

## Newfoundlanders and Labradorians do not support Grimes' Lower Churchill Agreement

ST. JOHN'S, November 22, 2002 — The overwhelming majority of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians do not support the deal negotiated by Premier Roger Grimes to develop the Lower Churchill, according to a recent survey conducted by Telelink of St. John's. In fact, only 21% of respondents support the Premier's deal while 67% are against it.

Danny Williams, Leader of the Opposition and MHA for Humber West, said, "This province-wide survey indicates that the overwhelming majority of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians do not support the deal presently being negotiated by Roger Grimes. In fact, only 21% of respondents supported his negotiating position while 67% are against it. That's a three-to-one margin against the Premier. The people strongly believe that any deal negotiated with Québec to develop the Lower Churchill should address the inequities of the Upper Churchill. The survey also found that 63% of respondents felt the Premier should call an election before signing a deal on the Lower Churchill."

Williams strongly advised the Premier and the Liberal caucus to reconsider the deal now before them. "Our position is that any Lower Churchill development deal with Québec must address the inequities of the Upper Churchill contract, the most lopsided deal ever negotiated in North America. I also believe that before pursuing an agreement with Québec, we must first seriously examine the option of moving forward with this project on our own so that we can use cheap hydroelectricity to attract new industrial development to Newfoundland and Labrador. This is our power and it should be used first and foremost to benefit Newfoundlanders and Labradorians."

The Telelink survey posed two questions concerning the proposed deal to develop the Lower Churchill:

1. Do you support moving forward on a deal with Québec without first seeking a better deal on the Upper Churchill contract? 66.73% said no, 21.05% said yes, and 12.22% either didn't have an opinion or didn't know enough about the subject.
2. Should Premier Grimes call an election before signing a deal on the Lower Churchill? 62.97% said yes, 26.69% said no, and 10.34% offered no opinion or were undecided.

Questioning by Williams in the House of Assembly this week disclosed several features of the pending deal:

- it is a forty-five year agreement that will expire no earlier than 2055;
- there will be no form of redress for the Upper Churchill;
- there is no transmission line for power to the Island;

- Québec is financing the project with money they made from this province on the Upper Churchill;
- there is no guarantee of 100% ownership of the project by Newfoundland and Labrador; there is no guarantee of 100% management and control of the project by Newfoundland and Labrador;
- the courts of Québec will decide major financial matters under this contract;
- our province can only recall our own power at a price greater than we sold it to Québec in the first place; and
- the province could lose the Lower Churchill project to Québec under this financial arrangement.

The poll was commissioned by the Progressive Conservative Party of Newfoundland and Labrador. It was conducted Thursday, November 21, 2002. Telelink interviewed 532 people randomly selected throughout the province. The survey has a margin of error of approximately +/- 4.3 percentage points, 19 times out of 21.