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CANADIANS' VIEWS ON PRIME MINISTERS

Having a “common touch” the quality Canadians most want to see in their Prime Ministers;

Canadians’ advice to Prime Minister Harper: be honest and show integrity in how you govern; and

We flunk a simple three question quiz on past PMs.

EMBARGOED 6:00 AM, Feb. 3, 2006 – The Dominion Institute, Magna and the Arthur Kroeger College of Public Affairs released today the results of a survey commissioned from the Innovative Research Group on Canadians’ knowledge and attitudes about Prime Ministers. The poll was undertaken as part of the *Next Great Prime Minister* initiative; a nation wide search culminating in a television special (CTV, 8:00 PM EST., Feb. 4) for the young Canadian best able to articulate a vision for the country’s future.

Some of the poll’s key findings include that when it comes to the characteristics Canadians’ most want to see in a Prime Minister having “the common touch” (29%) was deemed as the most important followed by being a “great communicator” (25%), “decisive” (21%) or an “intellectual” (15%). Interesting, only 4% of respondents felt that being “bilingual” was the most important characteristic for a Prime Minister to possess.

There were noticeable regional variations in terms of what characteristic were thought to be most important in a PM. Quebeckers are much more likely than the rest of the country to want a PM to have the common touch (51%). Residents of Atlantic Canada (37%), and British Columbia (32%), place being a great communicator as the most important characteristic of a Prime Minister, while Albertans value decisiveness (37%).

Canadians were also asked for the one piece of advice they would give Prime Minister designate Harper, and they provided a wide array of responses. The most frequently mentioned answer was too be honest, ethical and have integrity (17%). Canadians also said that he should keep his word on election promises (14%), work for Canada and stick up for the little guy (12%), not to make an error and to make intelligent decisions (8%). Some respondents, obviously detractors, said he should resign or hand power over (8%). Seven per cent advised him to “show moderation and not lean too far right”. Residents of the Atlantic Provinces are more likely than other Canadians to advise Prime Minister Harper to keep his word on election promises (25%). On the opposite coast, British Columbians are more likely than others to tell him to show moderation and

not to lean too far right (21%). Canadians who have a university (11%) or post graduate (11%) degree are more likely than those with other educational backgrounds to give the advice that Prime Minister Harper should show moderation and not to lean too far right.

56 per cent of 18-to-24 year old Canadians agreed that young people in their community have the same chance as other Canadians to one day become PM. This compares to seventy-four per cent of Canadians as a whole agree that young people in their community have the same chance as other Canadians to one day become PM, and fully to 81 per cent of Canadians who are 55 years of age or older.

Residents of Quebec were more likely to feel this way (78%), while residents of British Columbia were the least optimistic about their young people's chance of becoming PM (66%). Interestingly, the older a person is the more likely they are to agree that young people in their community have an equal chance as others to become Prime Minister.

Survey respondents were also asked three questions about famous PMs in Canadian history and on each question less than half were able to correctly name the appropriate PM. Only 47 per cent were able to correctly identify Sir John A. MacDonal as the father of Confederation, 44 per cent were able to name Pierre Trudeau as the PM who said "just watch me" when he invoked the war measures act, and an abysmal 18 per cent identified Sir Wilfred Laurier as Canada's first francophone PM who declared that the 20th century would belong to Canada. The likelihood of someone knowing the correct answer greatly increases with a higher level of education and income.

There was also an age gap in terms of respondents who knew the correct answers and those that did not. On all three knowledge questions about past Prime Ministers, the likelihood of a respondent answering the question correctly greatly increases with age. There is a 23 point gap between respondents who are 55 years of age and older (59% correct) and 18 to 24 year olds (36%) who were able to correctly answer which Prime Minister when invoking the War Measures Act, famously declared: Just watch me.

