

When the date is set, appropriate lots of this material are shipped off to the constituencies. Returning officers complete plans for the recording of the votes of people in their areas, set up polling divisions and polling-stations, set enumerators at work compiling lists of eligible voters and appoint deputy returning officers. These lists of voters are printed and posted in public places so that anyone may check them for accuracy and call for a revision in case names have been wrongly omitted or wrongly included.

The independence of the Chief Electoral Officer is ensured by the fact that he is nominated by the House of Commons and not, as with most public servants of similar rank, by the Governor-in-Council. In addition, his salary is set by law and not by order-in-council. Finally, he is responsible not to the Government but to the House of Commons, and can be removed only for cause and in the same way as a Judge of the Supreme Court of Canada.

The Voters

Every Canadian citizen or other British subject 21 years of age or over has the right to vote. However, British subjects who are not Canadian citizens must have resided continuously in Canada for the 12 months immediately preceding the election day. Persons born in Canada or born in a foreign land of Canadian parents are automatically Canadian citizens. Persons born in a foreign country may acquire Canadian citizenship after a residence of five years in Canada.

A member of the Armed Forces may vote even if he is not 21 years old, and he may have his vote recorded in the constituency of his residence, even if he is absent on service. Other electors must vote in the constituencies where they live and at the appropriate polling-station.

Among those who are deprived of their franchise -- but only so long as the cause of this deprivation lasts -- are prisoners in penal institutions and persons confined to hospitals for mental illness. Certain classes of person are deprived of their vote on account of their official functions; such are the Chief Electoral Officer and his Deputy, judges and chief returning officers. The last-named officials must cast the tie-breaking ballot when two candidates for election have received the same number of votes. Finally, any person who has been found guilty of electoral fraud may lose the franchise for a specified period.

The Candidates

In general, anyone eligible to vote is eligible for nomination and election to the House of Commons. There are no property or educational qualifications.

Some exceptions to this rule are: persons holding or sharing in the benefits of government contracts; members of provincial legislatures; judges; persons who have been found guilty of corrupt electoral practices. None of these people may run for the House of Commons.

In most cases, candidates declare their intentions long before an election is called. Most of them are the official representatives of the various political parties. Sometimes they have waged lively battles at party nominating conventions and defeated other aspirants.