

Party standings

At the time of the election call, standings in the Canadian House of Commons were as follows:

Party	No. of seats
Progressive Conservative	136
Liberal	114
New Democratic	27
Social Credit	5

Parliament. Warrants have been used on occasion to finance virtually all ordinary governmental expenditures for short periods. This was the case during and after the election in 1979 when Parliament did not sit for over six months.

How it works

If, after an election such as the last one on May 22, 1979, no single party has a majority of seats in the House of Commons, a minority government is formed. The party with the greatest number of seats in the Commons usually assumes power although it is possible for the party ranked second or third to form a government if it has enough support from the "third parties".

Its subsequent success or failure depends on its ability to secure sufficient votes from one or more opposition parties. This support is necessary to pass bills and to defeat motions of "non-confidence" directed against the Government.



NDP leader Ed Broadbent visits a forestry company in Quebec and shakes paw of the workers' resident pet.



Liberal leader Pierre Trudeau meets students at the University of Western Ontario in London, Ontario.

While a minority government's hold on power is tenuous, this does not necessarily result in parliamentary paralysis. Minority governments are considered by some to be more responsive to the public and productive in terms of effective legislative programs. Canada's universal medical care program (Medicare), the winter works program and the Canada Pension Plan were introduced under minority governments.

Thirty-second federal election

This federal election will be the thirty-second since Confederation. Voting will take place in 282 electoral districts — each district electing one member of Parliament. Over 15 million Canadians will be eligible to vote. In the May 22 election last year, 11,537,909 total votes were cast, approximately 76 per cent of the number on the official list of electors.

To be qualified to vote a person must be 18 years of age by election day, be a Canadian citizen and reside in Canada. A number of people are not qualified to vote including federally-appointed judges, inmates of penal institutions, the Chief Electoral Officer and his returning officers.

There were nine registered political parties in the last general election: Progressive Conservative, Liberal, New Democratic Party, Social Credit, Marxist-Leninist Party, Communist Party of Canada, Parti Rhinoceros, Union Populaire and Libertarian. Last year 1,424 candidates contested the election.

Seasonal farm worker recruitment rules change

More flexible arrangements will be in force this year to allow Canadian employers to recruit seasonal agricultural workers from the Commonwealth Caribbean and Mexico when Canadians are not available.

The ceiling on the total number of workers who can come into Canada is being removed, permitting greater access to these workers for employers who are expanding their operations and for those who need to recruit these workers for the first time. Employers who are not expanding their operations will be allowed to hire up to the same number as in 1979.

The more flexible arrangements are expected to benefit fruit and vegetable growers and processors and tobacco growers in Ontario as well as vegetable growers in Alberta, Manitoba and Quebec. Formerly, there had been a ceiling on the number of workers who could be brought into the country based on the number who had entered the previous year. In 1979, 4,900 workers were brought in, about the same as the figure for the previous year.

The changes in the recruitment procedures came about as a result of representations made to the Minister and the Employment and Immigration Commission this past summer and fall by employers, the source countries and provincial representatives during a review of the 1979 operations.

As in previous years, an employer/worker agreement specifies that the wages to be paid to the foreign workers will be the same as those received by Canadians doing similar work or the provincial minimum industrial rate, whichever is the greater. This agreement also covers accommodation, transportation and repatriation provisions.

In 1980, the normal operational periods during which Caribbean and Mexican workers can be employed in each identified agricultural sector are:

- Fruit and vegetable growers, including apple producers, and fruit and vegetable canners: April 1 to November 15;
- Tobacco growers: August 1 to end of harvest only (approximately mid-September);
- Vegetable greenhouse operators: February 15 to August 15;
- Nursery operators: March 1 to April 30 and September 10 to November 10.