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Parti Québécois new government in province of Quebec

Voters in the province of Quebec's general election chose a new government on November 15, when the Parti Québécois, led by 54-year-old René Lévesque, defeated Premier Robert Bourassa's Liberal party 69 seats to 28. Eleven members of the Union Nationale were also elected, as were one Creditiste and one member of the Parti National Populaire. Some recounts are taking place.

Mr. Bourassa and 13 of his Cabinet colleagues were defeated.

In the general election of 1973, the Liberals took 102 seats, PQ six, Creditistes two, Union Nationale none.

Mr. Bourassa called the election two years early, seeking a mandate to negotiate constitutional issues and to resolve labour issues. He promised to aid business, give protection to consumers and bring about municipal tax reform. He wanted more control in the areas of immigration, communications and culture.

Mr. Lévesque, who resigned from the Quebec provincial Liberal party in

1967 to form and lead the Parti Québécois, won his seat for the first time in three attempts. Referring to the first article of the program of the Parti Québécois, which calls for political sovereignty for Quebec, he said in his victory speech that Quebec would become an independent country only when an "adult society has approved it by a democratic and clear majority in a referendum".

The new premier has placed priority on putting the province's financial and administrative situation on a sound basis and indicated he would attend a forthcoming constitutional federal-provincial conference of first ministers.

Prime Minister's statement

Following the election, Prime Minister Trudeau made the following statement: "In a democratic election, Quebec voters have granted the Parti Québécois enough seats to form the next provincial government. Out of respect for our democratic process, we must

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Quebec's new premier

René Lévesque, son of a lawyer, was born in the town of New Carlisle, Bonaventure, Quebec in 1922. He attended law school at the University of Laval. From the age of 14 he worked during holidays as an announcer at several radio stations. He interrupted his law studies in 1943, during the Second World War, to become a war correspondent in the campaigns in France, Germany and Austria. In 1946 he worked for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation International Service and was a war correspondent in Korea in 1952. From 1952 to 1956 he was chief of CBC's French network news services and afterwards was a freelance radio and television commentator. While he was with the CBC he covered such events as the coronation of Queen Elizabeth, sessions of the United Nations General Assembly,



René Lévesque

the United States elections and the crisis in Algeria in the 1950s. René Lévesque was first elected as a Liberal member of the Quebec provincial government in 1960 for the riding of Montreal-Laurier and was named Minister of Public Works and Hydraulic Resources. In 1961 he was appointed Minister of Natural Resources. He was instrumental in nationalizing Quebec's hydroelectric power. For a short while he was also the Minister of Family and Social Welfare.

Mr. Lévesque resigned from the Liberal Party in 1967 to form the Sovereignty Movement, which became the Parti Québécois the following year. He was elected president. The party won seven seats in the election of 1970 and six in the election of 1973. Mr. Lévesque was elected for Taillon County in 1976 by more than a 22,000 majority.

He is married, with three children.