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The Canadian Values Study: A joint project of Innovative Research Group, the Dominion Institute and the National Post

Day Four Release

Canadians Willing to Listen to Concerns of Other Regions But Tensions Remain; Majority of Canadians Are Prepared to Put Aside Provincial Self-Interests

Toronto – September 27, 2005 – Despite the cries of some critics that Canada is dysfunctional and that regional differences threaten to make the country ungovernable, the *Canadian Values Study*, a joint project of the National Post, the Dominion Institute and Innovative Research Group finds the Canadian federal family generally in good working order. Canadians judge the regional grievances of other regions on their merits, accepting some and rejecting others, while remaining open to a call to put regional differences aside when needed.

National Post/Dominion Institute/Innovative Research *Canadian Values Study* explored the general concept of regional alienation in three ways.

1. We asked Canadians whether they felt their province is treated better or worse than other provinces.
2. We read a list of five statements, each of which embodied a specific regional grievance, to see whether each region was wrapped up in its own grievance while rejecting those of other regions, or whether Canadians were willing to listen to the concerns of Canadians from other places.

3. Finally, we asked Canadians if they were willing to put their provincial interests aside for the national interest.

Treatment of My Province By the Federal Government

A majority (57%) of Canadians say that their province is treated as well (46%) or better (11%) than other provinces although three times as many Canadians feel their province is, in fact, treated worse than others (34%) than better (11%).

Dalton McGuinty's crusade for more federal funding appears to be making inroads in Ontario. Just over a year ago, the Canadian Election Study found that Ontario was the one place in the country where more people felt the federal government treated their province better than most (29%) rather than worse (16%). Today, slightly more Ontarians say their province is treated worse than most (22%) rather than better (20%).

Regional Grievances that Unite Canadians

Canadians appear to be willing to listen to the concerns of other regions. While there is generally more support for a particular region's grievance in that region, three of the five statements receive wide support across Canada.

Overall, there is what might be considered surprising support for Ontario's complaint with Ottawa over its "fiscal imbalance" with the federal government. Two in three (64%) Canadians agree that "the federal government can not continue to take over \$20 billion more out of Ontario every year than it is returning in services." One in five (20%), however disagrees with this proposition. A majority of roughly 55% agrees with this statement in virtually every region of Canada except Ontario, where it peaks at 78% support.

BC's softwood lumber concerns are also widely embraced across Canada. Throughout the periphery in the Atlantic, the Prairies and Alberta, at least 60% agree that "if the softwood lumber dispute hurt Ontario and Quebec the way it is hurting BC, the government never would have let it go on so long." While lower levels of the public agree in Central Canada, over 50% in each province agree with the British Columbian sentiment.

Finally, most Canadians support the Atlantic province's position on offshore oil revenues. A majority (54%) of Canadians agree that "the federal government was wrong when it tried to deduct offshore oil revenues from equalization payments due to some Atlantic provinces." One in four (25%) disagrees. Alberta is the Atlantic's biggest ally when it comes to protecting oil money from the federal grasp. BC and Quebec are the most skeptical, but even in those provinces a strong plurality accepts the argument.

Regional Issues that Divide Canadians

While most Canadians want the federal government to keep their hands off Atlantic oil revenues, Alberta oil revenue appears to be another story. In fact, six in ten (58%) Canadians disagree with the view that “Alberta should be able to keep all of its oil revenue for its own use.” In comparison, almost four in ten (37%) believes that Alberta should be able to keep all its oil revenues for itself. Only Alberta believes it should keep all the money for its own use. In every other region a majority disagree.

Quebec shares Alberta’s isolation when Canadians are asked to react to the statement “Quebec is not receiving its fair share from the federal government.” While 70% of Quebecers agree with that statement, a majority disagree in every other region. Even in the Atlantic provinces, the most sympathetic region of English Canada, just 24% agree while 56% disagree.

Putting the Country First

Despite the differences of opinion on various regional grievances, Canadians appear willing to rise up beyond their own provincial or regional issues to view themselves as members of a larger nation. In fact, an overwhelming majority (82%) of Canadians agree with the statement “Sometimes we have to put our provincial self-interest aside to do what is right for the country.” Just over one in ten (14%) disagrees. Support is over 90% in Ontario, the Atlantic provinces and Manitoba and Saskatchewan. BC and Alberta are a little more reserved with support in the 80 percent range. Even in Quebec, 57% agree sometimes we have to put provincial interests aside.

