EM8302: The Kitchener-Waterloo Record, September 8, 1983

NDP gains while Tories slip in poll

TORONTO (CP) – Support for the federal Progressive Conservatives is slipping among committed voters while the New Democratic Party is gaining favour, a Gallup poll released today suggests.

The August poll, conducted eight weeks after Brian Mulroney was chosen the new Conservative leader, said 50 per cent of decided voters would support the Conservatives in an election, a drop of five percentage points from a July poll.

At the same time, the poll suggests, the NDP increased its share to 20 per cent from 16 per cent a month earlier, while the Liberals garnered 28 per cent, up one percentage point.

Twenty-six percent said they were undecided compared with 23 per cent in July.

"Nothing much has changed," Conservative party president Peter Elzinga said of the results. "We’re still well ahead, the Liberals are still in serious trouble and the NDP has just climbed up from rock bottom."

NDP leader Ed Broadbent said the results "are a very good sign for the New Democratic Party right across Canada and it will mean that our own members will be going into Parliamant more determined than ever."

Parliament reopens Monday.

The poll is based on interviews with 1,055 people and is accurate to within four percentage points 19 times out of 20, says Gallup.

This means Conservative support could range fron 46 to 54 per cent of decided voters, the NDP’s between 16 and 24 per cent and the Liberals’ between 24 and 32 per cent.

The poll provides no precise regional breakdown because the smaller sample size for each region increases the margin of error. But it suggests the NDP’s gains came at Conservative expense in the Atlantic provinces, Ontario and the West.

Reached Wednesday night in Liverpool, N.S., where he is attending a federal caucus meeting, Broadbent said Canadians are listening to the party’s message on medicare and unemployment "and that’s encouraging."

Federal Labour Miniser Andre Ouellet, remarking on the apparent dip in Conservative support, said "The situation seems to be coming back to normal and the gap between the Conservatives and the NDP should shrink in the coming months.

Ouellet, attending a Quebec Liberal caucus meeting at a Quebec resort, said he believes the Liberal popularity will increase as anti-inflation measures and job creation measures take effect.

"We’re still relativey low but I’m not surprised by the situation."

The article EM8302 reprinted above is used in Figure 2.12 of the STAT 332 Course Materials.