

Jean Chrétien

Prime Minister of Canada

Born in Shawinigan, Quebec, on Jan. 11, 1934, Jean Chrétien studied law at Laval University and was called to the bar in 1958. He joined a Shawinigan law firm, and was director of the Bar of Trois-Rivières in 1962-63.

Mr. Chrétien was first elected to the House of Commons in 1963 as the member for St-Maurice-Laflèche. After being re-elected in 1965, he was appointed parliamentary secretary to Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson and, in 1966, parliamentary secretary to the minister of finance. In 1967 he became minister of state attached to the minister of finance, and in 1968 he was appointed minister of national revenue.

Mr. Chrétien was returned to the House in the 1968 election, representing the new constituency of St-Maurice. He was appointed minister of Indian affairs and northern development in 1968 and remained in that post until 1974 when he was appointed president of the Treasury Board.

Mr. Chrétien was appointed minister of industry, trade and commerce in 1976, and became minister of finance in 1977, a post he held until 1979. He was returned to the House of Commons for a sixth consecutive term in the 1979 election.

Mr. Chrétien was appointed minister of justice and attorney general of Canada and minister of state for social development in 1980. At this time he was given the additional role of minister responsible for constitutional negotiations. In 1982, he was appointed minister of energy, mines and resources.

Mr. Chrétien was appointed deputy prime minister and secretary of state for external affairs in June 1984. He was re-elected as the member of Parliament for St-Maurice in September 1984. As a member of the Opposition, he served as critic for external affairs. Mr. Chrétien resigned from the House of Commons in 1986, and returned to the legal profession.

On June 23, 1990, Mr. Chrétien was elected leader of the Liberal Party of Canada.

He was elected to the House of Commons in a by-election in the riding of Beauséjour (New Brunswick) on Dec. 10, 1990, and sworn in as leader of the Opposition on Dec. 21, 1990.