The Federal General Election – 1957

The Federal Franchise
The federal franchise is regulated by the Canada Elections Act. The right to vote is the privilege of all Canadian citizens or other British subjects, men and women, from 21 years of age, ordinarily resident in Canada for 12 months before polling day and ordi-
narily resident in the electoral district on the date of issue of the writ ordering the election.

Those who may not cast a vote are:
(a) judges appointed by the Governor General in Council;
(b) the Chief Electoral Officer, the Assistant Chief Electoral Officer and returning officers for electoral districts;
(c) inmates of penal institutions undergoing punish-
ment for the commission of an offence;
(d) Indians on reserves who were not members of the Armed Services in either of the World Wars or who did not obtain waivers of exemption from taxation on their personal property under the Indian Act;
(e) those deprived of their liberty or the manage-
ment of their property because of mental illness;
(f) those disqualified for corrupt and illegal practices.

Democracy in Action
On the forthcoming election day it is expected that more than six million Canadians will cast their ballots. At the dissolution of Parliament, standings in the House of Com-
mons were as follows: Liberals 168, Progressive-
Conservative 59, C.C.F. 22, Social Credit 8, Independents 8, and vacant 7.

The right to vote without interference and by secret ballot are vital features of Canadian democracy. It is a right achieved by man after centuries of struggle for indi-
vidual freedom and the way of life we call democracy. In non-democratic countries this right is denied and freedom is a sham. Cana-
dian citizens who conscientiously exercise their right to vote are playing an important part in keeping democracy strong and active. Voting is both a privilege and a duty.

Calling an Election
When Parliament is dissolved, writs are issued calling the election. Normally a federal general election is called 60 days before polling day. The official in charge of the administrative conduct of general elections is the Chief Electoral Officer who is appointed by the House of Commons.

When the election is called, the Chief Electoral Officer immediately notifies by telegraph each of the district returning officers responsible for Canada's 263 constitu-
dencies. Enumeration of eligible voters begins and printed lists of voters are posted for each polling division 26 days before the election. The 14th day before polling day is the official nomination day in most electoral districts; 21 Canadian constitu-
dencies hold nomination day 28 days before. After nomination day candidates names are printed on ballot paper specially printed and watermarked to prevent forgeries.

In accordance with the established practice, it was announced in Parliament on April 12 that election day would be June 10.

Election Day
The federal general election will take place on a Monday as required by law. The cost of holding the election is estimated to be $65.5 million as compared to $58.8 million in 1953. The increase in election expenses is attributed to higher fees for some 200,000 election workers and by the addition of about 800,000 new voters.

On election day ballot boxes are placed in all polling stations under the supervision of deputy returning officers assisted by poll clerks. Each candidate for election in any constituency may have in each polling station two scrutineers who may challenge the iden-
tity of any voter. Election secrecy and protection against false balloting is achieved by the use of the detachable number on each ballot, which corresponds to the number on the pad stub from which the ballot is torn and handed to the voter. The voter marks his ballot with an X, folds it and hands it to the deputy returning officer who destroys the number after checking it against the number on the ballot pad. The unnumbered, unidentifiable vote goes into the ballot box.

Duration of Parliament
The maximum duration of any Parliament is five years but Parliament may be dissolved and an election may be held at any time within the five-year period. The present Parliament was elected on August 10, 1953. The federal election could, therefore, have been held any time up to the date in 1958 on which the life of the present Parliament would expire.

Canadian Forces Electors
Those entitled to vote under the Cana-
dian Forces Voting Regulations are called Canadian Forces Electors. They must be Cana-
dian citizens or other British subjects and members of the regular forces, former members of the reserve forces on full-time employment or on active service. Members of the regular forces are entitled to vote even if under age 21.

The headquarters of the special voting territory outside of Canada for the 1957 federal election is at London, England. Cana-
dian forces in Europe, the Middle East and in Indo-China come within the voting territory of London headquarters. Servicemen in Japan and Korea come within the voting territory with headquarters in Edmonton, Alta.; headquarters for personnel in the United States is Ottawa.

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Voting is carried to remote Canadian settlements.