

**The Alliance Leadership Contest and  
the Popularity of Stockwell Day and Social Conservatism**



**COMPAS Inc.  
Public Opinion and Customer Research  
July 7, 2000**

## Huge Lead for Day Over Manning

### **Day Rightwing Favourite, Manning Favourite of the Left across the Country**

Nationally, Day and Manning are an even match as preferred leaders of their party. But, Day is apt to win because he is the stronger preference among rightwing voters while Manning is the stronger preference on the left. Among those who would vote for the Alliance party, an overwhelming majority favour Alberta Treasurer Stockwell Day over former Reform party leader Preston Manning. Those who would not vote Alliance tend to prefer Manning, especially New Democrats.

Respondents in the nation-wide survey completed July 5-6 were asked how they would vote in an upcoming federal election if Manning were leader and, separately, if Day were leader. Day inspires the rightwing electorate. Among those who would vote Alliance if Day wins the leadership, Day is greatly preferred over Manning as the best leader for the party—by a margin of more than 2:1. Among those who would vote Alliance if Manning wins the leadership, Manning is preferred over Day as the best leader for the party—but only by a small margin. Meanwhile Manning is the preferred choice of New Democrats, who, in earlier seasons considered him too radical or extreme.

The following is a summary of overarching findings:

- ❑ The country as a whole is split evenly in preference for the two candidates—33% for Day vs. 32% for Manning
- ❑ NDP voters strongly and consistently prefer Manning over Day—40% vs. 18% among those who would vote NDP if Manning were Alliance leader and 47% to 8% of those who would vote NDP if Day were Alliance leader
- ❑ Liberals tend slightly to prefer Manning—among those who would stay with the Liberals if Day won the Alliance leadership Manning is the favourite (36% vs. 28%) whereas among those who would stay Liberal if Manning were leader, Day edges out Manning (34% vs. 30%)
- ❑ Alliance voters as a whole prefer Day—among those who would vote for a Day-led Alliance party, Day trounces Manning 65% vs. 26% whereas among those who would vote for a Manning-led Alliance party Manning edges out Day 46% vs. 41%.



## **Left-Right Social and Economic Division among Day and Manning Supporters among Voters at Large**

Among the public at large, social conservatives and economic right-wingers much prefer Day while social liberals and economic left-wingers prefer Manning. Respondents were asked if various aspects of social conservatism would be an asset or a liability for a leader of any given party. Respondents were also asked to assign importance to tax cuts, health spending, and the strength of the Canadian economy vis-à-vis the American economy in their electoral thinking. We report below in some detail the views of Canadians on these issues of social and economic conservatism. Here, we mention these issues to show that these issues divide Day and Manning supporters among the electorate *at large*.

Among voters at large, just as Liberals and NDPers tend to prefer Manning to Day, so too do voters with liberal social beliefs or leftwing economic positions. Thus,

- Strong Manning supporters are more likely than strong Day supporters to believe that being a devout Christian is a very or somewhat negative quality in a party leader—41% vs. 22%
- Strong Day supporters are more likely than strong Manning supporters to believe that it is a somewhat or very positive quality for a party leader to oppose marriage and adoption rights for homosexual couples equal to the rights for heterosexual couples—65% vs. 44%
- Strong Day supporters are more likely than strong Manning supporters to believe that it is “very important” for governments to cut taxes—61% vs. 40%
- Strong Manning supporters are more likely than strong Day supporters to believe that it is very important to increase health spending—71% vs. 58%.

## **Very Little Left-Right Division within the Alliance Party**

Outside the Alliance party, Manning is the preference of the social and economic left and Day is not. But this left-right division hardly appears within the party. Manning and Day supporters differ little except on a few biology-related, primordial issues. Day and Manning supporters agree about

- the virtues of “social conservative” beliefs in a leader
- the benefits of having a devout Christian as a leader—if anything, strong Manning supporters are slightly more inclined to see the characteristic as somewhat or very positive (69% vs. 57% among strong Day supporters)
- the virtues of having a devout Christian leader who is pluralist or accepting of the attitudes of those who disagree



- the merits of improved tax treatment of stay-at-home mothers
- the importance of fresh leadership in national politics
- the importance of tax cuts, and
- the importance of strengthening the Canadian economy vis-à-vis the American.

Within the Alliance party, Day and Manning supporters differ on three primordial, biology-related issues—gay rights, health spending, and especially abortion:

- Strong Day supporters are more likely to see as a somewhat or very positive characteristic a leader's opposition to equal marriage and adoption rights for gays—72% vs. 48% among strong Manning supporters
- Strong Manning supporters are more likely to see increased health spending as important or very important—90% vs. 66% among strong Day supporters
- Strong Day supporters are more likely to see as a somewhat or very positive characteristic a leader's opposition to third trimester abortions—66% vs. 35% among strong Manning supporters.

