

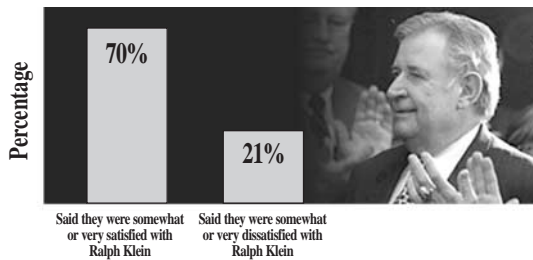
Poll STATION

With Linda Banister



For fans of politics, the last few months have been most entertaining. We have seen the federal Conservative party form a minority government while, in Alberta, the provincial Tory party secured another term as the governing party. With the recent Progressive Conservative annual general meeting, came a call for a change in party leadership and the race for the premier's job is on. This month we asked Edmontonians for their thoughts regarding the leadership race.

HOW SATISFIED WERE YOU WITH RALPH KLEIN'S JOB AS PREMIER?



First, survey participants were asked how satisfied they are with Ralph Klein's performance as Alberta's premier. Almost three-quarters (70 percent) of respondents were either somewhat or very satisfied with Mr. Klein. In fact, 34 percent of respondents were very satisfied with the job Ralph Klein did. However, one in five (21 percent) surveyed were somewhat (11 percent) or very dissatisfied (11 percent) with Premier Klein's performance.

WHAT WAS PREMIER KLEIN'S GREATEST SUCCESS? DIFFICULTY?

Respondents were asked to identify Premier Klein's greatest success during his tenure as premier. The majority of respondents (58 percent) felt the elimination of the provincial debt was his greatest success. Economic growth and low unemployment rates were seen by 11 percent as his crowning achievements, while six percent identified budget management and surpluses.

Survey participants were also asked to identify the issue with which Premier Klein has struggled with the most. Forty percent cited health care reform, while 30 percent identified Premier Klein's public and personal approach to his position as causing him the most difficulty. Education (six percent) and the elimination of the provincial debt (four percent) were cited among the remaining responses.

WHO WILL SUCCEED KLEIN?

Looking ahead, survey respondents were asked to identify Ralph Klein's successor. While approximately one-third (30 percent) did not have a response, one-third (30 percent) of respondents identified Preston Manning as Ralph Klein's successor. Seventeen percent thought Jim Dinning

would become the next Conservative leader, while 12 percent felt Lyle Oberg would fill the position. David Hancock (three percent), Ed Stelmach (three percent), and Mark Norris (one percent) were identified by far fewer respondents as the next leader of the party. Approximately four percent felt the next leader would be someone other than these gentlemen.

WHAT ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT CHARACTERISTICS FOR A PREMIER?

Considering the position of premier, respondents were asked to rate the importance of a number of characteristics. A formal education was seen as an important characteristic by 86 percent of respondents. Ninety-six percent mentioned business experience, 79 percent felt a background in government was an important characteristic, and 77 percent cited previous political experience.

When asked to identify other attributes a premier should possess, three characteristics stood apart: Listening to Albertans (23 percent), being honest and trustworthy (22 percent), and having integrity (21 percent) were the most commonly cited. Other qualities included a good public image (11 percent), good communication and social skills (10 percent), personal magnetism (eight percent), and fulfilling promises (seven percent).

WHAT ISSUE WILL FACE THE NEW PREMIER?

Finally, respondents identified the most important issue that will face the new premier. More than half (58 percent) identified healthcare as the most important issue. Controlling the budget/surpluses (13 percent), education (13 percent), and the economy (10 percent) were the next most commonly mentioned issues.

Linda Banister is a certified management consultant and the owner of Banister Research and Consulting Inc., a full service provider of market research and program evaluation services. If you have a question you would like included in the Edmontonians Poll, contact Linda at 780.451.4444 or e-mail at lbanner@edmontonians.com. For further information on the firm visit www.banister.ab.ca.