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## Libs to lose some strongholds

Keyes, Goodale, Phinney, Lastewska and Valeri in tough battles to hold onto seats

By ANGELO PERSICILLI

TORONTO—Paul Martin's strategy for this federal election was based on a simple concept: he knew the Liberals were going to lose some seats in Ontario because of the merger on the right, but thought he would gain more seats in Québec because the Bloc Québécois was dead. His Liberal strategists also hoped they would win more seats in British Columbia where Paul Martin was much more popular than Jean Chrétien.

Please see 'Backrooms' on Page 14

## Tory TV ad recycles HRDC boondoggle 'myth'

By PACO FRANCOLI

Embattled public servants, whose profession has been dragged through the mud for the better part of the past four years amid mounting waste scandals, are not done taking their lumps as the federal election kicks into high gear.

Some of these hits will be less deserved than others.

Take the Conservative Party TV ad called "Carousel" attacking the Liberal Party. It highlights three of the biggest scandals to hit Ottawa in recent memory: the \$250-million sponsorship scandal, the gun registry program which will soon be \$2-billion over budget, and the \$1-billion HRDC grants and contributions boondoggle.

While the first two are arguable great examples of government bungling, calling the latter "a boondoggle" is more than a slight exaggeration, says David Good, a former assistant deputy minister who was responsible for the program at the now defunct Human Resources Development Canada department.

Please see Civil Circles on Page 21

## NOT MANY WOMEN RUNNING IN 2004



Photographs by Jake Wright, *The Hill Times*  
**WOMEN WHO ARE RUNNING:** 1. LIB JUDY SGRO 2. NDP MONIA MAZIGH 3. LIB LUCIENNE ROBILLARD 4. NDP JUDY WASYLICIA-LEIS 5. BLOC MONIQUE GUAY 6. LIB CAROLE-MARIE ALLARD 7. LIB CAROLYN BENNETT 8. LIB CLAUDETTE BRADSHAW 9. CONS. CAROL SKELTON 10. CONS. BELINDA STRONACH ARE RUNNING FOR FOR RE-ELECTION. MS. MAZIGH AND MS. STRONACH AND FOR THE FIRST TIME.

By ROSEMARY SPEIRS

The number of women willing to stand for Parliament dropped in the 2000 election, and fewer women have stood, and been elected, in the last nine provincial elections. All federal party leaders are men, all premiers, all mayors of the biggest cities. Men's grip on politics in Canada is tightening, at a time when

women in other countries are making exciting political breakthroughs. Only 23 per cent of the candidates running in 2004 are women. What's wrong? See Page 16

See also complete lists of female candidates  
 See total numbers from every major party  
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## Parties' polling costs now part of election expenses: new bill

By F. ABBAS RANA

For the first time, the parties' polling costs will be considered election expenses in Campaign 2004. The changes are being billed as some of the "most far-reaching in the regulation of the finances of federal parties and candidates since the Election Expenses Act of 1974."

Elections Canada says starting this year, as a result of former prime minister Jean Chrétien's campaign finance reform bill C-24 which came into effect in January, polling costs — which can cost millions per party — will now be considered election expenses.

Elections Canada, however, has not set any cap on election polling and it will be up to each political party to decide how much

they will spend on electoral activities including advertising, polls, office expenses, leaders' tours, travel other than leaders of the party, salaries and wages and miscellaneous expenses.

Elections Canada does not have any specific figures on how much money each party spent in the 2000 election on polling because parties were not required to report what they spent on polling. However, when looking at overall spending, in the 2000 general election, the Liberal Party spent a total of \$12,525,174, the former Alliance Party spent \$9,669,648, the former Progressive Party spent \$3,983,301, and the NDP spent \$6,334,585.

A seasoned Liberal insider, told *The Hill*

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Photograph by Jake Wright, *The Hill Times*

**Campaign Election 2004 This Week**  
 Prime Minister Paul Martin has 28 days to go as of Monday. Read about pollsters on page 10, 'Wiseguys' on page 5, Campaign Finance Primer on page 7 and Political Style on page 12.

