

## CANADA

Date of Elections: 4 September 1984

### Purpose of Elections

Elections were held for all members of the House of Commons following premature dissolution of this body on 9 July 1984. Previous general elections had taken place in February 1980.

### Characteristics of Parliament

The bicameral Parliament of Canada consists of the House of Commons and the Senate.

Under the British North America Acts, which are the basis of the Constitution, the representation of each of Canada's 10 provinces in the House of Commons is to be readjusted after each decennial census. A province is always, however, entitled to a number of Commons members not less than the number of its Senators. The present House of Commons is composed of 282 members. Of this current total, 95 members come from Ontario, 75 from Quebec, 28 from British Columbia, 21 from Alberta, 14 each from Manitoba and Saskatchewan, 11 from Nova Scotia, 10 from New Brunswick, 7 from Newfoundland, 4 from Prince Edward Island, 2 from the Northwest Territories and 1 from the Yukon.

The number of Senators may not exceed 112, and at present stands at 104. All Senators are appointed by the Governor-General on the advice of the Prime Minister and the Cabinet. A total of 24 come from each one of Canada's 4 regions (Ontario, Quebec, the Maritime Provinces - Nova Scotia (10 Senators), New Brunswick (10) and Prince Edward Island (4) - and the Western Provinces - British Columbia (6), Alberta (6), Saskatchewan (6) and Manitoba (6)) while 6 Senators come from Newfoundland, 1 from the Northwest Territories, and 1 from the Yukon. A Senator holding office prior to 2 June 1965 is entitled to hold this post for life; if appointed after this date he must retire at the age of 75.

According to the Constitution, the duration of Parliament is limited to a maximum of 5 years. In practice, however, the House of Commons is generally renewed after 4 years, which is considered as the normal term of a legislature.

### Electoral System

All Canadian citizens who have attained the age of 18 years are entitled to vote. The franchise also extends to members of the armed forces under the age of 18. Disqualified, however, are persons convicted of certain electoral offences, inmates of penal institutions and the insane. Also unable to vote are the Chief and Assistant Chief Electoral Officer, the returning officer for each district and every judge appointed by the Governor in Council.

All qualified electors are entitled to have their names entered on the register of electors for the polling division in which they ordinarily reside. These registers are prepared and revised on this level starting 38 days before election day. Voting is not compulsory. Advance polls are open on the ninth and seventh day before the ordinary polling day for certain

categories of people. The following persons, when they have reason to believe that they will be unable to vote on any of the scheduled polling days, may appoint proxy voters from their own polling division: fishermen, mariners and prospectors, if absent in the course of their employment; the ill or physically handicapped; and full-time students registered at a Canadian educational institution.

All qualified electors may be candidates for the House of Commons. Ineligible for varying time periods, however, are persons convicted of electoral fraud or of a corrupt practice (seven years) or illegal practice (five years) connected with elections; certain public officers; members of provincial legislatures; and persons party to certain contracts and agreements having a connection with the Government.

All citizens at least 30 years old who are resident in the province for which appointed, who own land free of encumbrances to the value of C\$4,000 within that same province, and whose real and personal property together have a net worth of C\$4,000, are qualified to become Senators. In Quebec, where Senators represent districts of the province rather than the province as a whole, the residence requirement and property qualifications are considered at the district level.

In addition to the constitutional requirements of regional representation, age and property qualification, there are several criteria of selection of Senators; these are especially party patronage, interest or community group representation and distinguished service to the nation.

For the House of Commons, a minimum of 25 electors may nominate a candidate for each electoral district 21 to 28 days before an election. The mandatory deposit of C\$200 accompanying the nomination paper is returned when the candidate is elected or obtains at least 15% of the votes cast in his constituency; party candidates are reimbursed only if their duly registered political group has nominated at least 50 candidates in the general election.

Members of the House of Commons are elected by simple majority in 282 single-member constituencies.

