

IN OVER HIS HEAD?

By Bruce Anderson & David Coletto

(4th of 6 releases based on our August 15-18th poll) For interviews/quotes, or to find out about our services, please contact Chairman Bruce Anderson at banderson@abacusdata.ca (613-882-0929) or CEO David Coletto at david@abacusdata.ca (613-232-2806)

IN OVER HIS HEAD?

“Didn’t come back for you” was the Conservative attack line trained on the last leader of the Liberal Party, and it may well have helped douse the political career of Michael Ignatieff.

Will “in over his head” do the same to Justin Trudeau?

Things could change, of course, but so far, not very many voters are convinced.

Today, 24% across the country are sure that Mr. Trudeau is in over his head, while 26% reject the argument outright.

Another 28% feel “maybe a bit, but he could learn on the job” and 23% are “unsure, and need to see more of him”.

The “in over his head” line rings more weakly for those under the age of 45 (17%), and but even those over 60 are hesitant to buy it (33% agree). Among those with the highest level of education, only 20% agree. In Alberta, the heartland of Conservative support, 31% think the Liberal leader is in over his head, while 49% either disagree (19%) or believe “he could learn on the job” (30%).

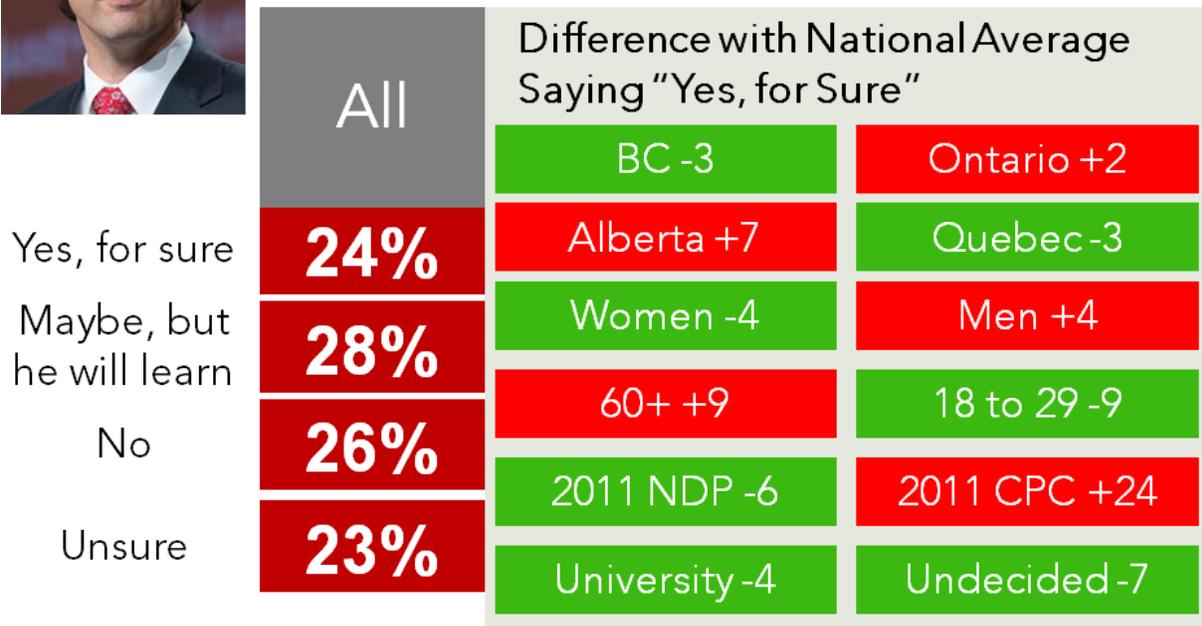
Among those who voted Conservative in 2011, just under half (47%) are convinced at this point that Trudeau is not up to the job, while 13% reject the argument and another 23% say he could learn on the job. 17% aren’t sure yet.

This line of attack has had limited impact so far among 2011 NDP voters. Only 18% believe it, while 65% either disbelieve (29%) or think he can learn on the job (37%).

Among full swing voters (consider any party), only 12% buy it, among those who will choose between the CPC and the Liberals (24%), and among those who will choose between the Liberals and the NDP, only a miniscule 3% accept this argument as of now.



Trudeau “In Over His Head”?



Q. Do you think Justin Trudeau 'is in over his head', as Conservatives have been saying?
National Survey, Aug 15 to 18, n=1,614

These numbers are consistent with a pattern seen since Mr. Trudeau took over the leadership of his party – an inclination to give him some benefit of the doubt. He’s made gaffes, and the Conservatives have seized on them, but the impact so far has been limited, even among Tory 2011 voters.

