

Saint-Maurice (Jean Chretien) Riding Survey



**COMPAS Inc.
Public Opinion and Customer Research
October 20, 2000**

Saint-Maurice Riding Survey

The Saint-Maurice riding's home boy who made good in Ottawa is slated to win local re-election in the expected federal election according to a National Post/COMPAS poll conducted October 19th. Jean Chretien is apt to beat the second place Bloc candidate despite the strong separatist tendencies of the riding and despite some strong misgivings about the federal government.

In a federal election, local voters would give the Prime Minister 50% vs. 35% for the second place Bloc Quebecois, 4% for the Alliance, 1% for the NDP, and less than 1% for the Tories (and 10% for other). The same voters would give a provincial Liberal candidate a hard time—36% of the vote vs. 42% for the Parti Quebecois and 22% for Mario Dumont's Action Democratique.

Chretien outperforms whoever would be the provincial Liberal candidate as a result of holding onto the lion's share of provincial Liberal votes (89%) while eating into sizeable numbers of PQ (25%) and ADQ (41%) votes.

Local voters give the Prime Minister some credit for honesty. In Saint-Maurice, Chretien places second among the national party leaders in terms of honesty—a mean score of 4.2 on a 7 point scale, behind Bloc leader Duceppe's score of 4.4 but ahead of Clark (4.0), Day (3.8), and McDonough (3.7). A recent national, National Post/COMPAS poll placed Chretien last in honesty among the federal leaders. Chretien virtually equals Duceppe in common sense—a mean of 4.3 vs. Duceppe's 4.4 and means of 3.8 for each of the other leaders.

While Chretien is certainly popular among locals, all is not entirely rosy. A clear majority (64%) believe that the mid-river, Versailles-like fountain project was a bad (34%) or poor (30%) use of public funds. Meanwhile, 22% thought that it was a good and 6%, an excellent use of public funds (9% dnk or refused).

A higher percentage of the local electorate rated poorly or worse the Prime Minister's HRDC-related performance—31% bad, 37% poor, 21% good, 4% excellent, and 8% dnk/refuse.

Despite their skepticism about the fountain project and HRDC spending, local voters feel charitably inclined, in part because they appreciate the amount of money and projects that he has brought to the riding—rated excellent by 20%, good by 35%, poor by 28%, and bad by 15% (2% dnk/refuse).

Saint-Maurice is a highly polarized riding where separatists and federalists divide sharply on so many of the issues. For example, perceptions of the PM's ability to bring money and projects are highly related to how people intend to vote. Among those who rate Chretien's project-related performance as excellent, 84% would vote Liberal. The



percentage intending to vote Liberal declines to 63% among those rating his performance as good, 32% among those rating it as poor, and 12% rating it as bad.

A similar pattern emerges in the case of the rating of the mid-river fountain—the Chretien share of the vote is 92% among those rating the project as an excellent use of public funds, 67% among those rating it as a good use of such funds, 53% among those rating it as poor, and 31% among those rating it as bad.

A similar pattern re-emerges in the case of voters' assessments of the Prime Minister's HRDC-related performance—77% Liberal vote among those rating the performance as excellent, 79% among those rating it as good, 51% among those rating it as poor, and 24% among those rating it as bad.

PQ and Liberal voters are highly polarized in their judgements of the honesty of Chretien and Duceppe—respective means of 3.3 and 5.4 among Bloc voters and 5.4 and 4.0 among Liberal voters.

As in other areas of French-speaking Quebec, Liberal support is

- ❑ greatest among the old (64% among those 60 years of age and older) and weakest among the young (24% among those under 30 years of age), and
- ❑ somewhat weaker among union households—44% vs. 52% among those without a union member in the household.

Methodology

A representative sample of 260 voters was interviewed by professional interviewers using computer-assisted telephoning interviewing technology. Samples of this size are deemed accurate to within approximately 6 percentage points 19 times out of 20. The principal investigator on this project was Conrad Winn.

