

GOVERNMENT

FEDERAL

Canada has a parliamentary system of government, established with the adoption of the British North America Act of 1867, which states "there shall be one Parliament for Canada, consisting of the Queen, an Upper House styled the Senate, and the House of Commons".

Queen Elizabeth II, as Queen of Canada, is Head of the Canadian State. (With the emergence of the Commonwealth of Nations in 1931, Canada, like several other original senior partners, such as Australia and New Zealand, chose to retain the same parliamentary structure it adopted in 1867.) The Queen's representative in Canada is the Governor General, who is appointed on the recommendation of the Prime Minister, generally for a five-year period.

The House of Commons and the Senate constitute the legislative arm of the Canadian Government. The judiciary, which consists of the Supreme Court of Canada, the Exchequer Court, and several minor courts appointed by the Governor General, is independent of both Houses of Parliament.

The 264-member House of Commons, which includes the Prime Minister, his Cabinet colleagues and members of his party, and members of opposing parties, is an elected body. The term of office is a maximum of five years, but an election may be called earlier, at the discretion of the Prime Minister.

Five political parties are at present represented in the House — the Liberal Party, the Progressive Conservative Party, the New Democratic Party, Le Ralliement des Cr ditistes and the Social Credit Party.

By tradition, the leader of the party winning most seats in the House is asked by the Governor General to form the Government and thus becomes Prime Minister. He selects his Cabinet, which is the executive arm of the Government, from elected members of his party.

The Cabinet Ministers head the various government departments, which are staffed by civil servants administering the affairs of the nation. National policy is formulated by the Cabinet, but its decisions must have

Opening of Parliament, Senate Chamber

