Electronic Financial Returns (EFR)

Overview

Version 1.8

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Overview

CONTENTS

Purpose of This Overview

The Electronic Financial Returns (EFR) application allows political entities (that is, candidates, political parties, electoral district associations, leadership contestants and nomination contestants) to electronically report on their financial transactions.

Even though EFR is easy to use, you may benefit from reviewing this Overview and the accompanying User Guides to understand the layout, data fields, functions and utilities within the application. This Overview describes the elements and tasks of the EFR application that are common to all political entities. Each associated User Guide describes the specific business needs of each political entity, and outlines their required procedures.

The EFR Overview and User Guides are intended for authorized users within a specific political entity. Only designated and authorized users conducting electronic financial transaction activities should use these guides.

Introduction to the EFR Application

Depending on the type of political entity (as described above), financial reporting will be conducted based on the following:

- a specific electoral event (such as a general or by-election)

- a particular contest (such as a nomination or leadership contest), or

- the calendar year (such as quarterly or annual reporting).

The EFR application has been designed to facilitate the reporting of financial transactions. However, the EFR software is not the only means of reporting financial information. Manual forms are available if necessary.

The EFR application also provides the ability to produce reports based on the information entered, as well as certain business forms. The EFR application is available for distribution on CD, and may also be downloaded from the Elections Canada Web site (www.elections.ca).

Benefits of Using EFR

The EFR application:

- captures information into a database and generates the forms/reports that help political entities manage their budgets and expenses

- allows the user to send a file containing information needed to generate the required forms and reports.

EFR makes it easier for the user to capture important financial information and submit it in an electronic file to Elections Canada.

PC Hardware Requirements

These are the minimum hardware standards required to run the EFR application:

Hardware	Specifications
• PC-compatible computer running Microsoft Windows 98 or better	• Pentium 4 processor running at a minimum 1.5Ghz • 128MB of Random Access Memory (RAM) • At least 20 MB of free hard disk space • Microsoft Windows 98 operating system or better • 101 key keyboard • 15-inch SVGA monitor • Mouse • Printer that takes legal-size paper, if printed forms are desired • CD-ROM drive (if installing from CD-ROM) • Internet connection (if the user downloads the application)

Technical Notes

You can run only one session of the EFR application at any given time. It is not possible to work on two forms at the same time by opening up two sessions of the application.

EFR is not intended to be a multi-user system. It cannot be successfully installed on a network server and have many users accessing the same data at the same time. It is a single-user system to be installed on a stand-alone computer. The computer may be on a network, but all the files for EFR are to be installed locally on your PC.

Before Installing EFR – Important Note

Before installing the EFR application, the user must ensure that they have sufficient privileges to install this software (that is, **administrative rights**) on their computer.

On a stand-alone PC, the user must ensure that they are logged onto their computer as an **Administrator** prior to installing the EFR application.

Within a network environment (that is, a local area network – LAN), the user must contact their local area network administrator or technical support team prior to installing the EFR application on their computer.

Setting the Date Before Using the EFR Application

Before you install and use the EFR application, you must ensure that the **date** format is properly set in your computer.

To set the date in your computer:

1.   Click on the **Start** button within the Microsoft Windows operating system.
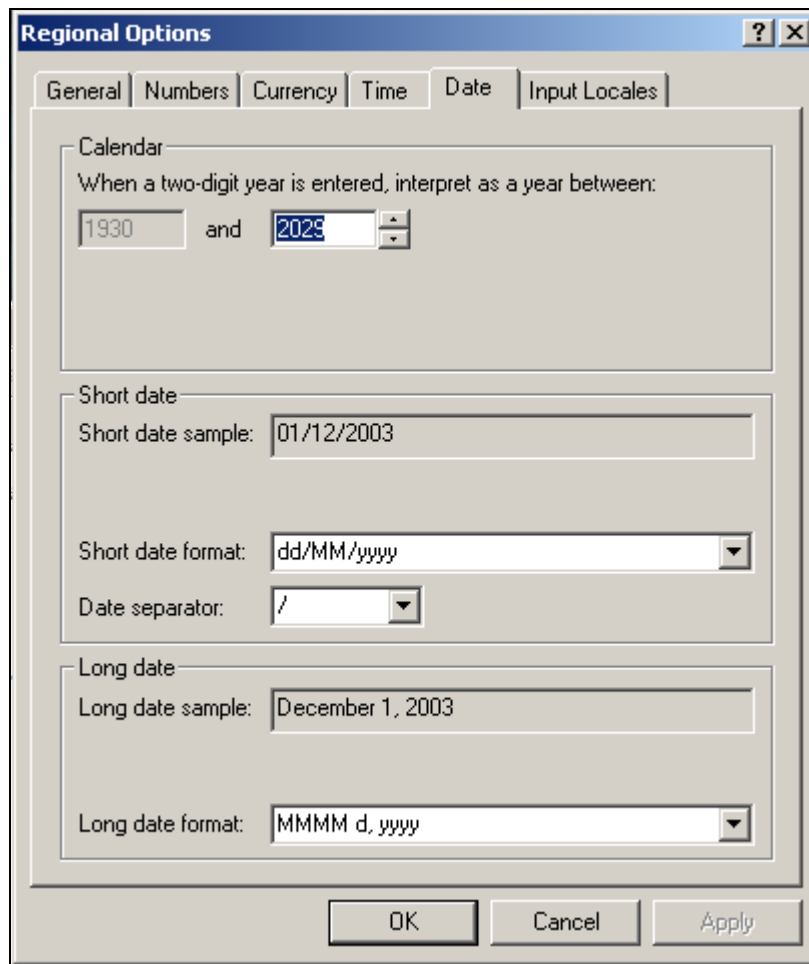2.   Scroll up to **Settings** and select **Control Panel**.
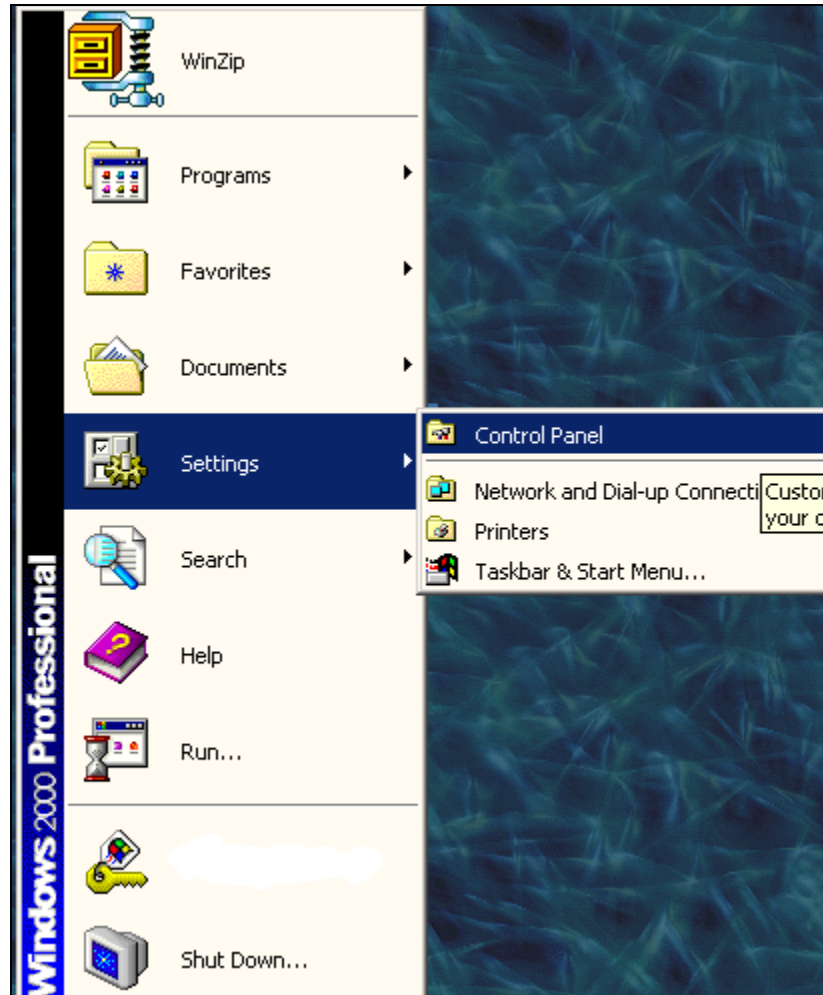
3.   Locate and double-click on the **Regional Options** icon within the **Control Panel** window.

