



Survey Asks Whether Canadians Are More Like Macdonald or Laurier

Learn More about these Great Nation-Builders and Win a Piece of History on New Website

Toronto - November 20, 2008 - A Dominion Institute poll conducted by Innovative Research Group found that the wisdom of Canada's great nation-builders, Sir John A. Macdonald and Sir Wilfrid Laurier, remains relevant to today's most pressing political issues. The survey which coincides with the launch of the *Macdonald-Laurier Days* project also found that Canadians lack basic knowledge about these two former prime ministers.

When it comes to dealing with the current economic downturn, twice as many Canadians sided with former Prime Minister Wilfrid Laurier instead of Sir John A. MacDonald. 52% of Canadians felt that Laurier's policies of increased free trade were a better solution to today's economic hard times than increased protectionism inspired by Macdonald's "National Policy" (25%).

When asked about how the foreign relation policies employed during the 1891 federal election would fare in today's political climate, Canadians were split with roughly equal numbers siding with Laurier's plan to strengthen ties first and foremost with the United States (42%) and Macdonald's policies that strengthened ties with other countries like Britain (39%).

Respondents were also asked on the best strategy for federalist parties, such as the Conservatives and the Liberals, interested in wooing Québec voters. When asked, a majority of those polled (56%) do not believe that these national parties would win more seats in Quebec with a leader from la belle province, such as Laurier. A majority of Quebecers (54%) agree with this assessment.

"Much of the wisdom of Canada's two great nation-builders remains relevant even if it is more than a century old," said Marc Chalifoux, Executive Director of the Dominion Institute. "I hope that the *Macdonald-Laurier Days* inspire Canadians to learn more about the men who forged the country that we live in."

The survey also showed that Canadians lack basic knowledge about these notable historical figures. More than two in five Canadians (42%) could not identify Macdonald as the country's first Prime Minister, while three in four (75%) were unable to identify Laurier as the first francophone Prime Minister.

To increase knowledge and appreciation of these great nation-builders, the Dominion Institute is launching the *Macdonald-Laurier Days* through a new, bilingual website www.macdonald-laurier.ca. Visitors can learn more about these former prime ministers, as well as participate in an interactive quiz. Participants in the quiz (over 18 years old) can win a piece of history: portraits and original signatures from Macdonald and Laurier. Those aged 13 to 18 and under can win a trip to Ottawa for themselves and a guardian.

The *Macdonald-Laurier Days* project also celebrates the birthdays of these former Prime Ministers, which are now recognized as Heritage Days. The survey found that just over one-in-ten (13%) were able to correctly identify January 11th as Macdonald's birthday and roughly the same number (8%) were able to identify November 20th as Laurier's birthday.

Macdonald-Laurier Days launches today, on Laurier's 167th birthday, at McGill University in Montréal with a bilingual panel "What Would Laurier Do?" featuring Senator Serge Joyal, André Pratte, John Duffy and Christopher Moore who discuss the different aspects of Laurier's life and legacy.



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For detailed survey results and to learn more about the *Macdonald-Laurier Days*, visit:
www.macdonald-laurier.ca.

-30-

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