About this survey

The phone survey of 815 randomly selected Canadians was conducted between September 22nd and September 24th, 2005, and has a margin of error of +/- 3.43 %, 19 times out of 20.

The survey was co-commissioned by The Dominion Institute (www.dominion.ca) and the National Post (www.canada.com/national/nationalpost). The Dominion Institute is a national charity dedicated to the promotion of Canadian history and shared citizenship.

The survey was conducted by Innovative Research Group, Inc. (www.innovativeresearch.ca), a Toronto-based research and polling firm.

Survey Attribution

The results of this poll are being provided exclusively to the National Post.

The first instance of survey should attribute the survey as "The Canadian Value Study, a joint project of the National Post, the Dominion Institute and Innovative Research Group". All subsequent attributions can use the shorter convention of: "National Post/Dominion Institute / Innovative Research survey".

If space allows, all survey articles will include a project header labeled "*The Canadian Value Study is a joint project of the National Post, the Dominion Institute and Innovative Research Group.*" All survey articles will end with a tag at the end of the story as follows: "*The Canadian Value Study is a joint project of the National Post, the Dominion Institute and Innovative Research. Visit Innovativeresearch.ca for more information.*"

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NP16. In general, does the federal government treat your Province better, worse, or about the same as other provinces?

Better	11%
Worse	34%
About the same as other provinces	46%
Don't know [VOLUNTEERED]	9%
Refused [VOLUNTEERED]	-

I am going to read to you a series of statements. Please tell me if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree with each of the following statements.

NP18. The federal government was wrong when it tried to deduct offshore oil revenues from equalization payments due to some of the Atlantic provinces.

1	Strongly agree	22%
2	Somewhat agree	32%
3	Neither agree nor disagree/Neutral (VOLUNTEERED)	2%
4	Somewhat disagree	16%
5	Strongly disagree	8%
8	Don't know (VOLUNTEERED)	18%
9	Refused (VOLUNTEERED)	1%

NP19. Alberta should be able to keep all of its oil revenue for its own use.

1	Strongly agree	19%
2	Somewhat agree	18%
3	Neither agree nor disagree/Neutral (VOLUNTEERED)	1%
4	Somewhat disagree	27%
5	Strongly disagree	31%
8	Don't know (VOLUNTEERED)	4%
9	Refused (VOLUNTEERED)	1%

NP20 The federal government can not continue to take over \$20 Billion more out of Ontario every year than it is returning in services to the people in that province

1	Strongly agree	29%
2	Somewhat agree	35%
3	Neither agree nor disagree/Neutral (VOLUNTEERED)	3%
4	Somewhat disagree	14%
5	Strongly disagree	7%
8	Don't know (VOLUNTEERED)	12%
9	Refused (VOLUNTEERED)	1%

NP21. Quebec is not receiving its fair share from the federal government.

1	Strongly agree	13%
2	Somewhat agree	15%
3	Neither agree nor disagree/Neutral (VOLUNTEERED)	2%
4	Somewhat disagree	20%
5	Strongly disagree	37%

8	Don't know (VOLUNTEERED)	13%
9	Refused (VOLUNTEERED)	-

NP22. If the softwood lumber dispute hurt Ontario and Quebec the way it is hurting BC, the federal government never would have let it go on so long.

1	Strongly agree	34%
2	Somewhat agree	28%
3	Neither agree nor disagree/Neutral (VOLUNTEERED)	2%
4	Somewhat disagree	16%
5	Strongly disagree	12%
8	Don't know (VOLUNTEERED)	10%
9	Refused (VOLUNTEERED)	1%

NP23. Sometime we have to put our provincial self-interest aside to do what is right for the country

1	Strongly agree	44%
2	Somewhat agree	38%
3	Neither agree nor disagree/Neutral (VOLUNTEERED)	2%
4	Somewhat disagree	8%
5	Strongly disagree	7%
8	Don't know (VOLUNTEERED)	2%
9	Refused (VOLUNTEERED)	-

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