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# IGNATIEFF

Ignatieff's high-stakes move could end his career, but he had no choice. Exclusive Angelo Persichilli p. 4



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## Next federal election trigger likely to happen after G20, not before: insiders

If the government's not defeated in the first week, the Libs will have other opportunities this month.

By BEA VONGDOUANGCHANH

Despite a potential election trigger which some say could come as early as the day Parliament returns on Sept. 14 through a confidence vote on a "ways and means" motion to implement the home renovation tax credit, it's unlikely that the government will be defeated before it tables its budget progress report the week of Sept. 28.

In his second meeting with U.S. President Barack Obama, Prime Minister Stephen Harper (Calgary Southwest, Alta.) will head to

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## RIM met 11 times with senior government officials, three Cabinet ministers

In lead up to the international climate change negotiations, energy and environment issues lobbied with Cabinet ministers and MPs.

By BEA VONGDOUANGCHANH

The head of Waterloo, Ont.-based hi-tech company Research in Motion and his lawyers met 11 times with senior governmental officials and three Cabinet ministers between March

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Photograph by Jake Wright, The Hill Times

Let's get the party started: Prime Minister Stephen Harper steps out.

## Political parties to focus on crucial 'swing ridings' in economic downturn campaign bid

Conservatives and Liberals to focus on 71 ridings where the margin of victory was 10 per cent or less in last election.

By ABBAS RANA

The governing Conservatives and Liberals, who are in a statistical dead heat in public opinion polls nationally, will focus on the 71 swing ridings where the margin of victory was 10 per cent or less in the last federal election, say pollsters.

"Those are the ridings that are going to determine who wins the next election. Generally, in elections, very rarely do we see, what I'll call, a sea change in regards to incumbents being overturned. Usually, it's 20 per cent of the seats that are realistically in play and 80 per cent are unlikely to really change significantly. So the question is how is the battle going to shape up for those 20 per cent of those seats that all the parties are desperately going to be fighting over," said pollster Nik Nanos of Nanos Research in an interview with The Hill Times.

The four national political parties will focus on their held ridings and on ridings they have a realistic chance of winning.

Given the current economic situation in the country, Mr. Nanos said the political

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## Marzolini tells Grits 46% want either a Liberal minority or majority

But pollster Greg Lyle says Tories and Liberals still have not sealed their base.

By ABBAS RANA

Liberal Party pollster Michael Marzolini told the Grits at last week's national summer retreat in Sudbury, Ont., that a total of 46 per cent of Canadians want either a Liberal minority or majority government, compared to 38 per cent who said they want a Conservative minority or a majority

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## Cabinet staffers busy compiling briefings in advance of election call

Ministers' offices are also trying to speed up any 'good news' press announcements before a possible fall campaign.

By ABBAS RANA

Senior Cabinet ministerial staffers are busy putting together background information on issues related to their respective departments in an effort to defend themselves in the next election campaign and are working to get as much "good news stuff done" before a campaign is triggered, Conservative sources told Hill Climbers last week.

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## Parliamentary Budget Officer still arguing for \$2.8-million increase

Parliamentary Budget Officer Kevin Page is also planning to release all his office's travel and hospitality expenses and all other office expenses on a regular basis.

By CYNTHIA MÜNSTER

Canada's Parliamentary Budget Officer Kevin Page is still arguing for his \$2.8-million budget and permanent staff and is looking into releasing on a permanent basis all his office's travel and hospitality expenses as well as all other office expenses on the PBO website, according to a leaked copy of his draft response to the Joint Library of Parliament Committee.

Last week, the office sent the 19-page draft response to chairs and co-chairs of the committees that it is legislated to work for, the Senate and House Finance committees and the Public Accounts Committee, opposition Finance critics, Parliamentary Secretary to the Finance Minister Ted Menzies (Macleod, Alta.) and MPs who have worked with the office before, such as NDP MPs Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, Ont.) and Charlie Angus (Timmins-James Bay, Ont.). Mr. Page has presented the report to Parliamentary Librarian William Young, who he reports to, in person last month. The Parliamentary Budget Officer will send the final response to the Library of Parliament Committee once it has received feedback from the other committees and MPs.

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## NEWS

# Marzolini tells Grits 46% want either Liberal minority or majority government

But Innovative Research pollster Greg Lyle says Tories and Liberals still have not sealed their base.

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government, according to Liberal sources.

