

CANADA

Date of Elections: July 8, 1974

Purpose of Elections

Elections were held for all the members of the House of Commons, whose terms of office came prematurely to an end on May 9, 1974. Previous federal general elections had taken place on October 30, 1972.

Characteristics of Parliament

The bicameral Parliament of Canada consists of the House of Commons and the Senate. The House of Commons is constituted on the principle of representation according to population, the Senate according to territorial divisions.

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 264 members.

The number of Senators may not exceed **110**, and at present stands at **102**. 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. A Senator holding office prior to June 2, 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, absent a more premature dissolution, 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, of either sex, who have attained the age of 18 years are qualified as electors. The franchise extends also to members of the armed forces under the age of 18 and to British subjects, other than Canadian citizens,

who qualified as electors on June 25, 1968, and who have continued to reside in Canada since that date. These British subjects are deemed to have the right to vote until June 25, 1975. 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 may have their names entered on the register of electors for the polling division in which they ordinarily reside. These registers are revised on the district level starting 49 days before election day. Voting is not compulsory. Advance polls are open on the ninth and seventh days before the ordinary polling day for certain categories of people. The following persons who 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 to the House of Commons. Ineligible for varying time periods, however, are persons convicted of electoral fraud or of a corrupt practice (7 years) or illegal practice (5 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 where the candidate is elected or obtains at least one-half of the votes polled by the successful candidate.

Campaign expenses of a candidate are limited according to the number of voters in his constituency (e.g. C\$ 1.00 may be spent for each of the first 15,000 names appearing on the preliminary lists of electors for the electoral

district) *. There are, however, no regulations dealing with the total amount of expenditures.

Members of the House of Commons are elected by simple majority in 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 Political Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

The July 1974 general elections came about after the minority Liberal Government of Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau was defeated on May 8, 1974, in a 137-123 vote of no-confidence mounted in the House of Commons by the 31 members of the socialist New Democratic Party (NDP) and the 106 Progressive Conservatives (PC). The no-confidence motion was brought against the Budget, presented by the Government on May 6, which the PC and the NDP had denounced as inadequate in the face of Canada's rising inflation (over 10 % before the elections). In presenting the no-confidence motion, PC leader Robert Stanfield maintained that the Liberal proposals "barely acknowledged inflation" and vowed that a Conservative Government would impose an immediate 90-day freeze on wages and prices, followed by at least 18 months of flexible controls.

The question of inflation indeed dominated the two-months long election campaign, in which 1209 candidates participated. Prime Minister Trudeau declared on May 9 that the Liberals would campaign for re-election on his Government's Budget, arguing that inflation was an international problem and an "imported" phenomenon, and noting that wage-price freezes had not worked to curb inflation in the United States and Great Britain. Conservative leader Stanfield called for "a new Government with an overall majority in Parliament" and reiterated his call for a wage-price freeze. NDP leader David Lewis, who had supported the Prime Minister subsequent to the 1972 elections, proposed "selective" price controls and a "two-price system" on basic commodity exports, with higher export prices subsidizing lower domestic prices.

Voting results, which gave the Liberals **141** seats, enabled them to regain the outright parliamentary majority they had lost in 1972. The victory came mainly at the expense of the NDP, whose strength fell from 31 to 16 seats and whose leader lost his own district in Toronto to the Liberals. According

• See *Chronicle of Parliamentary Elections VIII (1973-1974)*, p. 9.

to certain observers, the surprisingly large Liberal victory — which included 55 seats (19 more than in 1972) from the key province of Ontario — was in no small part due to the active campaigning of Prime Minister Trudeau, who had emphasized that only a strong and effective national " leadership " could handle the country's problems.

Prime Minister Trudeau announced the composition of his new Cabinet on August 8.

Statistics

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

Voters	9,667,985
Blank or void ballot papers.163,881
Valid votes.	9,504,104

Political Group	Number of Candidates	Votes obtained	%	Number Seats in the House of Commons
Liberal Party	264	4,102,093	43.16	141
Progressive Conservative Party	264	3,369,722	35.46	95
New Democratic Party	262	1,465,869	15.42	77
Social Credit Party	152	481,327	5.06	11
Independents	91	38,846	.41	1
Others	176	28,355	.29	
				264

- There were 2 vacancies at the time of dissolution.

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

Lawyers and notaries	59
Businessmen	57
Teachers	27
Farmers and ranchers	20
Doctors and veterinarians	14
Journalists	10
Manual workers	6
Others	<u>71</u>
	264

*3. Distribution of Members of the House of Commons
according to Sex*

Men	255
Women	9
	264