

EKOS SEAT PROJECTION AND ANALYSIS: DOES THIS LOOK FAMILIAR?

[OTTAWA – March 14, 2011] From time to time, EKOS offers seat projections based on its opinion polling. The projections are based on national, regional and, in some cases, sub-regional polling projected onto the results of the last election. They do not pretend to predict individual ridings.

Below are the seat projections polling data collected from February 24th to March 8th. As you can see from the above the mere 7-point lead belies a pretty formidable advantage for the Conservative Party. The key is Ontario where the Conservatives would see the rewards of a newfound but fairly stable lead. Even with a bleak situation in Quebec, the Conservatives would comfortably be in the driver seat for some time with these electoral results. With only 115 seats between them, the Liberals and NDP couldn't even mount a feeble challenge to continued Conservative hegemony (even without a majority). Another striking finding is just how similar this parliament would be to the one we currently have. No party would shift by more than a handful of seats and qualitatively this would be a virtually identical balance of power to what we have now.






The story gets even worse for these parties when we look at the patterns of how voters have shifted since the last election. First of all, it is the Conservatives who have the most loyal and committed voter base with a retention rate of nearly 80%. The Bloc also do well exceeding 70% loyalty. The Liberals and NDP, however, have a tough time cracking 60%. Worse, the overall mobility patterns from 2008 and to today suggest most of the churning has been, for the Liberals, a futile war of attrition with the Conservatives for many of the same swing voters. Most movements have been shifts back and forth across those two parties with the Conservatives now holding by far the lion's share of that swing group and little evidence that the Liberals will be able to shake those voter loose and back their way. Stephen Harper and Michael Ignatieff have been fishing the same pond but it's Harper with the bigger catch. Interestingly, the analysis suggests that it is the Conservatives and Liberals who are the most natural political coalition but no one should hold their breath waiting for that one.

The only room for optimism in this poll for the Liberals and the NDP is the fact that they do better on second choice, particularly the NDP. It may well be that the very things which have so fiercely alloyed Conservatives voters to their leader and party are the very things that produce the lower ceiling which frustrates their prospects for majority. On the other hand, it is hard to imagine that a 140-seat Conservative minority would function as anything short of an effective majority with election-weary voters.

So the enthusiasm for immediate electoral adventure may be dampened in opposition camps (outside the Bloc) by a more careful examination of the underlying patterns of movement in the electorate. It's still close enough to be an interesting race but the opposition clearly need to shift

the channel to more resonant wavelengths than those they have been broadcasting. It might well be prudent to park the impulse for an immediate election and hope the accountability and character issues can percolate and blend to provide a more forceful challenge than they are capable of offering based on this week's poll.

Seat projection: February 24 – March 8, 2011

						Other	Total
CANADA	140	86	29	0	52	1	308
Atlantic Canada	9	20	3	0	0	0	32
Quebec	8	13	1	0	52	1	75
Ontario	55	39	12	0	0	0	106
Manitoba	7	3	4	0	0	0	14
Saskatchewan	13	1	0	0	0	0	14
Alberta	28	0	0	0	0	0	28
British Columbia	20	8	8	0	0	0	36
Yukon/NWT/Nunavut	0	2	1	0	0	0	3