### **Prairie Heartland Solidly for Day, Ontario and B.C. Volatile**

Alliance voters on the Alliance party's prairie heartland are resolutely for Day irrespective of whether they would vote for a Day-led or a Manning-led Alliance party. Among those who would vote for a Day-led Alliance party, Day is the choice of 76% vs. 17% for Manning. Among those who would vote for a Manning-led Alliance party, Day remains the first choice, albeit with a reduced margin of superiority—58% vs. 28%. The fact that Day remains the first choice even of those who would vote for a Manning-led Alliance party shows that, on the prairies, both Alliance party loyalty and Day's personal appeal are very strong. On the prairies, Day enthusiasts are less likely to bolt if their man loses the leadership contest.

While prairie voters remain stable in their preferences, voters in B.C. and Ontario are volatile:

- In Manning's heartland of personal support, British Columbia, among those who would vote for a Manning-led Alliance party Manning is the decisive preference for leader—57% saying that he would make the better leader vs. 32% choosing Day as the better leader. Meanwhile Day is the preferred leader (48% vs. 41%) among those who would vote for the Alliance party if Day were leader.
- In Ontario, Manning is the decisive preference of those who would vote Alliance with him as leader, 61% saying that he is the better leader vs. 26% choosing Day. Meanwhile Day is the



decisive preference of those who would vote alliance with Day as leader (51% vs. 33% choosing Manning).

### **Charismatic Edge for Day**

Respondents were asked to name “the strongest and most dynamic leader” among the national party leaders. Two questions were asked, one with Day as the Alliance head and one with Manning. Lest anyone take Prime Minister Chretien’s testosterone for granted, the incumbent Prime Minister emerges in top spot. But, Day emerges in a strong second position, well above the others and in a stronger position than Manning, as displayed below.

*Who is the Strongest and Most Dynamic Leader?*

	WHEN DAY IS ALLIANCE LEADER	WHEN MANNING IS ALLIANCE LEADER
Jean Chretien	43	47
Stockwell Day	18	-
Preston Manning	-	13
Alexa McDonough	7	6
Joe Clark	5	6
Gilles Duceppe	4	5
DNK	24	23

### **Day Edge among Francophones**

Ever since Confederation, national parties achieved the most electoral success nationally and, especially in Quebec, if their leader was bilingual or at least if their leader had a prominent francophone lieutenant. In light of the historical importance of bilingualism, one would expect Day to have an edge among francophones, and he does. Thus, 32% of francophones prefer Day while 25% prefer Manning. Among Anglophones, the two leaders are essentially tied—34% for Day, 33% for Manning.

### **Momentum with Day**

Day not only has the lead among Alliance voters, but he also benefits from a sense of momentum. Canadian voters as a whole and Alliance voters in particular perceive him as having some prospect of winning the next election. Among the electorate as a whole, an extraordinary 37% think that a Day-led Alliance party would have a good or excellent chance of forming the next government. The proportion is slightly smaller in the case of a Manning-led Alliance party, as displayed below.



*Alliance Leadership Contest  
Final National Post/COMPAS Poll, Draft 2, July 7, 2000*

---

Those who would vote for a Day-led Alliance party are especially inspired. In this group, 13% believe that the party would have “excellent” prospects while another 61% believe that the prospects would be “good.” Those who would vote for a Manning-led Alliance party are also inspired, albeit less so.

*Perceived Chances of “beating the Liberals and forming the next federal government”*

	EXCELLENT	GOOD	POOR	BAD	DNK
All voters if Day were Alliance leader	4	33	33	15	15
All voters if Manning were Alliance leader	3	27	38	21	11
Day-Alliance voters if Day were Alliance leader	13	61	17	2	8
Day-Alliance voters if Manning were leader	7	39	34	13	8
Manning-Alliance voters if Day were Alliance leader	12	51	22	6	8
Manning-Alliance voters if Manning were leader	9	55	26	4	6



Among all voters, not just those who would vote Alliance, there is a stronger sense of potential Alliance success with Day than Manning, as reported earlier. The sense that Day has got a kind of royal jelly is especially strong among those who strongly prefer him to Manning. Among those who “strongly” rather than moderately prefer Day to Manning, 67% believe that a Day-led Alliance party has a good (55%) or excellent (12%) chance to beat Chretien. Meanwhile, among those who strongly prefer Manning to Day, 62% believe that a Manning-led Alliance party has a good (49%) or excellent (13%) chance to beat Chretien.

**Who Benefits from Dissension Depending Upon a Manning or Day Victory—  
Alliance Does Better under Day, Both Liberals and Tories Do Better under Manning**

Though Day is much preferred by rightwing voters, most of those who would vote Alliance under Day would vote Alliance under Manning and vice-versa.