> **Note:**   This option is called **Regional and Languages Options** in Windows XP.

4.   Select the **Date** tab in the **Regional Options** window.

5.   Ensure that the **Short date format** (located in the middle of this window) is set to year, month and day (that is, **YYYY-MM-DD**). If it is not, click on the down arrow pointer and select the YYYY-MM-DD Short date format.

6.   Click on the **Apply** button in the **Regional Options** window to confirm the settings.
7.   Click on the **OK** button. You will return to the **Control Panel** window.
8.   Close the **Control Panel** window and return to your desktop.

Installing the EFR Application

Once you access the EFR application, either from the CD or by downloading it from the Elections Canada Web site, it will be installed automatically on your computer by an installation wizard. The wizard will run in the language that is used within the MS Windows operating system on your computer. For example, if you are running a French version of Microsoft Windows, then the wizard will start in French.

To install the EFR application:

1.   Locate the EFR **SETUP.exe** file, on your computer (if you downloaded the application from the Elections Canada Web site) or on the CD. Double-click on the program icon. The following window will appear:
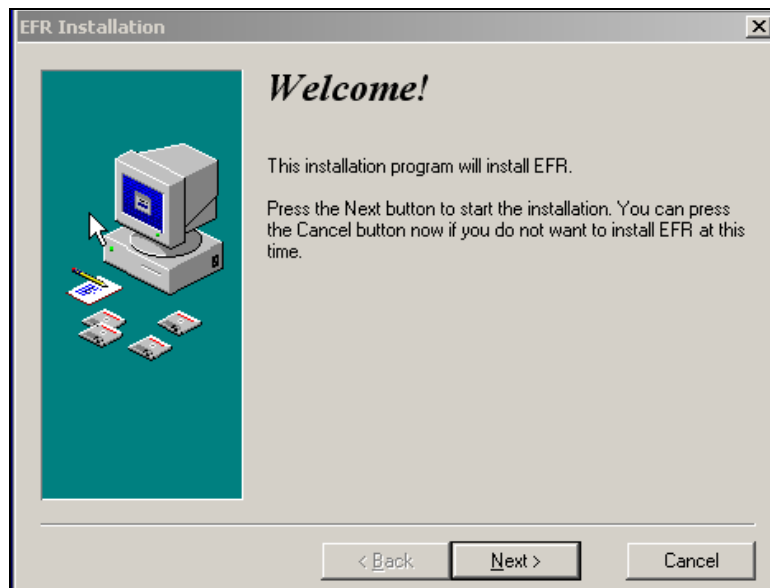
2.   Click on the **Next** button. The following window will appear:
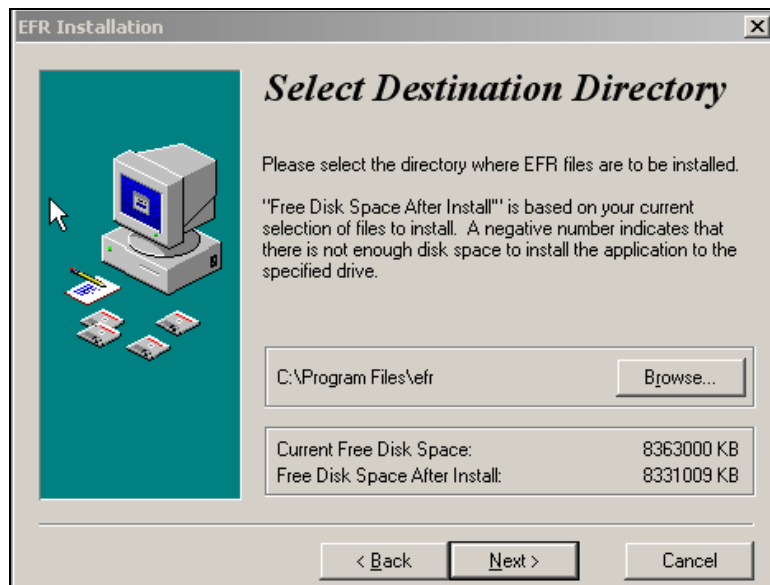
3.   Select the default destination directory and click on the **Next** button.

> **Note:** To change the location of the installation directory, click on the **Browse** button and specify the directory on your computer in which the EFR application is to be installed.

The following window will appear:
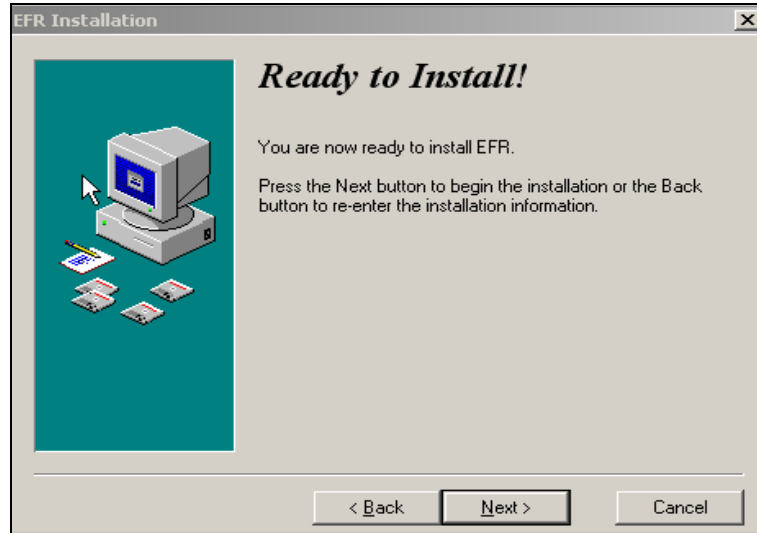
4. Click on the **Next** button.