About this survey

The survey was conducted by Innovative Research Group, www.innovativeresearch.ca, a national research firm, between Thursday, January 19th and Sunday, January 22nd, 2006. This telephone survey is random sample of 1,008 Canadians 18 years of age and older. The survey results have a margin of error of $\pm 3.1\%$, 19 times out of 20.

The Next Great Prime Minister, www.asprimeminister.com, is sponsored and organized by Magna in association with The Dominion Institute and The Arthur Kroeger College of Public Affairs. *The Next Great Prime Minister* is based on a nationwide challenge originated by Frank Stronach's Magna corporation in 1995. This is first time the competition has culminated in a televised special – and it's also the first time that former Prime Ministers have been asked to choose the winner. Clark (1979-80), Turner (1984), Mulroney (1984-93) and Campbell (1993) will act as a four-member judging panel, appearing on stage in the special as five finalists is "*The Next Great Prime Minister*."

The hour-long special, hosted by *Canada AM's* Seamus O'Regan, will be broadcast on CTV on Saturday, Feb. 4 at 8 p.m. ET (check local listings).

The winner of the competition will receive \$50,000 and The Dominion Institute Magna Kroeger (DMK) Fair Enterprise and Public Policy Award. The award includes a six-month paid internship split between The Dominion Institute, Magna and the Arthur Kroeger College of Public Affairs. The remaining finalists will each receive \$10,000 and a three-month paid internship also split between the three employment sectors

Magna is a leading global supplier of technologically advanced automotive systems, components and complete modules. As of June 2005, Magna employs approximately 82,000 people at 220 manufacturing divisions and 56 product development and engineering centres throughout North and South America, Mexico, Europe and Asia.

The Dominion Institute was established in 1997 by a group of young professional concerned about the erosion of a common memory in Canada. The Institute has had a far-reaching impact on Canadians' perceptions of their history and shared citizenship, through opinion research, national in-school programmes and curriculum reform.

The Arthur Kroeger College of Public Affairs is the home of Carleton University's Bachelor of Public Affairs and Policy Management (BPAPM) program. Kroeger College brings together leaders from all sectors of civic society to advance public debate, resolve issues and create a new dialogue across sectors.

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Question Wording

1. Please name the Scottish immigrant, skilled lawyer and Father of Confederation who became Canada's first Prime Minister [DO NOT READ CODE FOR CORRECT ANSWER]

John A MacDonald	1 [VOLUNTEERED]
Other	2 [VOLUNTEERED]
Don't know	8 [VOLUNTEERED]
Refused	9 [VOLUNTEERED]

2. Please name Canada's first francophone Prime Minister who optimistically proclaimed: The 20th Century will belong to Canada? [DO NOT READ CODE FOR CORRECT ANSWER]

Wilfred Laurier	1 [VOLUNTEERED]
Other	2 [VOLUNTEERED]
Don't know	8 [VOLUNTEERED]
Refused	9 [VOLUNTEERED]

3. Which Prime Minister, when invoking the War Measures Act, famously declared: Just Watch Me? [DO NOT READ CODE FOR CORRECT ANSWER]

Pierre Trudeau	1 [VOLUNTEERED]
Other	2 [VOLUNTEERED]
Don't know	8 [VOLUNTEERED]
Refused	9 [VOLUNTEERED]

4) Which of the following characteristics is most important to you in a prime minister? [ROTATE & READ LIST]

great communicator	1
an intellectual	2
bilingual	3
decisive	4
Has a common touch	5
Don't know	8 [VOLUNTEERED]
Refused	9 [VOLUNTEERED]

5) Based on recent public opinion polls it looks like Stephen Harper will be the next Prime Minister. If you had one simple piece of advice to give the new Prime Minister what would it be?

6) Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree with the following statement: Young people in your community have the same chance as other Canadians to one day become Prime Minister?

Strongly agree	1
Somewhat agree	2
Neither agree nor disagree	3 [VOLUNTEERED]
Somewhat disagree	4
Strongly disagree	5
Don't know	8 [VOLUNTEERED]
Refused	9 [VOLUNTEERED]