

at any rate, call one after five years in office. He prefers to call one at a propitious moment when he has a majority and feels that he can maintain or improve it. Most parliaments — as in the case of the most recent — last for something over four years. Only three have gone the five-year limit. Two have been dissolved in their first years. [On rare occasions a Prime Minister may call an election to resolve a major question. In 1911 Liberal Prime Minister Sir Wilfrid Laurier called one to let the voters decide if Canada should have its own Navy and whether it should enter into a trade reciprocity treaty with the United States. (The voters decided yes for the Navy; no for the treaty.)]

Strong governments tend to have long Parliaments, but a short one can be a sign of growing rather than waning strength. In 1957 Prime Minister Diefenbaker's Progressive Conservative Party won less than half of the House's 265 seats. He called an election less than a year after taking office in an effort to improve his position. He did. The Progressive Conservatives took 208

seats, giving them the most substantial majority in history.

The Prime Minister calls an election — for whatever reason — by asking the Governor General to dissolve the Parliament. The Governor General now does this more or less automatically, though once he exercised a certain independence.

When the Parliament is dissolved, all its members (including the Prime Minister and the members of his cabinet) must run if they wish to return to the House of Commons. The Prime Minister differs from other Members in that his Party has the majority (or coalition support) and he is its elected leader. He will run only in his own constituency — in American terms, in his own Congressional District. It is assumed, of course, that he will win. (It has happened that a Party has won a majority of seats, but the leader has lost. When that happens he runs again in a by-election in a "safe" constituency after the incumbent of that constituency obligingly steps down.)

An election must be called at least fifty-seven



LEWIS! 



Stanfield