By-elections are held to fill vacancies in the House of Commons which arise between general elections. Vacancies in the Senate are filled by the Governor-General.

## **General Considerations and Conduct of the Elections**

The premature election date was announced on 9 July 1984 by outgoing Prime Minister John Turner (Liberal Party), shortly after he had succeeded Mr. Pierre Trudeau as Liberal leader. Mr. Turner stated that a fresh election mandate was required to tackle the country's economic problems.

Primary opponents of the Liberals were the Progressive Conservatives (PCP), who had held 100 of the House of Commons' 282 seats and were led by Mr. Brian Mulroney. Both parties emphasized the need to improve the country's economy, especially through creation of new jobs.

On polling day, the PCP swept to a landslide victory, winning a total of 211 seats to 71 for all other groups and making a surprisingly strong showing in the province of Quebec.

Canada

The PCP thus assumed power for the first time since 1963 (except for nine months as a minority Government in 1979-80). Mr. Mulroney became Prime Minister, taking office on 17 September; he heads a Cabinet comprising a record number of members.

Statistics

1. Results of the Elections and Distribution of Seats  
in the House of Commons

Number of registered electors. . . . .	16,700,565
Voters. . . . .	12,634,982 (75.65%)
Blank or void ballot papers. . . . .	89,009
Valid votes. . . . .	12,545,973

Political Group	Number of Candidates	Votes obtained		Number of Seats	Number of Seats held at Dissolution	Number of Seats won at Previous Elections
Progressive Conservative Party (PCP)	282	6,276,530	50.0	211	100	103
Liberal Party . . .	282	3,516,173	28.0	40	139	147
New Democratic Party (NDP) . .	282	2,358,676	18.8	30	31	32
Rhinoceros Party .	89	99,207	0.8			
<i>Parti nationaliste du Quebec</i> . . . . .	75	86,482	0.7			
Libertarian Party .	72	23,495	0.2			
Party for Commonwealth/Republique	65	7,312	0.0			
Green Party . . .	60	26,957	0.2			
Confederation of Regions						
Western Party .	55	65,409	0.5			
Communist Party .	52	7,616	0.1			
Social Credit Party	51	16,700	0.1			
Independents and no party affiliation .	54	61,416	0.5			
				282	27P	282

\*Plus 11 vacancies.

2. *Distribution of Members of the House of Commons according to Professional Category*

Businessmen and women, industrialists, managers, merchants and owners . . . . .	65
Lawyers, notaries and jurists . . . . .	54
Professor, teachers and educators . . . . .	30
Administrators . . . . .	26
Farmers and agronomists . . . . .	20
Doctors, dentists, pharmacists, veterinarians and chiropractors . . . . .	18
Political scientists, economists, sociologists, social workers, geographers . . . . .	12
Journalists and radio and television announcers	10
Engineers . . . . .	10
Brokers and insurance agents . . . . .	5
Accountants . . . . .	5
Priests, pastors and members of the clergy . . . . .	5
Mayors and municipal councillors . . . . .	4
Public employees . . . . .	4
Others . . . . .	27
Unknown . . . . .	3
	298 •

•Total number exceeds 282 since some MPs have more than one occupation.

3. *Distribution of Members of Parliament according to Sex*

	<i>House of Commons</i>	<i>Senate</i>
Men	255	88
Women	27	II
	282	99 •

•Plus five vacancies.

4. *Distribution of Members of Parliament  
according to Age Group*

	<i>House of Commons</i>	<i>Senate</i>
20-29 years	9	—
<b>30-39</b> »	52	—
<b>40-49</b> »	<b>116</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>50-59</b> »	81	26
<b>60-69</b> »	19	39
<b>70-79</b> »	4	<b>16</b>
80-89 »	—	<b>5</b>
Over 90 years		1
Unknown . .	1	
	282	<b>99*</b>
<i>Average age of Members:</i>	46.8 years	62.2 years

•Plus five vacancies.