Mr. Marzolini, chairman of Pollara, declined to discuss his company's polling numbers, but Liberal sources told *The Hill Times* that according to the numbers he presented, 24 per cent want a majority Liberal government and 22 per cent want a Liberal minority government. In the case of Conservatives, Mr. Marzolini said 28 per cent want a Tory majority government and 10 per cent a minority government. The poll was conducted in July and August.

Nationally, in the survey of about 3,000 Canadians which has a margin of error of plus or minus 1.5 per cent, Mr. Marzolini reportedly told Grit Parliamentarians that the Conservative Party leads the pack with 37 per cent support followed by the Liberals with 34 per cent support, the NDP with 16 per cent support and the Green Party with three per cent support.

At the three-day caucus retreat in Sudbury, Mr. Marzolini told Liberals that in the vote-rich province of Ontario which has 106 seats, both the Conservatives and the Liberals are tied at 40 per cent followed by the New Democrats at 16 per cent and the Green Party at three per cent.

In the 416-area code, the Liberals are ahead of the Conservatives at 56 per cent support while the Conservatives are at 29 per cent, the NDP at 11 per cent and the Green Party at three per cent.

In the 905-area code, Mr. Marzolini put the Liberals at 44 per cent, the Conservatives at 39 per cent, the NDP at 15 per cent, and the Green Party at three per cent.

In the 519 area code, the Conservatives were ahead of all the parties with 44 per cent support, Liberals at 32 per cent, the New Democrats at 20 per cent and the Green Party at two per cent.

In the province of Quebec, which has 75 seats, the second

highest of all provinces, Liberals were ahead of all the parties with 38 per cent followed by the Bloc with 31 per cent, Tories at 20 per cent, NDP at 10 per cent and the Green Party at one per cent, according to the Liberals' numbers.

In Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta, where the Harper Conservatives are holding an overwhelming majority of the seats, the Tories were leading all the parties with comfortable margins. In British Columbia, the Harper Conservatives had a five-point lead with 38 per cent support followed by the Liberals at 33 per cent, the NDP at 23 per cent and the Green Party at five per cent.

In Atlantic Canada, Liberals again were on top with 39 per cent, followed by the NDP with 33 per cent, the Conservatives at 25 per cent, and the Green Party at three per cent.

It's not clear what the methodology was or what the questions were asked for this poll.

As well at the caucus retreat, campaign director Gordon Ashworth and campaign co-chair Sen. David Smith also briefed the Grit caucus members on all aspects of the Liberal Party's election readiness. Liberals were also shown the new \$2-million advertising campaign to be released this week.

Last week, Liberal Party leader Michael Ignatieff (Etobicoke-Lakeshore, Ont.) threw down the election gauntlet and announced that his party will no longer support the Harper Conservatives on confidence votes. The Tories will now have to rely on the support of either the New Democrats or Bloc Québécois. But in media interviews, the Conservatives seemed unwilling to work with either of the parties.

"We will not be making any backroom deals. If other parties, as I said before, other parties have useful ideas, good, effective, affordable ideas on the economy, let us see what they are and we'll

take a look at them. That's been our position all through this Parliament," Prime Minister Stephen Harper (Calgary Southwest, Alta.) told reporters in Niagara-on-the-Lake last Thursday.

"We already had...people know there's, you know, the deal between the NDP, the Bloc and the Liberals. People didn't like that. I don't think we want to go there. So we're not going to be getting into that kind of deal."

Currently, Conservatives have 143 seats in the House, the Liberals 77, the Bloc 48 and the New Democrats have 36. There's one Independent MP and three vacancies.

To defeat the Harper government, the three opposition parties will have to vote together, but to survive confidence votes, Conservatives need the support of only one opposition party.

Conservative strategist Tim Powers, meanwhile, declined to comment on the Liberals polling numbers, but accused them of forcing an unwanted election. He said Mr. Harper won power only last October and suggested that because of triggering another election that the Ignatieff Liberals will suffer the consequences with voters.

"I don't think the public wants an election and those numbers will change dramatically, were there to be an election," said Mr. Powers. "The questions, I assume were posed without there being any sense of what the election issues might be, and without knowing what the public is being asked to vote on. I don't look at those polls and take too much from them one way or the other. What I do look at is the complete lack of necessity for an election, should one be thrown upon us and I think that's the thing that maybe isn't addressed in those polls."

