

Compilation of results

As soon as the polls close, counting of ballots begins. The deputy returning officer and the poll clerk are responsible for counting the votes in each polling division. These counts are transmitted to the returning officer and made public as they are completed. Within a few hours of the closing of the polls, the result in most constituencies is known. The national outcome of the election is usually known by midnight. The official count is usually undertaken in each electoral district by the returning officer on the Thursday following polling day.

Consequences of an election

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.

The Parliamentary system, combined with the Canadian electoral system, appears to have served Canada well. During more than 100 years of Canadian federation it has, by and large, produced Governments responsive to the will of the people and capable of developing long-range policies.

