

Jean Chrétien

Prime Minister of Canada

Born in Shawinigan, Quebec, on Jan. 11, 1934, Jean Chrétien studied law at Laval University. Called to the bar in 1959, he joined a Shawinigan law firm.

A candidate for the Liberal Party of Canada, Mr. Chrétien was first elected to the House of Commons in 1963. After being re-elected in 1965, he was appointed parliamentary secretary to Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson and, in 1966, parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Finance. In 1967, Mr. Chrétien became Minister of State (Finance) and, in 1968, he was appointed Minister of National Revenue.

Re-elected five times between 1968 and 1980, Mr. Chrétien held a number of cabinet portfolios, among them Indian Affairs and Northern Development; Industry, Trade and Commerce; Finance; Justice; and Energy, Mines and Resources. He was President of the Treasury Board from 1974 until 1976, and he was appointed Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for External Affairs in 1984.

Following the election of 1984, the Liberals formed the official Opposition and Mr. Chrétien served as critic for external affairs. In 1986, he left politics. From 1986 to 1990, he was a counsel with the law firm of Lang Michener Lawrence and Shaw. He was also a senior adviser with Gordon Capital Corp.

In 1990, Mr. Chrétien returned to politics and was elected Leader of the Liberal Party. In the same year, he was elected to the House of Commons in a byelection and was sworn in as Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Chrétien became Prime Minister of Canada on Nov. 4, 1993, after his party won a majority of the seats in the House of Commons. He was re-elected to serve the Quebec riding of Saint-Maurice and to lead majority governments in 1997 and in November 2000.

Mr. Chrétien married Aline Chaîné of Shawinigan in 1957. They have three children.