on foreign airlines offering domestic flights in Canada? Good idea/Bad idea? What's in it for you? What are some of the advantages? Are there any drawbacks?

## ➤ Passports

- There's been a lot of talk lately about tougher border controls between the US and Canada. What have you heard? How would you feel if the government were to consider ways to encourage Americans to visit Canada? What means should they consider?
- How about offering Americans an incentive to come here? i.e. refund passport cost if they spend \$XXX good idea/ bad idea?

## ➤ Foreign Credentials

- Foreign credentials: is it ok for the government to recognize foreign credentials? What would be some of the benefits of considering this? Can you think of any drawbacks?



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- **Miscellaneous**
  - Sam-sex marriage: should government reopen debate?
  - US is their influence on Canada appropriate? Are people threatened by it?
  
- **Overall**
  - Ok, now that we've talked about these various issues, are there other issues that we haven't spoken of which you should have been included in our discussion? Why?
  - Are there any issues among those we discussed that you think are not worthy of the government's attention? Which ones and why?
  
- **CONCLUSION [5 Minutes]**
  - Can the Government realistically accomplish all the things we talked about today?
  - We've spent the better part of our time discussing specific issues that could/should be dealt with by the government, of the issues we've discussed, if the federal government could only deal with one or two in the short to medium term, which ones do you think should be priorities? Should they deal with first?
  - Any final comments?



# Recruitment Screener

- Good morning/afternoon/evening, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am calling from the Ipsos-Reid Corporation, a national marketing research organization. We are a professional public opinion research firm that gathers opinions from people. From time to time, we solicit opinions by sitting down and talking with people. We are preparing to conduct a series of these discussions on behalf of the Government of Canada and are calling to see if you would be willing to participate. The discussion will take about two hours and those who qualify and attend will receive \$60.00 as a token of our appreciation.
  
- Would you be interested in participating in this discussion which will be held at a location in \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_?
  - Yes **CONTINUE**
  - No **THANK AND TERMINATE**
  
- Now, I would like to ask you a few questions to see if you qualify to attend.
  
- **(INTERVIEWER RECORD GENDER, DO NOT ASK) (AIM FOR 50/50 MIX)**
  - **Male ( Continue for possible recruit)**
  - **Female (Continue for possible recruit)**
  
- Do you or does anyone in your household work in any of the following areas? **(READ LIST) IF "YES" TO ANY - THANK AND TERMINATE**
  - An advertising agency
  - A market research company
  - The media, that is for TV, Radio or a newspaper
  - The Government of Canada



# Recruitment Screener

- Have you attended a discussion group like this or a market research focus group in the past year?  
**IF "YES" - THANK AND TERMINATE**
  
- I am going to read you a series of age categories, please stop me when I get to the one that applies to you.
  - 25 to 35 years (**SOFT QUOTA 3 PER LOCATION**)
  - 36 TO 39 years (**SOFT QUOTA 3 PER LOCATION**)
  - 40 to 50 years (**SOFT QUOTA 3 PER LOCATION**)
  - 60 years and older (**SOFT QUOTA 3 PER LOCATION**)
  
- **Could you please tell me what is the highest level of education you have achieved, is it?**
  - **Less than high school**
  - **Some high school**
  - **Graduated high school**
  - **Some post secondary (university/community college)**
  - **Graduated post secondary (university or community college)**
  - **(Note: ACADEMIC ATTAINMENT: ensure a good mix of education profiles)**



# Recruitment Screener

- Please tell me if you have you ever done any of the following:
  - Purchased stocks and or mutual funds,
  - Acted as a volunteer in your community,
  - Written a letter to the editor of your community newspaper,
  - Written a letter to a municipally, provincially or federally elected official,
  - Called a local talk show to voice your opinion about an issue you were particularly concerned about
  - (If yes to any two of the previous, continue for possible recruit, if yes to only one thank and terminate)
  
- Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with the following statement. Please use a 7-point scale, where 7 means you strongly agree, 1, means you strongly disagree and 4 means you neither agree nor disagree?
  - I am very interested in learning about what the Federal Government is doing.
  - (If scores of 3,4,5,6,7 continue for possible recruit, if 1or 2 thank and terminate, ensure a good mix of interest)
  
- I am going to read you two statements and I would like you to tell me which one of the two most closely resembles your own personal situation. (Soft quota – ensure good mix in all locations)
  - I am encouraged by the various steps the federal government has taken since it has been elected. Positive outlook
  - I am concerned by the various steps the federal government has taken since it has been elected. Negative outlook
  - \*\*\*\*(IN EACH LOCATION, PLEASE ENSURE 12 PARTICIPANTS ARE RECRUITED for 10 to show)



# Recruitment Screener

- Wonderful, you qualify to participate in one of our discussion sessions. The session will be held on ....

City/Location	Date/Time	Audience
Moncton	June 5	<u>5:30 pm</u> <u>7:30 pm</u>
Montreal	June 6	<u>5:30 pm</u> <u>7:30 pm</u>
Mississauga	June 5	<u>5:30 pm</u> <u>7:30 pm</u>
Kenora, Ontario	June 6	<u>TBD</u>
Regina	June 6	<u>5:30 pm</u> <u>7:30 pm</u>
Vancouver (including individuals from the suburbs)	June 7	<u>5:30 pm</u> <u>7:30 pm</u>

- The session will be 2 hrs in length. We are reserving this discussion time for you. So if for any reason you cannot attend, please call: XXX-XXXX. We may be reviewing certain print materials so if need be please bring along your glasses.



## Canadians Assessment and Expectations of the New Government

June 29, 2006

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