The question for Conservative strategists is whether to persist in trying to make the ballot question Mr. Trudeau’s competency or abandon it in favour of something else. Thus far the evidence suggests it has not worked. The [Liberals lead the Tories by six points, Mr. Trudeau bests Mr. Harper on evaluations of their values, attitude, ideas, and even judgment](#), the very attribute the Conservatives want Canadians to assess Mr. Trudeau most on.

WHAT ABOUT POT?

For many observers the Liberal leader's proposed policy on marijuana is a controversial idea that he may come to regret.

Our data shows that there is more downside than upside for Mr. Trudeau, but the number of votes at risk is modest at this point. Just over half of those polled say that Mr. Trudeau's position on pot won't affect their vote one way or the other. 19% say it makes them more likely to vote Liberal, while 26% say it makes them less likely to support the Liberals.

The pot position is a net negative among both men and women, and in every region except BC. For those under 60 roughly equal numbers are pushed away as pulled towards the Liberals, while those over 60 are more clearly alienated (13% more likely versus 35% less likely)

Across different partisan groups, Green Party and Liberal Party 2011 voters tend to like the proposed policy, while it's something of a wash among New Democrats. Among 2011 Conservative voters: 15% say it makes them more likely to vote Liberal, while 41% say it makes them less likely to do so.

As an election nears and the prospect of a policy idea moving to policy action becomes more real, and as more people evaluate the details of decriminalization, the risk for the Liberals may well rise. For the moment anyway, Mr. Trudeau's policy on pot is not keeping many voters awake at night, it seems.



Impact of Pot Position on Vote

		Net Impact by Subgroup	
	All	BC +3	Ontario -8
More likely	19%	Alberta -7	Quebec -10
		Women -7	Men -6
Less likely	26%	60+ -22	18 to 29 +1
		2011 NDP -2	2011 CPC -26
No difference	55%	University -1	High school -9

Q: Does Justin Trudeau's position on marijuana make you more likely or less likely to vote Liberal or would it have no impact on how you think you will vote? National Survey, Aug 15 to 18, n=1,614

METHODOLOGY

Our survey was conducted online with 1,614 respondents by Abacus Data, August 15 to 18, 2014. A random sample of panelists was invited to complete the survey from a large representative panel of Canadians, recruited and managed by Research Now, one of the world's leading provider of online research samples.

The Marketing Research and Intelligence Association policy limits statements about margins of sampling error for most online surveys. The margin of error for a comparable probability-based random sample of the same size is +/- 2.5%, 19 times out of 20. The data were weighted according to census data to ensure that the sample matched Canada's population according to age, gender, educational attainment, and region. Totals may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

Abacus Data is an innovative, fast growing public opinion and marketing research consultancy. We use the latest technology, sound science, and deep experience to generate research based advice to our clients. We offer global research capacity with a strong focus on customer service, attention to detail and value added insight.

Our team combines the experience of our Chairman Bruce Anderson, one of Canada's leading research executives for two decades, with the energy, creativity and research expertise of CEO David Coletto, PhD. For more information, visit our website at <http://www.abacusdata.ca/>

Does Justin Trudeau’s position on marijuana make you more likely or less likely to vote Liberal or would it have no impact on how you think you will vote?

Sample size: 1,614

Comparable MoE: ± 2.5%, 19 times out of 20

Fields dates: August 15 to 18, 2014

		More likely	Less likely	No impact	Raw	Weighted
Region	Canada	19%	26%	55%	1614	1593
	BC	25%	22%	53%	296	206
	AB	19%	27%	54%	200	169
	SK/MB	27%	26%	47%	185	109
	ON	20%	28%	52%	500	616
	QC	14%	24%	62%	293	381
	Atlantic	18%	23%	59%	140	112
Gender	Male	21%	27%	51%	802	770
	Female	17%	24%	59%	812	823
Age	18 - 29	23%	22%	55%	245	301
	30 - 44	20%	22%	59%	449	458
	45 - 59	22%	24%	54%	543	461
	60 and over	13%	35%	52%	377	374
Education Level	HS or Less	18%	27%	55%	368	579
	College or some University	18%	26%	56%	620	578
	University or greater	23%	24%	54%	626	437
May 2011 Federal Vote	Conservative Party	15%	41%	44%	508	462
	Liberal Party	27%	15%	59%	330	317
	NDP	22%	24%	54%	341	328
	Green Party	31%	23%	46%	85	82
	Bloc Quebecois	13%	23%	64%	55	77
	Another party	10%	26%	64%	26	27
	Did not vote	15%	15%	70%	269	298
Current Federal Vote	Conservative Party	11%	47%	41%	391	364
	Liberal Party	31%	12%	57%	459	432
	NDP	18%	30%	52%	286	274
	Green Party	32%	20%	48%	89	90
	Bloc Quebecois	12%	22%	65%	44	62
	Another party	5%	31%	64%	24	25
	Undecided	13%	17%	69%	321	344

Do you think Justin Trudeau 'is in over his head', as Conservatives have been saying?

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