

tion, Parliament is dissolved through the expiry of its mandate, and an election automatically becomes necessary. More often, before the end of this term, the Prime Minister fixes an election date. Prime Ministers do not like to appear fearful of an election by putting it off until required to call one. Normally, an election takes place four years or so after the previous one. In a minority-government situation, however (where no party has an absolute majority in the House of Commons), the vote is likely to come sooner, since the Government is more vulnerable.

The voters

Every Canadian citizen 18 years of age or over has the right to vote. In addition, until June 26, 1975, British subjects who are not Canadian citizens may vote in federal elections provided they have been residing in Canada continuously since June 25, 1967, and were at least 20 years old on that date.

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 living five years in Canada.

Among those deprived of their franchise — but only so long as the cause of the deprivation lasts — are prisoners in penal institutions and persons confined to hospitals for mental illness. Certain classes of person are deprived of their vote because of their official functions: the Chief Electoral Officer and his deputy, judges and chief returning officers. The last-mentioned must cast the tie-breaking ballot when two candidates for election have received the same number of votes. Finally, any person found guilty of electoral fraud may lose the franchise

for a specified period.

Voters who for any reason feel they cannot get to the polls on election day — whether because they plan to take a trip, attend a wedding or just go fishing — can vote in an advance poll a week beforehand.

Fishermen, mariners, prospectors, physically-incapacitated persons and students away from home have the right to vote by proxy.

Canadian public servants posted abroad, such as the staffs of embassies, vote before election day, with their dependants. The total in the July 8 election was expected to be about 3,400.

In the same category for voting purposes are all 83,000 members of the regular armed forces plus the dependants in Germany of about 5,000 Canadian troops stationed there under NATO command.

These special votes usually take place throughout the second week before the election.

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 members of provincial legislatures, judges, persons convicted of corrupt electoral practices, public servants and members of the regular armed forces. None of these may run for election to the House of Commons.

Most candidates are the official representatives of the various political parties, chosen at party nominating conventions.

Expenses

Canadian elections are expensive. The country is vast and many parts are sparsely populated. Yet, as far as possible, every voter, no matter where he lives, must be given a chance to vote.

Chief Electoral Officer J.M. Hamel expected to spend \$27 million of public funds on the July 8 election — on printing, salaries and fees for electoral officials, transportation and other expenses.

The campaign expenses of candidates and political parties exceed several million dollars. These funds come from private sources — the candidates themselves, friends and well-wishers, and

from party supporters.

Individual candidates must keep records and, after the election, must declare their electoral expenses. They are required to appoint official agents to receive all contributions and make all disbursements on their behalf. There is at present no limit to the amount they may spend trying to get elected. In recent elections, statements have shown expenses ranging from a few hundred dollars to about \$92,000.

Legislation already approved by Parliament — but not in force until August 1, 1974 — will have the effect of limiting campaign spending. At the same time, candidates will be reimbursed from the public treasury for part of their campaign expenses.

Large expenditures are required to finance the national campaigns of the parties, but these, too, will henceforth be limited by law. They cover advertising in newspapers and other publications, radio and television broadcasts, printing and distribution of literature, travel expenses of the leaders and party organizers, and rental of office space and meeting-halls.

Partisan radio and television broadcasts are prohibited on election day and the day before. Owing to time-zone differences, election results in Eastern Canada are known before voting ends in the West. Federal law therefore prohibits the publication or broadcast in any province, before polls close in that province, of the result of voting in any other electoral district in Canada. This is intended to prevent late-voting Westerners from being influenced by results already made public in the East.

If the party forming the Government before the election wins a majority or has the largest number of seats in the new House of Commons, the members of the Cabinet must be sworn in again. Even when a general election returns the same party to power, the makeup of the Cabinet usually changes.

If another party wins a majority or has the largest number of seats in the new House of Commons, the Prime Minister within a few weeks submits his resignation and that of his Cabinet to the Governor General with a recommendation that the leader of the winning party be called on to form a Government.

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