

CANADA VOTES OCTOBER 25

Job creation, deficit reduction and social programs dominated the first half of the Canadian federal election campaign. More than 18 million Canadians are eligible to vote on October 25.

At the mid-point of the seven-week campaign, on October 3 and 4, the leaders of the five parties represented in the House of Commons met in televised French and English-language debates at Ottawa's National Arts Centre.

The debates were regarded as a critical test for the leaders: Jean Chrétien, whose Liberals broke in front in the pre-debate campaign polls; Prime Minister Kim Campbell, whose Progressive Conservatives have dropped to second place in the polls; Audrey McLaughlin, whose New Democrats began the campaign with support in single digits; Preston Manning, whose Reform Party has grown in strength in western Canada and parts of Ontario; and Lucien Bouchard, whose separatist Bloc Québécois has surged to strong levels of support in Quebec.

Carried in the United States on C-SPAN, the Cable Satellite Public Affairs Network, the 2½-hour English language debate was the best opportunity for Canada-watchers to look in on the Canadian election. It was also an opportunity for some 2 million Canadians living in the U.S. to take the pulse of the campaign at home. Canadians who have been out of the country less than five years are eligible for the first time to vote in the election via absentee mail ballot.

Both the French and English debates featured sharp exchanges among the five leaders. Both also featured, for the first time, a live audience of undecided voters.

In the French-language debate, both Prime Minister Campbell and Liberal Leader Chrétien clashed sharply with the Bloc's Bouchard about Quebec's future in Canada and the Bloc's role in the House of Commons. In the English-



The party leaders take their places at the podium for the leadership debate in Ottawa. From left to right, Liberal leader Jean Chrétien, Prime Minister Kim Campbell, Bloc Québécois leader Lucien Bouchard, NDP leader Audrey McLaughlin, and Reform leader Preston Manning.

language debate, all five leaders took turns on the hot seat. As the apparent front-runner, Chrétien came under fire from all sides for his job creation program. Campbell faced tough questioning on her five-year plan to eliminate the deficit. Manning had to fend off the suggestion that his three-year "zero in three" plan to eliminate the deficit would compromise social programs, including funding for medicare. Bouchard, pressed on his sovereigntist option for Quebec, said, "There are two countries in this land."

The North American Free Trade Agreement was the subject of a heated exchange between Chrétien and the NDP's McLaughlin, whose party flatly opposes NAFTA. While the Liberals want to renegotiate NAFTA on subsidies, dumping and energy, Chrétien made it clear that he favors trade liberalization. NAFTA is supported by the Conservatives, who signed the pact and the subsequent environmental and labor

side agreements with the United States and Mexico. Both the Reform Party and the Bloc Québécois also support NAFTA, with some reservations.

As the campaign moved into the final weeks following the debates, all the polls put the Liberals in the lead over the Conservatives, with the Reform and the Bloc Québécois making significant inroads in the West and Quebec, mostly at the expense of the Conservatives. It seemed clear that all five parties would be represented in the next Parliament. What was less clear was whether the voters would return a majority government, or whether Canadians would be faced with their first minority Parliament since the 1979 election.

The answer will come on the evening of October 25, when polls close at 8 p.m. across Canada. The CBC broadcast of the election returns will be carried live in the United States on C-SPAN once the polls close in British Columbia, at 11 o'clock EDT.

A PRIMER ON CANADIAN GOVERNMENT

Canada, like the United States, is a federal union, but its national government wields power in fundamentally different ways.

Although comparisons are sometimes made, Canadian political parties are not the ideological counterparts of American ones. (Progressive Conservatives are not Canadian Republicans, Liberals are not the same as Democrats, and Preston Manning is not the Canadian Ross Perot.) The electoral process also differs significantly in the two countries.

Canada's parliamentary system is modelled after that of Great Britain. The executive branch is composed of the monarch, represented in Canada by the Governor General, and the Prime Minister and Cabinet. The legislative

body, the Parliament, is made up of two houses, an elected House of Commons and a less powerful, appointed Senate. The distinction between the executive and legislative branches is blurred since the Prime Minister and Cabinet are Members of Parliament and are answerable to the House of Commons.