Given that Day is the choice of the rightwing, one might expect that Day, the apparently more rightwing candidate, would have a tougher time holding onto Manning’s supporters in a federal election than Manning would have holding onto Day’s supporters. Logically, the apparently more radical candidate, Day, should have a tough time holding onto Manning’s apparently more moderate supporters. But, charisma comes into play, and Day actually does better at holding Manning’s supporters than Manning does at holding Day’s. Thus, among those who would vote Alliance if Manning were the leader, 75% say that they would still vote Alliance if Day were leader. Among those who would vote Alliance if Day were leader, slightly fewer, 71%, say that they would still vote Alliance if Manning were leader.

Irrespective of who wins, the Liberals face a rising challenge, as reported in Part 2 of this report. If Day wins the leadership, he would lose about 25% of those who would vote for a Manning-led Alliance party while gaining many votes among those who would not vote for a Manning-led Alliance party. Manning supporters turned off by Day would go about equally to the Liberals (10%) and Tories (9%). Day supporters turned off by Manning would go disproportionately to the Liberals—14% of them to the Liberals, 7% to the Tories

## Alliance in Strong Number 2 Position

### **Strong, Emerging Support for Alliance**

The fanfare associated with the Alliance leadership contest has contributed substantially to igniting support for the party. Irrespective of who wins the leadership, the Alliance party will be in a far stronger position than it and its Reform party



predecessor have ever been. As evidenced in the table below, the Alliance party is now in a strong second place, well ahead of the Tories and NDP.

*Vote Intentions if Day Were Leader and if Manning Were Leader  
(13% and 12% DNKs removed from the analysis)*

	IF DAY WERE LEADER	IF MANNING WERE LEADER
The Liberals led by Jean Chretien	44	44
The Alliance party led by Stockwell Day or Preston Manning (different questions)	25	23
The NDP led by Alexa McDonough	10	11
The Progressive Conservatives led by Joe Clark	14	13
IN QUEBEC: The Bloc led by Gilles Duceppe	9	9

### **Rise of Moderate Social Conservatism**

Columnists and commentators with socially liberal views have spoken at length about the electoral dangers for politicians as a result of espousing social conservatism. But findings from the survey show a huge appetite for traditionalist values among voters at large. As displayed below, very large majorities consider it an asset for a party leader to be a pluralist-minded devout Christian and to favour improved tax treatment for stay-at-home mothers. Smaller majorities consider it an asset for a leader to be a devout Christian or socially conservative in private beliefs. The two conservative talismans that divide the public, albeit about equally, are prohibiting third trimester or late term abortion and withholding marriage and adoption rights from homosexual couples. Intriguingly, even the most unpopular of these conservative positions elicits more public support than the Alliance party itself.



*Alliance Leadership Contest  
Final National Post/COMPAS Poll, Draft 2, July 7, 2000*

---

*How Positive or Negative a Factor in Your Thinking Would Be  
Each of the Following Beliefs in a Party Leader?*

If the party leader were...	Total Positive (i.e. very + somewhat)	Very Positive	Some-what Positive	Neutral	Some-what Negative	Very Negative	DNK
Devout Christian Who Respects the Beliefs of Others	78	31	47	4	11	6	1
Believes that Stay-at-Home Mothers Should Be Treated the Same Under Tax Law as Mothers in paid Workforce	73	40	33	2	13	7	6
Devout Christian in Private Life	55	16	39	17	17	9	3
Socially Conservative in Beliefs	54	9	45	4	24	8	10
Believes that Homosexuals Should Have Equal Workplace Rights But Not Same Rights as Heterosexuals to Marry or Adopt	47	17	30	4	24	20	5
Believes Late Term Abortions Should Be Illegal	45	26	19	3	22	24	6



### **Economic Conservatism as a More Two-Edged Sword**

While the conventional wisdom has been that social conservatism would harm its advocates while economic conservatism is the main opportunity for the political rightwing, the data present a more ambiguous portrait. The best electoral case for economic conservatism is continued evidence of tax fatigue and public concern about the comparative decline of the Canadian dollar and economy vis-à-vis the American. However, the same public that cries out for tax relief also calls out with at least equal intensity for increased spending on healthcare, as evidenced below.

*How Important Is It to You that the Federal Government...*

	Total important	Very important	Important	Somewhat important	Not really important	Not at all important	DNK
put more money into healthcare	95	64	17	14	3	2	1
do something about the comparative weakness of the Canadian dollar and the Canadian economy	90	50	17	23	7	3	2
truly lowers taxes	85	49	14	22	9	4	2
have fresh new leadership	72	35	17	20	17	9	2

### **Methodological Note**

A national representative sample of n>600 was interviewed July 5-6, 2000. Samples of this size are deemed accurate to within approximately four percentage points 19 times out of 20. The principal investigators on this project were Conrad Winn and Robert Lauffer.