## CAMPAIGN 2004

## NDP, Conservative and Lib pollsters first time in federal bids

Libs spent at least \$1-million on polling in 2000 campaign, one poll can cost \$20,000 to \$80,000

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Times that how much polling the party does is usually decided by the top campaign strategists.

The insider said some strategists prefer polling every day during the election campaign, so that every bump in the road is charted. Polling is also seen as a "must" before and after the leaders' debates to gauge voter reaction. Other campaign strategists favour weekly polls, which can be "national" or "region based."

The insider estimated that the party spent "at least a million dollars" on polling in each of the 1997 and 2000 election campaigns.

Chris Baker, president of Continuum Research, said polling is obviously used extensively by federal political parties before and during an election campaign, not only to help political parties prepare policy platforms, but also to help track party fortunes across the country.

"Having a good understanding of public opinion is essential to crafting a platform, positioning your leader and arriving at a victorious conclusion," said Mr. Baker.

"Every central campaign, whether you are a New Democrat or Conservative or Liberal or Bloc Québécois, they all do it as much as they possibly can."

Mr. Baker, a former Liberal staffer, stressed each party has a different take on how much polling is needed during an election campaign. He said that in the 1993 and 1997 federal election campaigns, the Liberal Party conducted polls every day.

Donna Dasko, senior vice-president of Environics, said most political parties like to do daily polling, provided they have the resources for it.

"If the party has enough money, it might do a daily tracking poll to see how issues are unfolding. They would be doing focus groups in response to particular issues and also in response to leaders' debates that would take place during an election. They'd want to know how they were faring. And of course, any testing of ads," said Ms. Dasko.

Ms. Dasko declined to estimate or give an average on how much the federal political parties spend in a federal election campaign on polling, but said that an



Photographs courtesy of New Democratic Party, by F. Abbas Rana and by Jake Wright *The Hill Times*

**TAKING THE POLITICAL PULSE:** BOB PENNER IS THE POLLSTER FOR FEDERAL NDP, LEFT, DIMITRI PANTAZOPOULOS IS THE POLLSTER FOR THE TORY PARTY, AND EARNSCLIFFE'S DAVID HERLE IS THE LIBS' POLLSTER. NEW CAMPAIGN LAWS COULD ACTUALLY ALLOW THE CONSERVATIVES TO SPEND MORE ON POLLING.

average national poll costs between approximately \$20,000-\$80,000.

William Stanbury, an expert on election financing laws and a professor emeritus at UBC, said in previous elections, political parties used to "poll about 500 people each night to create a rolling poll" to track the pulse of the Canadians. In the last two elections, he said the leading national parties spent approximately "over \$1-million on polling."

Prof. Stanbury told *The Hill Times* in an e-mail interview that the value of polls to parties before and during elections cannot be overstated.

"First, polls are critical in determining when the party in power calls for a general election. The absence of fixed election dates like the U.S. is a huge advantage to the party in power. The PM exercises his discretion up to a constitutional limit of five years. During the campaign, polls are vital to obtain feedback on how the electorate is responding to the efforts of each party and leader. Campaigns are a massive marketing exercise and polls are the most important form of market research as the campaign proceeds," said Prof. Stanbury.

He said polling expenses were not covered as an expense before because "this was just another example of how the incumbents, the Liberals, feathered their own nest. It also gave the public the illusion of lower levels of expendi-

tures on the campaigns."

Asked if he thinks the political parties will now do more polling as a result of the new campaign finance bill, Prof. Stanbury responded: "As far as I can tell, the allowed increase in 'election expenses' is slightly greater than what the major parties had been spending on polls in previous elections. Note, however, that only the Liberals came very close to hitting the limit on party 'election expenses' in past campaigns. So the new Conservative Party has plenty of room to spend more on their campaign including more on polls if they want. As the same time, it appears that the rate of inflation in the costs of election campaigns has been higher than the CPI which is used to index the limits on 'election expenses'."