Most legislation is introduced by the government. Party discipline is tight and members are expected to vote with their party, except on rare occasions when bills are deemed to be matters of personal conscience. Disagreements within the party are ironed out during caucus meetings. As a result, a government with a majority in the House of Commons is almost assured of seeing its legislation pass. Legislation must be passed by the

Senate as well as the House. The Senate rarely vetoes legislation although it can hold it up.

Canadian elections must be held at least every five years but are sometimes called earlier in a government's mandate. Federal elections are conducted by Elections Canada, an independent non-partisan agency. The process is launched when the Governor General, on the advice of the Prime Minister, dissolves Parliament and directs the Chief Electoral Officer to "issue the writs."

One striking difference between Canadian and American electoral campaigns is the relative briefness of the Canadian ones. By law, the electoral period must last at least 47 days, from the issuing of the writs to the "return of the

PARTY PLATFORMS

JOB CREATION

DEFICIT REDUCTION



PROGRESSIVE CONSERVATIVE PARTY

Kim Campbell

Campbell has said there is no quick fix for unemployment, which currently stands at more than 11 per cent nationally. The Tory strategy to create jobs and economic opportunity is based on lowering interest rates and taxes by reducing the deficit, pursuing new export markets, building a more highly skilled and more flexible workforce and aiding small business. Campbell has said that her government would not propose job creation programs that would increase the deficit.

The Conservatives have made eliminating the deficit (\$35.5 billion for 1992-93) their top priority and have pledged to do so over five years, with details of a national debt management plan to be worked out with the provinces after the election. They have said they would cut government operations, business subsidies, foreign aid and defence. Campbell has promised not to raise taxes.



LIBERAL PARTY

Jean Chrétien

The Liberals have said their primary objective is putting Canadians back to work, and they have pledged to create a total of 1.6 million jobs directly and indirectly over four years. Their investment plan includes a public works program, increased R&D spending and a youth corps. They would stimulate private sector job creation through a venture capital fund and measures to encourage banks to ease credit for small business.

The Liberals have pledged to reduce the deficit to 3% of GDP from the current rate of 5.2% within three years. New spending of \$5.3 billion would be offset by \$7.1 billion in spending cuts. A Liberal government would replace the Goods and Services tax with an unspecified new consumption tax. It would redirect the focus of monetary policy from fighting inflation to lowering interest rates and promoting economic growth.



NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY

Audrey McLaughlin

The NDP has made full-employment its top economic priority and has promised to create 500,000 jobs over five years. Its plan includes creation of a national investment fund to make capital available to new companies and community development enterprises, a doubling of investment in R&D, a public works program, a training levy on employers and elimination of the Goods and Services tax.

The NDP has said it would reduce the deficit by creating jobs which would generate higher tax revenues. It would gradually replace the Goods and Services Tax over five years with a 14% minimum corporate tax and higher taxes on individuals earning more than \$100,000.



REFORM PARTY

Preston Manning

The Reform Party's job creation strategy is based on lowering the cost of doing business in Canada through deficit and tax reduction so that the private sector can create jobs. The party would not spend government funds on job-creation programs and would cut subsidies to business and to Crown corporations. It would emphasize making Canadian goods more competitive through job training and investment in R&D.

The Reform Party has a "zero in three" plan to eliminate the budget deficit over three years by cutting \$19 billion in federal spending. The remaining shortfall would be eliminated through economic growth. The Reform Party advocates legislation to require the federal government to balance the budget in each three-year period or call an election.



BLOC QUÉBÉCOIS

Lucien Bouchard

The goal of the Bloc Québécois is the separation of Quebec from the Canadian federation, which it has said would benefit the economies of both Quebec and the rest of Canada. In the meantime, its \$5-billion job creation strategy includes a program to stimulate investment by municipalities, investment credits to encourage hiring and a fund for industrial restructuring.

Leader Lucien Bouchard has said the Bloc would save an estimated \$10 billion by "cutting the fat" in federal spending, with half the savings going to job creation and half to reducing the deficit. The party would cut \$3 billion from the defence budget, save another billion by transferring complete authority for manpower training to Quebec, and make \$6 billion in other, unspecified spending cuts.

writes" that brings polling to a close. This period includes seven days allotted for compiling an official list of voters (citizens over 18 years old) in each polling division, which in the past was mainly accomplished by enumerators going door-to-door. In this election, for the first time, enumeration is allowed by mail or fax.