5. The following password window will appear:
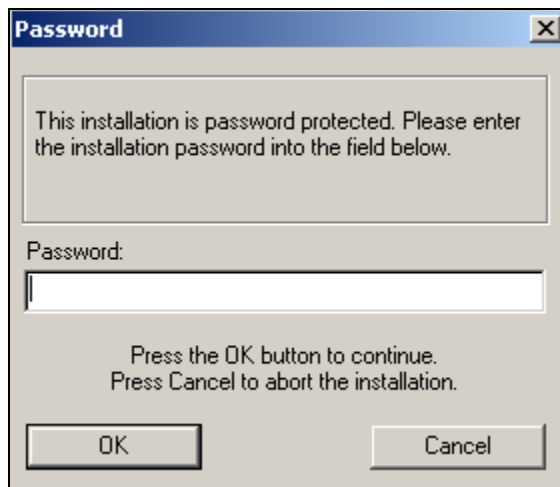
6. Enter the EFR installation password and click on the **OK** button. The following installation "progress" window will appear.
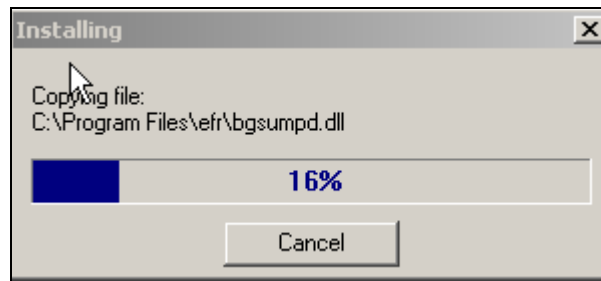
> **Note:** You can obtain an EFR installation password from the Elections Canada Web site, or from the *Read Me First* document that accompanies the EFR CD. A password is required for the installation process to continue.

7.   Once all the files have been copied, the following **EFR Installation** window will appear:
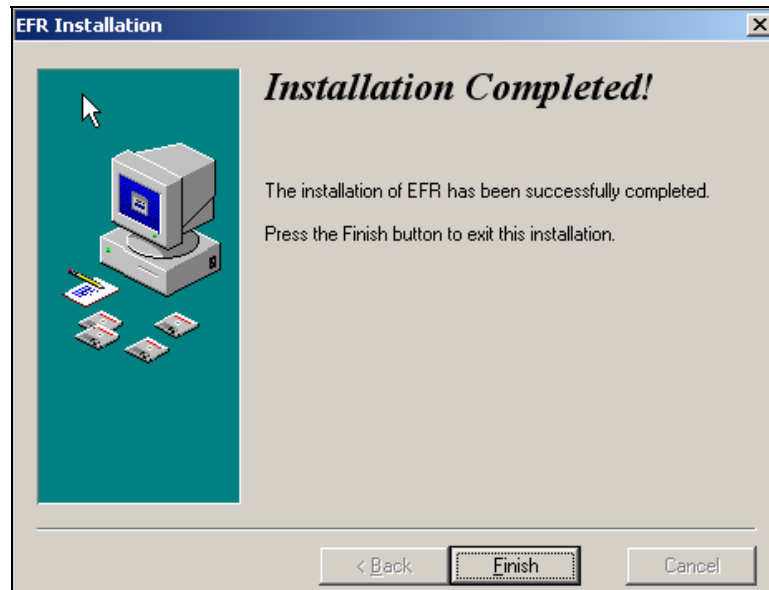
8.   Click on the **Finish** button.

9.   After the installation has completed, this desktop icon will appear on your screen:
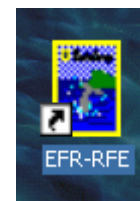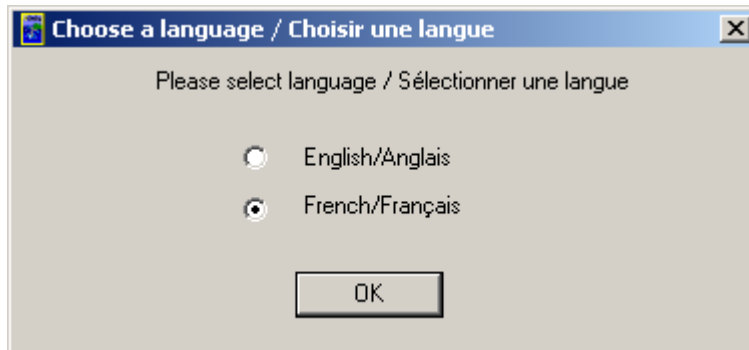
Getting Started with EFR

When the EFR application was installed on your workstation, this shortcut was placed on the desktop.

1.   Double click on EFR shortcut icon.

      The following window will appear:
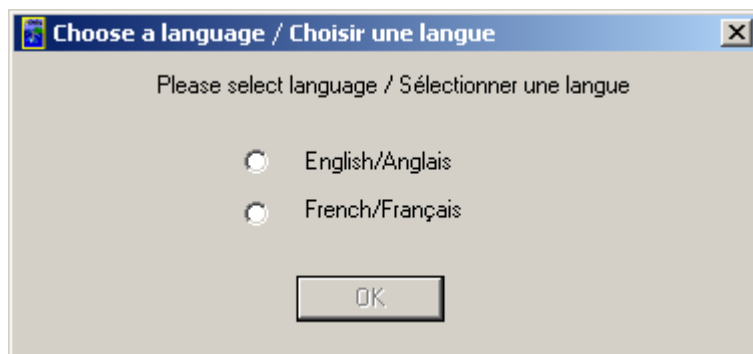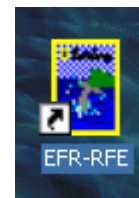
2.   Select the language of your preference (English or French), then click on the **OK** button.

3.   Review the following message window, which explains which electoral districts are used in this version of the EFR application.
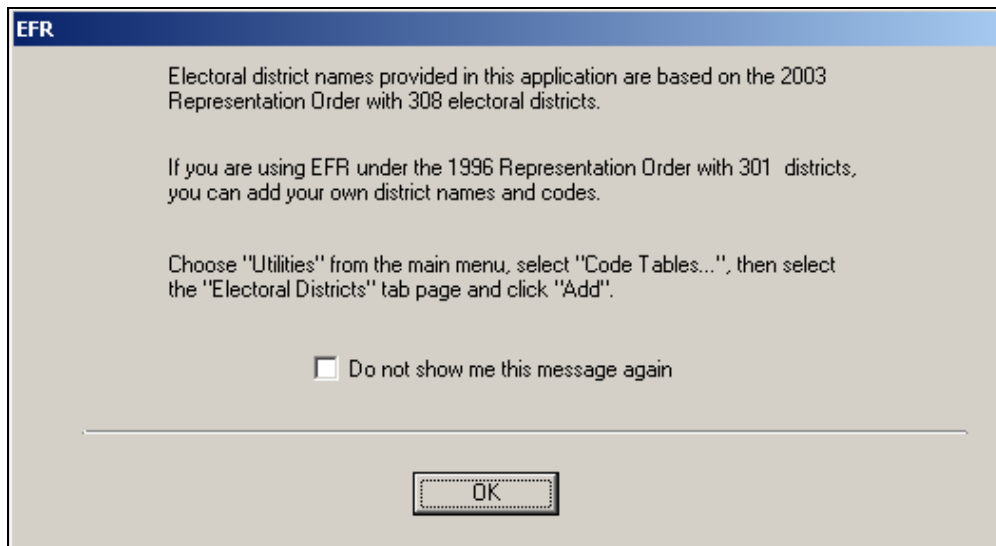
4.   Click on the **OK** button to acknowledge the message. An **Electronic Financial Returns** set-up information window will then appear.

