

## Election 2005-6

### *The EKOS track record*

#### Our track record over the campaign

The first week of the 2006 election campaign had the federal parties running in very similar territory to the 2004 campaign, with the Liberals retaining a lead over the second-place Conservatives nationally, and in crucial battlegrounds such as Ontario and British Columbia.

*“The race is too close at the moment to suggest a likely winner.” – Frank Graves, Dec. 3/05*

Following the Christmas break, however, EKOS noted a crucial shift in the electorate: the Conservatives had moved ahead of the Liberals. So important was this finding, that the CBC broke their policy of not publishing polls and reported the following: “It’s the first time since the beginning of the campaign a poll has indicated the Tories in a clear lead across the country” (*CBC News*, Jan. 5/06). This, as EKOS noted, proved to be the turning point in the campaign, with the Conservatives establishing a significant lead, one they would retain up until and on election day: “[EKOS] was the first to show the Conservatives pulling away from the Liberals in this campaign,” (Andrew Chung, *The Toronto Star*, Jan. 21/06).

*“The Conservatives have broken out and they have further room to grow. Not only is their support on the rise, but more and more Canadians supporting other parties are starting to consider them seriously.”  
– Frank Graves, Jan. 5/06*

EKOS was also the first to reveal another change in the mood of the electorate, this time in Quebec. While still not poised to overtake the commanding lead of the Bloc Québécois, EKOS was the first to show that the Conservatives were moving ahead of the Liberals in that province: “An EKOS Research Ltd. poll for the *Toronto Star* and *La Presse* shows that, for the first time since 1988, the Conservatives has a slim lead over the Liberals in Quebec” (Graham Fraser, *The Toronto Star*, Jan. 10/06).

*“This is the breakthrough that Harper has been waiting for. The Conservatives’ gains are nationwide, but their most significant growth is in Ontario, where they have surpassed the Liberals in their traditional heartland, and in Quebec, where they are now vying with the Liberals as the leading federalist alternative to the Bloc Québécois.” – Frank Graves, Jan. 10/06*

EKOS closely monitored the Conservative’s progress, and was among the first to suggest that this lead would translate into a Conservative victory. Unlike some competitors, however, EKOS avoided the error of predicting a Conservative majority.

*“Clearly, he is going to achieve a government of some sort.” – Frank Graves, Jan. 15/06 (reported by Robert Benzie in *The Toronto Star*, Jan. 16/06)*

## Predicting the outcome

The following are the results of the 39<sup>th</sup> general election in Canada:



In the week leading up to the January 23<sup>rd</sup> vote, EKOS collected more than 4,000 cases. This sample included results from polling conducted on Friday, January 20, 2006. After arriving at the conclusion that overall patterns appeared stable (particularly for the Conservatives), EKOS felt confident in making the following prediction:

*“We feel comfortable in forecasting a Conservative minority of about 125 seats plus or minus 5 seats. We also predict a Liberal lead opposition.” – Frank Graves, Jan. 21/06*

Unlike others, EKOS clearly and explicitly forecast the outcome of the election. This prediction was published on EKOS’ website and shared with our media partners: « La firme EKOS se sent en terrain assez solide pour prévoir l’élection de 120 à 130 députés conservateurs, aux élections de lundi, et ainsi assurer un gouvernement minoritaire à Stephen Harper » (Raymond Giroux, *Le Soleil*, 21 jan. 2006).

## A note on the EKOS methodology

Our goal at the outset of the campaign was not only to chart the horserace, but to carefully analyze the factors that would produce the final outcome. We accomplished this by developing a more agile and responsive methodology that enabled us to detect and report movement in the electorate first. More importantly, EKOS sought to understand what the implications of the election result might be for the country. All and all, EKOS’ election polling endeavored to provide neutral and constructive analysis.

We would like to thank our media partners, *The Toronto Star*, *La Presse*, and *Le Soleil*, for their support and guidance. We would also like to thank the thousands of Canadians who generously and patiently contributed their time to this research initiative in the interests of a better informed democratic process.