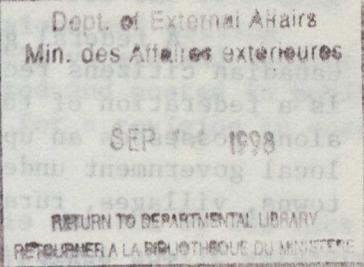


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## GENERAL ELECTIONS IN CANADA

All Canadian citizens share in the government of their country through general elections for the House of Commons. That body is the most powerful element in the Parliament of Canada, which is responsible for Canada's relations with other countries, national defence, finance, criminal law and other fields of administration on which common policy for the whole of Canada is deemed desirable.

The constitution requires the election of a new House of Commons at least once every five years. These elections are called "federal general elections" to distinguish them from the many other elections which are held in the country. Directly, through the federal general elections, Canadians seat 264 of their fellows in the House of Commons as legislators. Indirectly, through the same election, they decide who will be their Prime Minister.

Under the Canadian constitution, representation in the House of Commons must be reviewed at ten-year intervals - i.e., after each decennial census. Since 1964, this revision has been carried out by independent bodies created for the purpose.

Members of Parliament are elected by the voters of the constituencies in which they stand. With a few exceptions provided for in the constitution, the populations of constituencies vary from 55,000 to 88,000 according to their rural or urban character.

The Prime Minister chooses 20 or more individuals, all of whom must be Members of Parliament, to serve with him as Ministers in the Cabinet. Usually all, except possibly one or two who may be members of the Senate, are Members of the House of Commons or secure election to that House after their appointment.

The Cabinet, consisting of the Prime Minister and the other Ministers, discharges the executive functions of government. Individual members administer different departments of government, such as Finance, Agriculture, External Affairs, Justice. In addition, there are usually several Cabinet members, known as "Ministers without Portfolio", who have no departmental responsibility. Collectively, the Cabinet provides leadership and initiative in the determination of national policy and the appointment of other chief officers of state, including lieutenant-governors of the provinces, judges and ambassadors. The Cabinet is at all times responsible to the House of Commons.

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