5.   Select the political entity for which you want to prepare a financial return.

> **Note:** Depending on which political entity you select, certain fields for each section of the
> set-up window will become available for use (for example, **Family Name** and **Given
> Name** for a candidate). The date you enter here will also become the base date for all
> further entries in EFR. You may change this date at a later time by using the **Utilities**
> functions within the application.

6.   Complete all the required fields, then click on the **OK** button. The main window of the EFR
      application will appear:
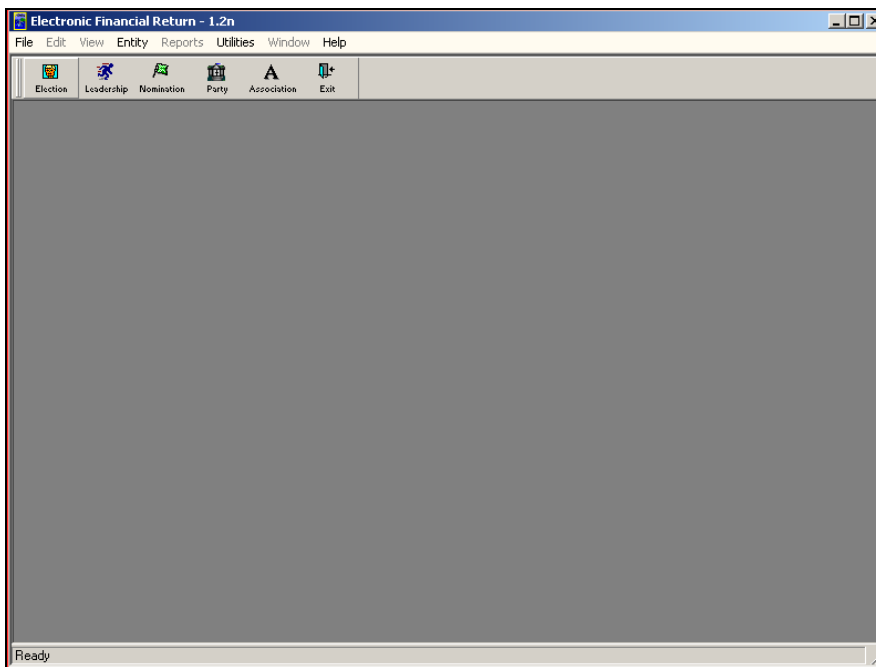
All EFR entries, functions and utilities are managed from this main window.

EFR Main Window Buttons

The main EFR window contains the following political entity selection buttons:

Different political entities have different rules to follow and different data to enter in EFR. You must click on one of these buttons to enter election finance data for your appropriate political entity.

> **Note:** The detailed data entry required for the EFR tasks for each political entity is described in the appropriate User Guide.

When you are finished working with EFR, you can click on the **Exit** button to turn off the application.

EFR Main Window Menus

The main EFR window contains several important drop-down menus, each of which contains several submenus. All data functions for each political entity are accessed through these menus and submenus.
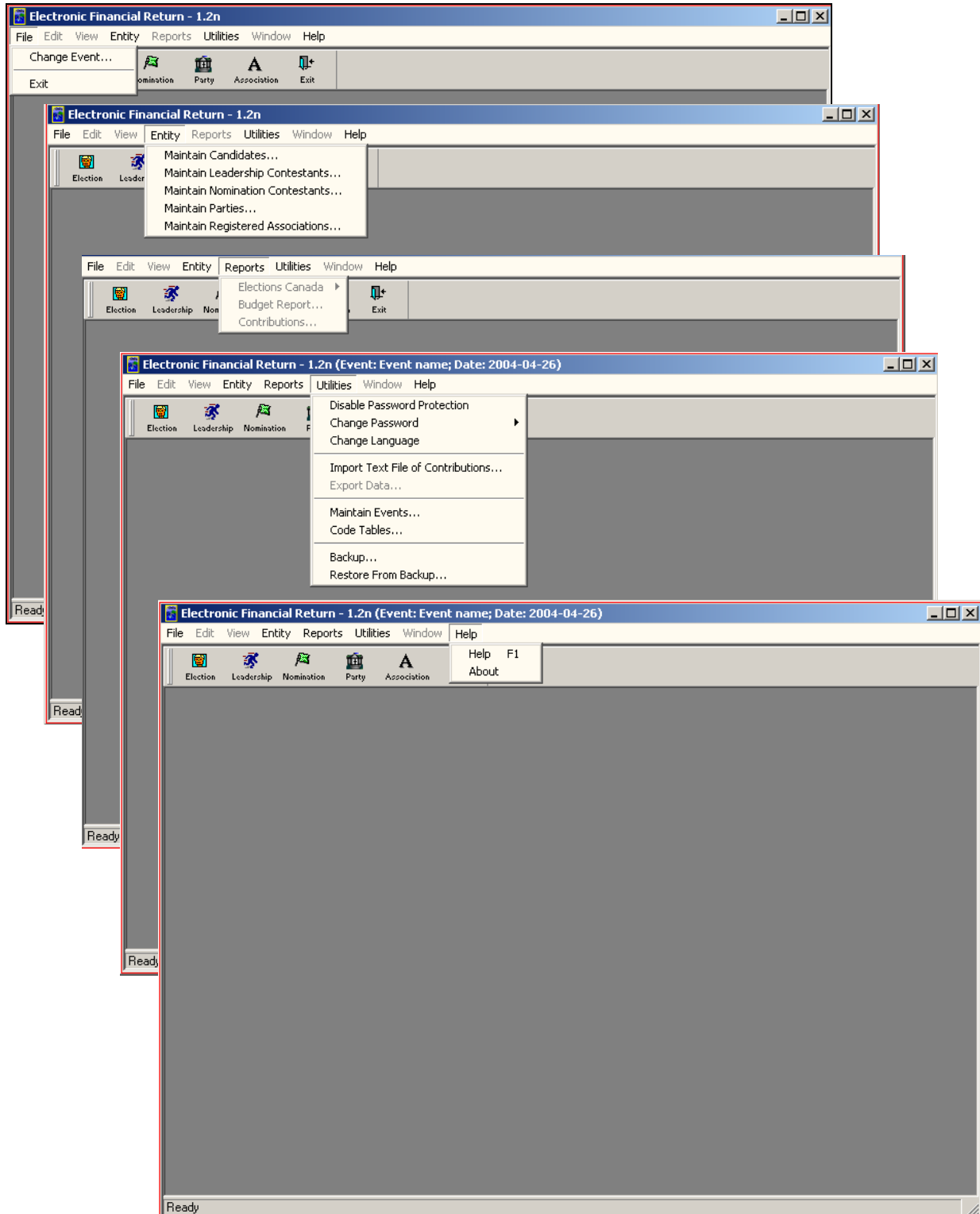
Some of these menus are explored in greater detail later in this document.

