

EM9331: **Kitchener-Waterloo Record, September 2, 1993, page A10**

Residents in Toronto crankiest, poll finds

The Canadian Press
and SouthamStar Network

TORONTO – Pollsters trying to determine the voting preferences of Canadians have come to a firm conclusion – Toronto residents are the crankiest in the country about telephone surveys.

Polling firms are finding that people here hang up on them.

"The refusal rate is highest in Metro Toronto," said Liberal pollster Michael Marzolini.

"Torontonians have got machines dialing them with recorded messages and steak-knife salesmen calling and so much chaff on the phone they are just fed up."

The professionals call it "survey fatigue" and some worry that it could put the accuracy of polls in question.

Pollsters trying to find out whether Liberal leader Jean Chrétien or Prime Minister Kim Campbell is going to win this fall's election are discovering that seven out of 10 Toronto residents decline to say.

"A disturbing trend threatens the future of valuable survey research in Canada," the Lobby Digest, a newsletter for lobbyists, states in its August edition.

"Its 27 million subjects are growing ornery and unco-operative – throwing the usefulness of current polling methods into question."

But Marzolini says good pollsters keep calling back until they get a proper sample. Their job is harder now, he says, but the pollsters can still tell what issues matter to Canadians and how Canadians intend to vote.

Donna Dasko of Environics Research agrees determined pollsters can get a sample that is demographically accurate, "if you really chase after them."

An accurate sample is balanced by region and matches the sex, age and cultural distribution of Canadians.

But Dasko suggests the polls may now have a missing element. The kind of people who hang up may represent a block of voters whose intentions don't match those who agree to be polled, she says.

Other big urban centres display the same phenomenon, particularly among potential voters already turned off by callers who pretend they are taking surveys but really are trying to sell a new vacuum cleaner.

The article EM9331 reprinted above is used in Figure 8.7a of the STAT 220 Course Materials, in Figure 3.9 of the STAT 231 Course Materials, in Figure 3.4a of the STAT 332 Course Materials (1995 curriculum) and in Statistical Highlight #16.