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EKOS SEAT PROJECTION: TORIES IN COMFORTABLE MAJORITY

[Ottawa – October 15, 2009] – From time to time, EKOS releases seat projections based on our weekly soundings of Canadians’ voting intentions.

There has been a dramatic shift in the Canadian political landscape in recent months. During the summer, the Liberals gradually gave up the advantage they had enjoyed over the Conservatives during most of the spring; but even as recently as our first weekly poll in September, the two leading parties were in an exact tie, at 32.6% each.

That seems like a long time ago. The Liberals have now dipped to historic lows two weeks in a row.

In our weekly poll released exclusively to CBC today, the Conservatives had 40.7% of the vote, followed by the Liberals at 25.5%, with the NDP at 14.3%, the Greens at 10.5% and the BQ at 9.1%.

Whenever you see this kind of dramatic shift, you hear pollsters talk about the leading party “approaching majority territory” or “in majority territory”. At EKOS, when we say these things, they are based on seat projections. We’re happy to say that in last year’s election, our seat projection was the closest to the actual result of any published.

So here’s where we appear to be now. The Tories are now trading in comfortable majority territory. If an election were held today, and the results mirrored our latest poll down to the regional level, this would be the likely result as translated into seats:

					
Number of Seats Nationally	167	68	23	0	50

Since a bare majority would be 155 seats, a result like this would constitute a “comfortable majority”: that is, not one that would be shaken by the odd defection or by-election reverse. There’s a good chance a parliament like this would last a full four-year term.

In terms of regional strength, the Conservatives would be able to claim that they were a national party, representing every region with a significant number of seats, including Quebec, where we estimate they would hold 10 seats.

The Liberals, in contrast, would hold just 10 seats west of Ontario, almost all of them in British Columbia. They would trail the Conservatives in every region in the country except Quebec, where, despite having similar popular support to the Conservatives, they would win a few more seats due to a more efficient distribution of votes.

In Ontario – a province that the Liberals were able to sweep in the last decade, winning virtually every seat – the Conservatives would win 68 seats to the Liberals’ 28, and the NDP’s 10.

Of course, as Harold Wilson famously remarked, “a week is a long time in politics”. A lot can change between now and the election in terms of popular support and the distribution of seats. But if the Conservatives seem to have a special spring in their step these days, while the Liberals seem to slouch a little, this is why.