Setting the Event Date and Details

Before you can enter data/information into the EFR application, you must specify a date and details for the political **event**. The date may have been entered when you initially started the EFR application. You should ensure that the date and the corresponding event details are correct before you proceed.

In order to verify/set the date for the political event from the main window of the EFR application, you must:

1. Click on the **Utilities** drop-down menu.
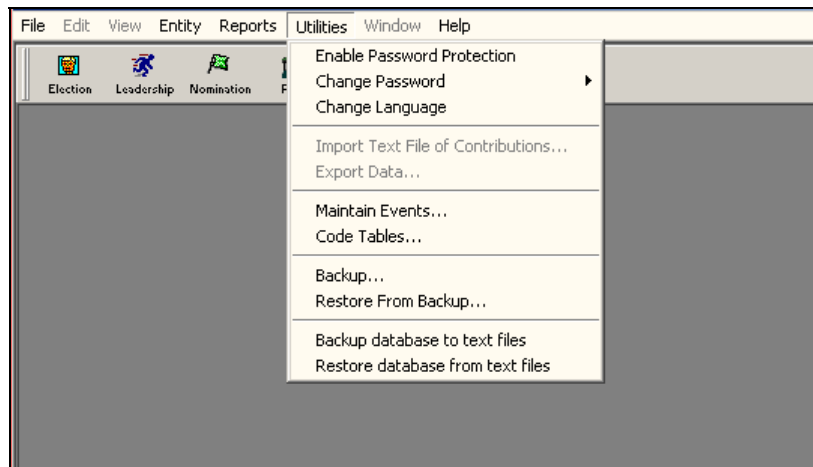
2. Scroll down to the **Maintain Events** submenu and click on it to open the **Maintain Events** window (shown on the next page).
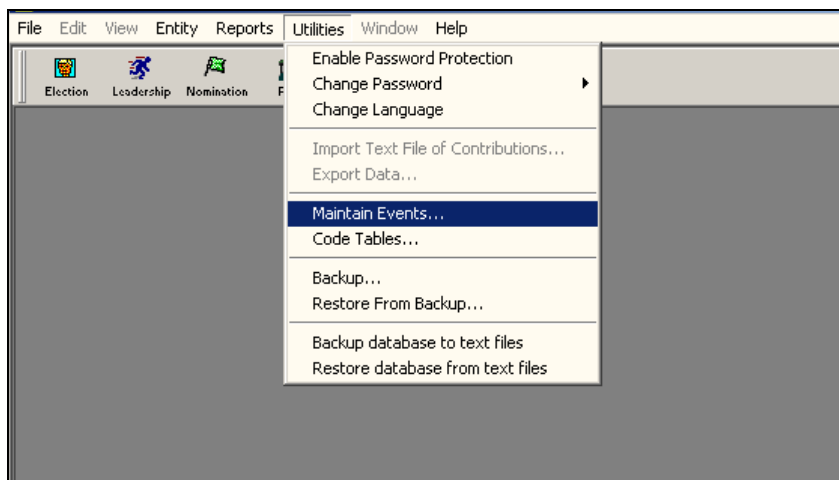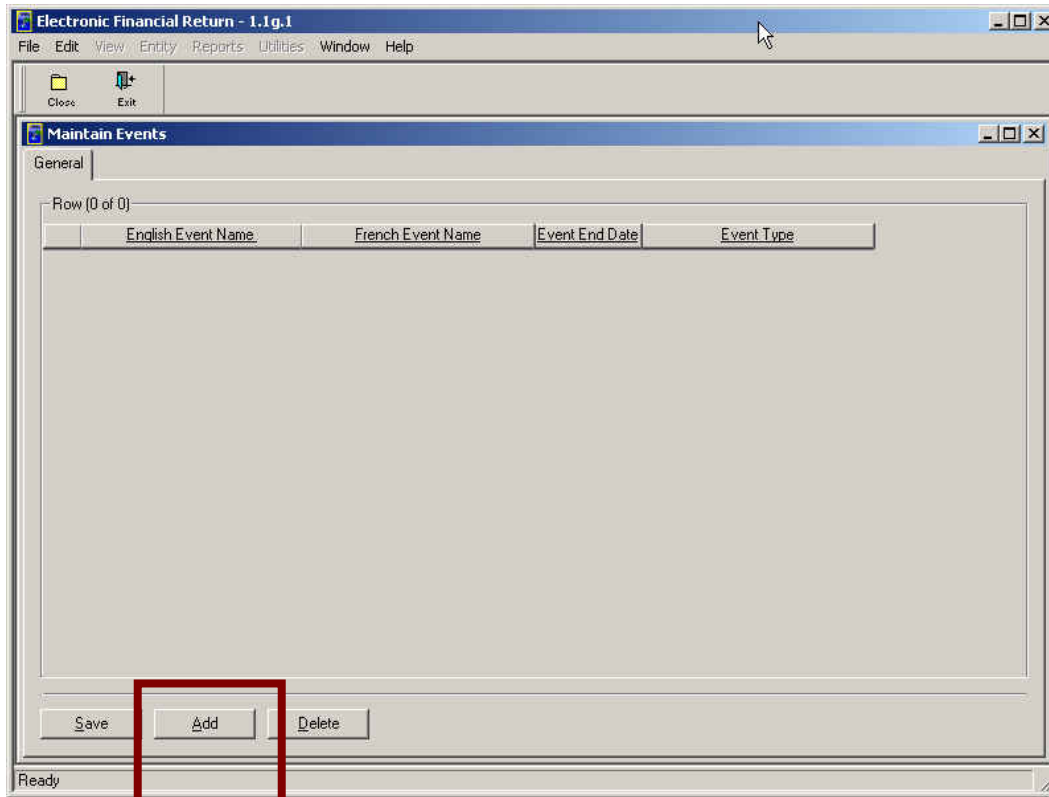
3. Click on the **Add** button. The following window will appear:
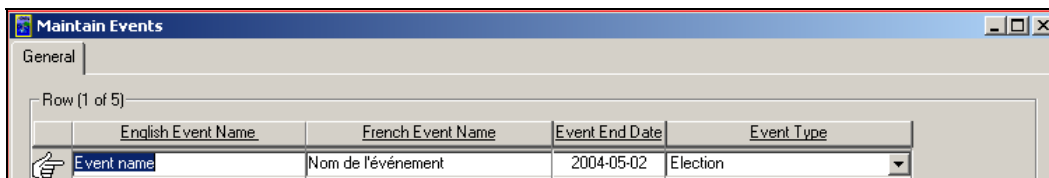
4. Enter the following event information in the first row of the window:

    - **English Event Name**   - **Event End Date**
    - **French Event Name**   - **Event Type**

5. For the **Event Type** field, click on the drop-down arrow and select the appropriate political **event**.
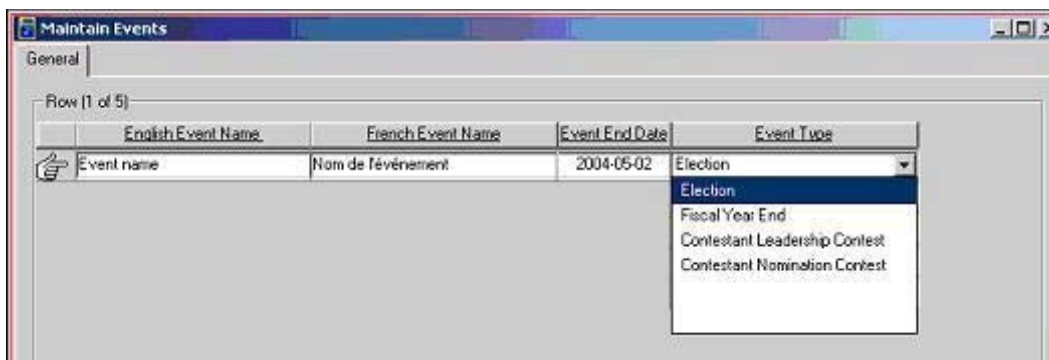
6.   Once the event information has been entered, click on the **Save** button.
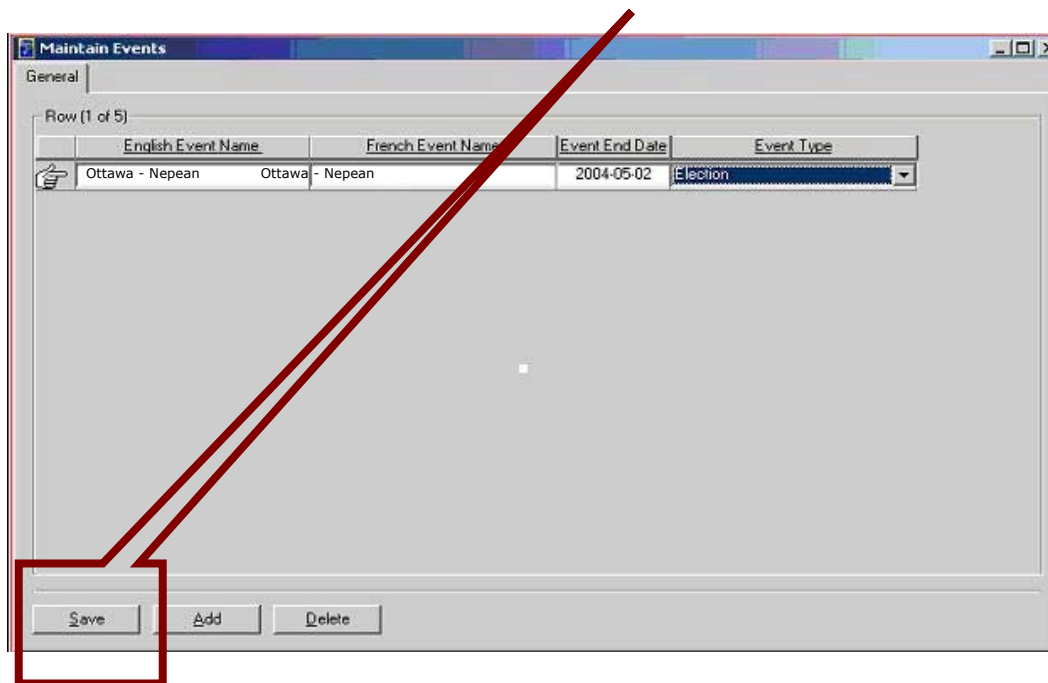
Note:	Multiple political events can be added and specified with different **Event Type** descriptions. Also, specific events can be deleted by selecting the event/row (by using the hand pointer) and clicking on the **Delete** button.

7.   Once the **Save** button has been clicked on, return to the main EFR window by clicking on the **Close** button.
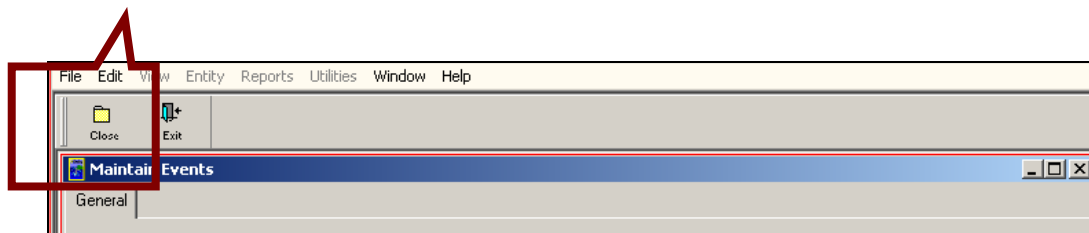

8.   The basic data for this event have now been entered and verified.

Using the Utilities Within the EFR Application

There are several utilities within the EFR application that all political entities can use to customize their application and keep their data current and organized.

The EFR **Utilities** drop-down menu allows you to perform the following activities:

- Enable, disable and/or change the EFR application password.
- Change language settings within EFR.
- Import and export data.
- Maintain events.
- Back up and restore databases.
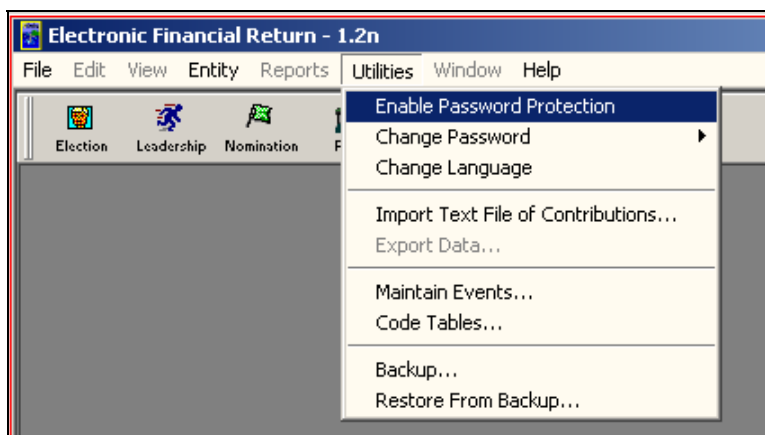
Enabling Password Protection

To enable a password protection window that will appear before a user may enter the EFR application:

1. Click on the **Utilities** drop-down menu and select **Enable Password Protection**. This enables the password protection feature.
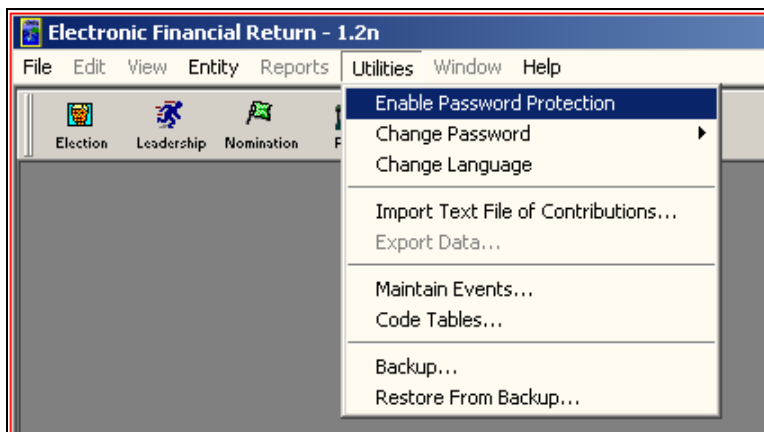
The next time you launch the EFR application, the password protection window will appear.