Canada is divided into 295 electoral districts or ridings, each represented by one seat in the House of Commons. Any number of candidates may contest a riding, and the one receiving the largest number of votes (not necessarily a majority), wins. The Governor General asks the leader of the party winning a majority of the seats in the House of Commons to form a government. The party with the second highest number of seats usually assumes the position of Official Opposition. Under this "first past the post" system, the governing party

often wins a majority of seats with less than half the popular vote. The system favours the rise of strong third parties which may regularly win a significant number of seats in Parliament without ever forming a government. A party must hold at least 12 seats to be accorded "official" status in Parliament.

When no party has a majority of seats, the one with the largest number forms a government and hopes it can maintain the confidence of enough members from other parties to stay in power. If it is defeated on a major vote (designated a vote of "confidence"), it must either resign, with the leader of the Opposition forming a new government, or advise the Governor General to call an election. Third parties can thus find their influence greatly expanded when they hold the balance of power under a minority government.

PARTY STANDINGS IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS On September 8, 1993

Total:	295
Progressive Conservative	153
Liberal Party	79
New Democratic Party	43
Bloc Québécois	8
Reform Party	1
Independent Conservative	1
Independent	2
Vacant	8

TRADE

The Conservatives negotiated the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the Conservative-majority Parliament passed enabling legislation for the agreement in June.

The Liberals have said they would renegotiate NAFTA and the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement to strengthen dispute settlement provisions and ensure Canada has the same control over energy resources that Mexico retained in NAFTA negotiations.

The NDP would not proceed with NAFTA and would abrogate the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement. It would try to negotiate sectoral trade agreements with the U.S. instead.

The party supports free trade in principle and has endorsed the Free Trade Agreement but has said it would not implement NAFTA until Canada's control over its water resources is made explicit in both agreements.

The Bloc has expressed general support for NAFTA. It advocates transition measures to help retrain workers.

DEFENCE

Campbell has announced that her government would cut the planned purchase of EH-101 helicopters from 50 to 43 and would cut defence spending by \$100 million per year.

The Liberals would cancel the entire \$5.8-billion purchase of new helicopters and upgrade existing ones instead. Additional unspecified cuts of \$1.6 billion would be made in the \$12-billion defence budget.

An NDP government would make peacekeeping the primary military role of the Canadian Forces. It would cut 3% a year from defence spending by pulling Canada out of NATO and NORAD, cancelling the helicopter purchase and reviewing other procurement plans, reducing the size of the forces and closing military bases. Funds saved would be redirected to foreign aid, the United Nations, arms control, and search and rescue.

The Reform plan calls for cutting defence spending through increased efficiency and lower administrative costs while maintaining strong, well-equipped forces.

The Bloc has not specified where it would take \$3 billion out of the defence budget other than cancelling the helicopter program.

SOCIAL PROGRAMS

Campbell has vowed to maintain Canada's social safety net while modernizing programs to eliminate waste and reward effort. She has said her government would discuss a basic overhaul of social programs with the Canadian people and the provinces after the election.

The Liberals have pledged to maintain the current system of universal health care without the imposition of user fees. Once the rate of economic growth reaches 3%, they would create 150,000 subsidized day care spaces if cost-sharing could be negotiated with the provinces. They would increase funding for native programs, literacy, women's health and youth programs, while cutting old-age pensions for high-income Canadians.

The NDP promises to rebuild Canada's social programs by stabilizing transfer payments to the provinces, refocusing the health care system to emphasize prevention, establishing a national child care program, rescinding eligibility requirements for unemployment insurance, introducing a national cooperative housing program and funding the construction of 10,000 new housing units a year.

The Reform Party has said it would redirect spending to those with the greatest need. It has promised to preserve national technical standards and federal spending for universal health care but would allow each province to devise its own rules, including user fees. It would guarantee a secure pension for senior citizens with no other source of income, but would make other programs, such as unemployment insurance and the Canada Pension Plan, self-financing.