Meanwhile, the new campaign finance reform rules have banned corporate and union donations to political parties (though individual candidates can accept a minimum of \$1,000 from corporations and unions). To offset the loss of donations, parties have been given a new taxpayer subsidized allowance based on the number of votes they got in the last election. Each vote is worth \$1.75.

Based on 2000 election results, this year, the Liberal Party got a \$9,191,054.25 allowance, the Conservative Party got \$8,476,872.25, the Bloc Québécois \$2,411,022.25, and New Democratic Party

\$1,914,269.

Aaron Freeman, a board member of Democracy Watch, said that he supports making polling expenses an election expense that must be reported to Elections Canada.

"It's long overdue. It's very obvious that polling prior to an election is an election-related expense. It's directly related to the campaign," said Mr. Freeman.

NDP pollster Bob Penner, meanwhile, told *The Hill Times* that he is of the same mind.

"I personally think it's a good thing. It's an important expense and I think parties should be accountable for the money they spend and to be transparent. I don't think there was ever a legitimate rationale to exclude polling from election expenses," said Mr. Penner.

Mr. Penner, 46, is the president and CEO of Strategic Communications Inc., a political research, communications and fundraising consulting company, which he founded in 1991. He was the pollster in NDP Leader Jack Layton's leadership campaign and in last year's Ontario provincial election, Mr. Penner was also the official pollster of the NDP. This is the first federal election campaign in which Mr. Penner is the official pollster for a federal party.

Mr. Penner wouldn't give details of the NDP's internal polling, but said the NDP is poised to "match or exceed" its 1988 election results when, under the

leadership of Ed Broadbent, the NDP won an historic 43 seats.

"We are feeling quite optimistic that our support is growing and we are doing quite well actually. I think we can match or exceed those results," declared Mr. Penner.

Meanwhile, the Conservative Party's pollster Dimitri Pantazopoulos, who is the president of Praxicus Public Strategies Inc., told *The Hill Times* that he's "more or less indifferent" to the new electoral law making polling expenses an official election expense. He said it will force parties to prioritize their electoral activities and spending.

"I am more or less indifferent to it. I don't think it's a bad thing. Clearly, if you are going to create a set of rules where there are cost caps, it makes sense. Obviously, it causes more trade-offs than it has previously. Do you spend more money on research or do you spend more money on advertising or do you spend more money on tours? Of course, that creates some fiscal tensions. I don't think, it's altogether a bad thing," he said.

A native of Ottawa, Mr. Pantazopoulos, 35, is a former Hill staffer who first came to the Hill in 1991 to work for then Sen. Stan Waters. Mr. Pantazopoulos started his own company Praxicus Public Strategies Inc. in 1999. This is the first federal election in which he is the official pollster of the Conservative Party.

In the interview, he declined to comment on

how often he's conducting polls or how much the party is spending on polling. But he said the new Conservatives are "optimistic" about the outcome of the election.

"I think we are optimistic and if you look at the public data, who would have predicted that situation would be what it is six months ago," said Mr. Pantazopoulos. "We are optimistic about our potential for breakthroughs in all parts of Canada and we are excited about the campaign."

Heidi Bonnell, a media spokesperson for the governing Liberals, confirmed the Earnscliffe Strategy Group is the official polling company for the Liberal Party "but none of the principals were available for an interview."

Earnscliffe Strategy Group is a government-relations, lobby and communications firm closely associated with Prime Minister Paul Martin (LaSalle-Énard, Que.). The firm's major players played a key role in Mr. Martin's Liberal leadership campaign. One of its principals, David Herle, is now the campaign co-chair of the Liberal Party.

Some of the other principals include Michael Robinson and Elly Alboim. Mr. Robinson represented the Liberals in negotiating the dates for the two TV debates. The French debate will take place on Monday, June 14 and the English debate will take place on Tuesday, June 15.

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*The Hill Times*