2. Enter the **Login password** (located in the *Read Me First* document that accompanies the CD or on the Elections Canada Web site – www.elections.ca), then click **OK**.

> **Note:** You may change this password once you have logged into the EFR application.

If password protection is enabled and a password is forgotten, then the EFR database must be backed up and a copy of the database sent to Elections Canada. Support personnel within Elections Canada will access the password and advise you on how to proceed with using the EFR application.

Disabling Password Protection

1. Click on the **Utilities** drop-down menu and select **Disable Password Protection**.
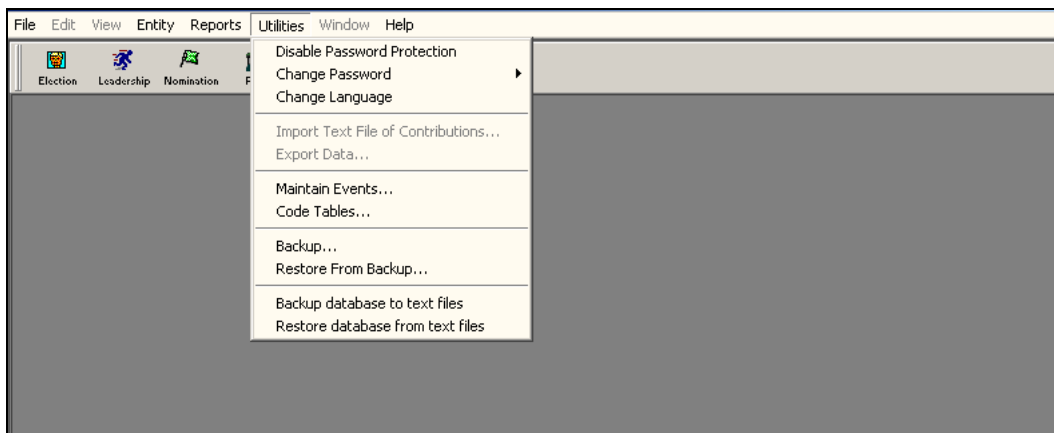
A window will appear stating that the **Password Protection has been disabled**.
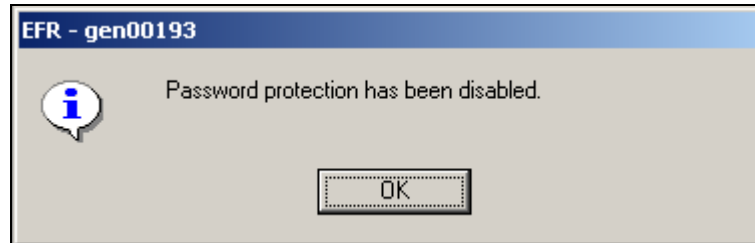
Note:	The next time you launch the EFR application, you will **NOT** see the initial EFR password protection window.

Changing Passwords

1. Click on the **Utilities** drop-down menu and select **Change Password**.

2. From the pop-out submenu, highlight and click on **Logon**.
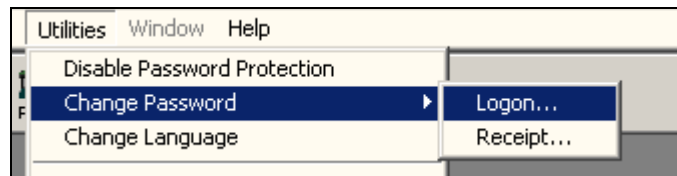
3. Review the **Change Login Password** window that appears.

4.   Enter the current password in the **Enter current password** field.

5.   Enter the new password in both the **Enter new password** and **Enter new password again** fields.

> **Note:**   Passwords must be exactly eight characters in length. If a password of less than eight characters is entered, an **error** message window will appear.

6.   Click on the **OK** button. Your new password will be saved. You will have to enter the "new" password the next time you launch the EFR application.

Remembering Your Login Password

The EFR application has a feature within the **Change Login Password** utility that allows you to store some simple verification information that you can use to retrieve your password in case you forget it. This feature can save you time if you need to retrieve a forgotten password.

1.   Click on the **Details** ( ) button just right of the **Store information for remembering your logon password** field.
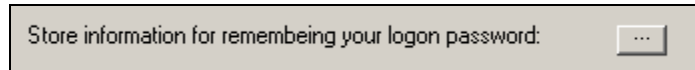
2.   Review the new window as shown below.
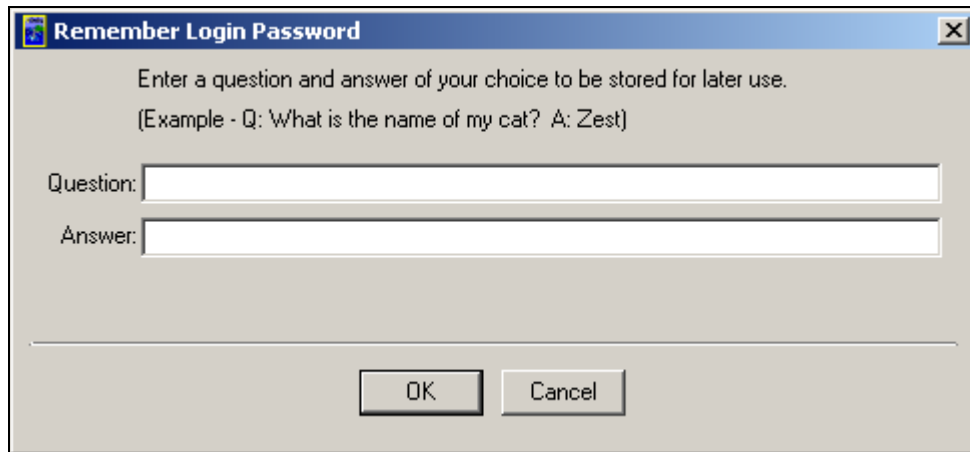
3.   Enter a question in the **Question** field. Try to select a question to which only you know the answer.