Greg Lyle, managing director of the polling firm Innovative Research Group in Toronto, asked to respond to Pollara's numbers, said he found it surprising that both the Conservatives and the Liberals were polling at more than 30 per cent nationally when he said the same poll indicated the number of Canadians who want a majority Conservative or Liberal government is lower than that. He said this means that both parties have failed to cement their base.

"[For Liberals] that's not a good number. They're polling at over 30 per cent so there's a bunch of people voting for Liberals who don't trust them with a majority government. That's pretty shocking actually," said Mr. Lyle.

As for the Conservatives, he said: "The Tories have the same problem the Liberals have, that not all the people that are voting for him actually want him to have full control."

*The Hill Times*



Photograph by Cynthia Munster, *The Hill Times*

Follow the money: Canada's Parliamentary Budget Officer Kevin Page.

## Parliamentary Budget Officer still arguing for his \$2.8-million office budget, permanent staff

PBO wants to release all travel, hospitality and all other office expenses on permanent basis

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The document reiterates the PBO's pledge to increase its original budget of \$2.8-million, which was one of the Library of Parliament Committee's recommendations. It also asks the Parliamentary Librarian to approve the PBO's outstanding staffing requests since Mr. Young has not approved making permanent the PBO jobs for employees on secondment from other departments. It also responds to the Library of Parliament Committee's recommendations.

In the draft response, the PBO is critical of the committee study, in that it didn't seek to interview "client Parliamentarians and committees who have commissioned and utilized PBO products and services or subject matter experts on economic and financial analysis and accountability or interested taxpayers who want Parliament to work as effectively as possible," and says the committee centered its recommendations on management and product release within the bureaucratic context of the Library of Parliament, without looking at how to strengthen the role of the PBO.

While the document agrees with most recommendations and documents the action taken towards accomplishing them, it emphasizes the unique work done by the PBO and the need for funding. It also stresses the need for transparency and accountability. The PBO also points out that it has begun to work more closely with Library of Parliament staff, using some of its resources and working on the costing for a private member's bill on a confidential manner—a first for the office. Finally, it highlights Mr. Page's concern for issuing confidential reports, something he said he hasn't been asked to do so far.

"The big issue will be how we work with them on the requested products with respect to the confidentiality issue. It's a substantive issue. For us, what's important is if we're going to do a quality product and we're going to do in-depth research, we need access to people. Experts, not only in departments, but also academic experts in Canada and elsewhere so that means that that whole issue of confidentiality has to be discussed very early in the project and we need to discuss how we roll out these products, right with the terms of reference, that's probably the key aspect of the report," Mr. Page told *The Hill Times*.

The PBO is currently working on a report on the government's costing of the Liberals' proposal for reducing the minimum requirement for Employment Insurance to 360 hours. The report is expected to be released this week.

The office will also be posting on its website the proactive disclosure of all travel and hospitality expenses for all staff this month and an annual performance report by Oct. 31.

Moreover, Mr. Page said he hopes to release over the next month a self-initiated paper that looks at Canada's potential growth rate and the issue of cyclical versus structural budget balances, as well as updating the PBO estimates.

"It would be important work, because we expect there will be a big debate on fiscal targets, and whether or not, what's the fiscal plan going forward? How do we bring it back to balance? So we want to make sure that Parliamentarians have the kind of analytical data, tools they need in front of them so they can engage in that debate," said Mr. Page.

The release of any studies, particularly the upcoming self-initiated economic and fiscal analysis, would be suspended during a federal election, as was recommended by the committee report.

*The Hill Times*

### Marzolini's numbers to Liberals:

Regional	National	Ont.	Que.	Man./Sask.	Alta.	B.C.	Atlantic
Conservative Party	37%	40%	20%	58%	55%	38%	25%
Liberal Party	34%	40%	38%	20%	28%	33%	39%
Bloc Québécois -	16%	—	31%	—	—	—	—
NDP	7%	16%	10%	16%	13%	23%	33%
Green	3%	3%	5%	5%	2%	5%	3%

  

Ontario	Area Code 416	Area Code 905	Area Code 519	Preferred Government
Conservative	29%	39%	44%	Liberal Majority 24%
Liberal	56%	44%	32%	Liberal Minority 22%
NDP	11%	15%	20%	<b>Total</b> 46%
Green	3%	3%	2%	Conservative Majority 28%
				Conservative Minority 10%
				<b>Total</b> 38%

Source: Pollara