The Bloc believes the provinces, not the federal government, should control spending on social programs such as health care and unemployment insurance.

QUEBEC'S PREMIER BOURASSA STEPS DOWN AT 60



Canapress / Jacques Boissinot

Quebec Premier Robert Bourassa, 60, announced his impending retirement on September 14.

Quebec's governing Liberal Party, which must face elections against the

separatist Parti Québécois (PQ) by the fall of 1994, will meet in Quebec City on January 30 to select Bourassa's successor. Treasury Board President Daniel Johnson, 48, is generally considered to be the front-runner.

The outgoing premier, who will remain in office until the new Liberal leader is chosen, said that one of the reasons he was making his announcement now was to leave his successor the option of calling the election in either the spring or fall of 1994. Bourassa caught many political observers off-guard with his decision.

In a rare public display of emotion during a press conference at Quebec's National Assembly, where he was a dominant figure over the last quarter century, Bourassa acknowledged: "It is not an easy day." He went on to reflect that when he was first elected premier at the age of 36 in 1970, many thought they had taken on "a student." Now, all those years later, he added, "here I am."

The youngest leader in the history of the Quebec Liberal Party in 1970, and youngest premier in Quebec history, he became the youngest former premier on his defeat by the PQ in 1976. Later, in 1983, he also became the first person in Canadian history to regain the leadership of his party.

Returned to power with a sweeping mandate in 1985, he was reelected in 1989 for a fourth term. Bourassa's time in office covered 15 of the last 24 years. He governed through some of the most turbulent periods in modern Quebec history, including the October kidnapping crisis of 1970, the Oka crisis of 1990, and the negotiation and subsequent rejection of the Meech Lake and Charlottetown constitutional accords of 1987 and 1992.

Throughout, Bourassa remained committed to Quebec's place in the Canadian constitutional family. "Canada, with all its problems," he said at his news conference, "remains by far one of the most enviable countries in the world."

His public life was defined by the continuous debate over Quebec's role in the Canadian federation. A cultural nationalist whose government passed Quebec's first law proclaiming French its official language in 1974, Bourassa nevertheless was regarded as a strong defender of the Canadian federal option.

He played a leading supporting role in the 1980 referendum campaign which defeated the PQ option of sovereignty-association with Canada, and on his return to office negotiated the Meech Lake constitutional accord which, among other things, would have recognized Quebec as a "distinct society within Canada."

Quebec's economic development in the Bourassa era was highlighted by the mammoth, multi-billion dollar James Bay hydroelectric projects in northern Quebec, which created thousands of

construction jobs in the 1970s and 1980s. Much of the additional capacity generated at James Bay was destined for export markets in the northeastern United States. The utility's plan for a companion project in the province's far northern Great Whale region is a priority for the Quebec government but faces challenges from aboriginal and environmental groups.

The last three years of Bourassa's premiership have been marked by a private struggle that played out as a public drama—his battle with cancer. Diagnosed with malignant melanoma in the summer of 1990, Bourassa twice underwent treatment at the National Cancer Institute in Bethesda, Maryland. Though his cancer is in remission, Bourassa acknowledged that family and health considerations were important factors in his decision to retire from politics.

Editorial reaction has been virtually unanimous in positive assessments of Bourassa's career. As the *Toronto Globe and Mail* commented: "Mr. Bourassa has attained substantial stature as a politician. He has done so on personal merits—civility, tenacity, intelligence, rationality and charm—that justify the respect in which he is held."

The Washington Post observed: "Mr. Bourassa has been the reasonable and reliable alternative to Quebec's flamboyant separatists. Mr. Bourassa has negotiated tirelessly with the federal government for more protection for Quebec's French heritage. At the same time he has reminded Quebec's voters of the substantial costs and burdens that secession would impose."

All figures are in Canadian dollars.
The official noon exchange rate on
September 30 was US\$1 = C\$1.3358.

CANADA QUARTERLY

Canadian Embassy
501 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20001
Tel.: (202) 682-1740
Fax: (202) 682-7791

Edited by Judith Webster
Designed by Sharon Musikar

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