4.   Enter the answer to your question in the **Answer** field.

5.   Click on the **OK** button. You will return to the **Change Login Password** window.
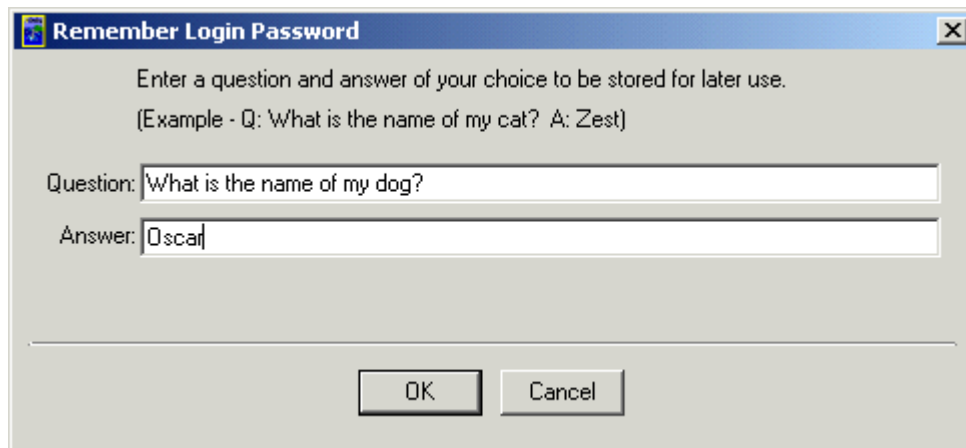
Retrieving a Forgotten Password

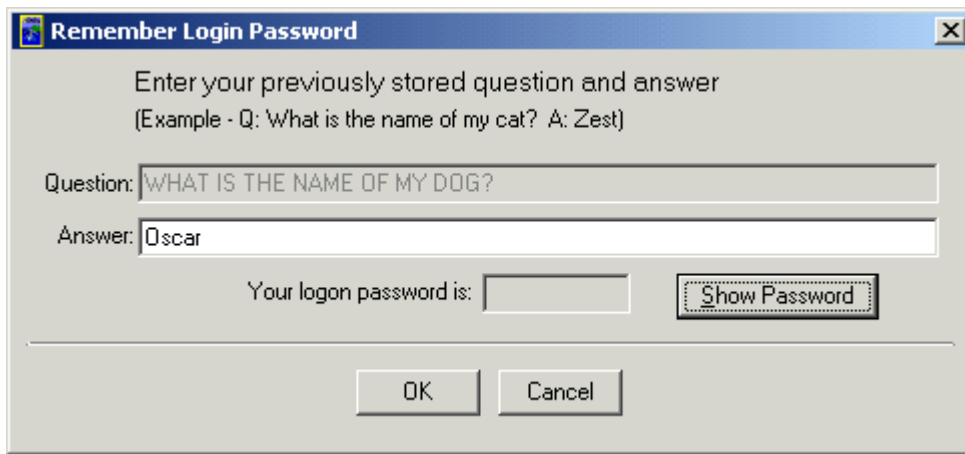To retrieve a password you changed in the EFR application but can't remember:

1. Click on the *Forget Password?* link in the **Electronic Financial Returns Welcome** window or in the **Change Login Password** window.
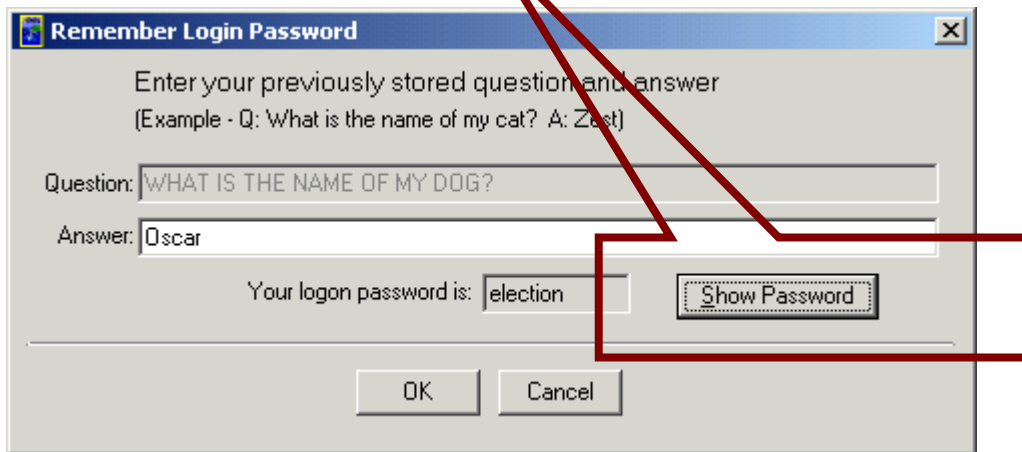

2. The **Remember Login Password** window will appear.

3. Enter the answer to your question in the **Answer** field.

4. Click on the **Show Password** button. Your logon password will be displayed within the **Your logon password is** field.

5. Click on the **OK** button to return to the **Electronic Financial Returns Welcome** window or to the **Change Login Password** window.

Changing Languages

The EFR application supports both Canadian official languages. To change the language used by the application:

1. Click on the **Utilities** drop-down menu and select **Change Language**.
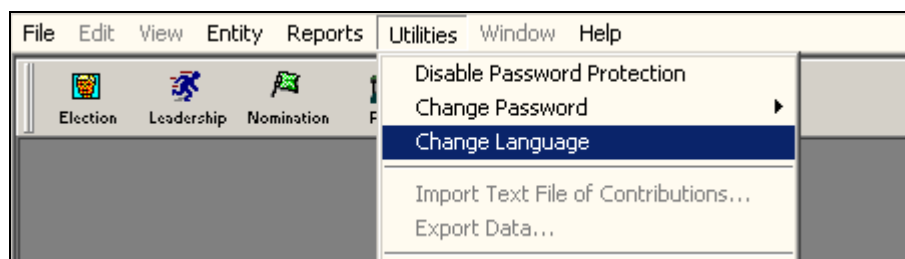
2.   Review the message window that appears:
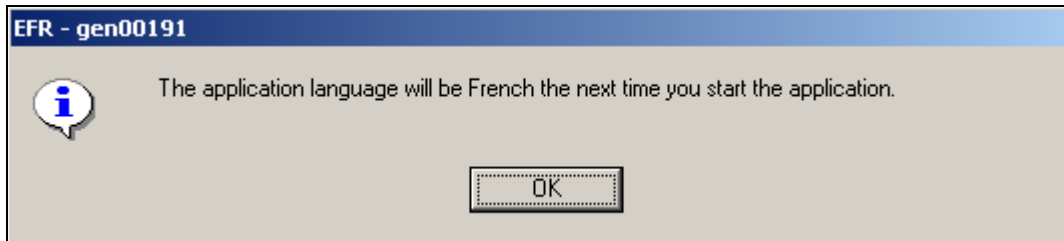
3.   Click on the **OK** button. You will return to the main EFR application window.

> **Note:**   The next time you launch the EFR application, the language you selected will appear.

Importing a Text File of Contributions

Importing a **Text File of Contributions** into the EFR application involves the following steps:

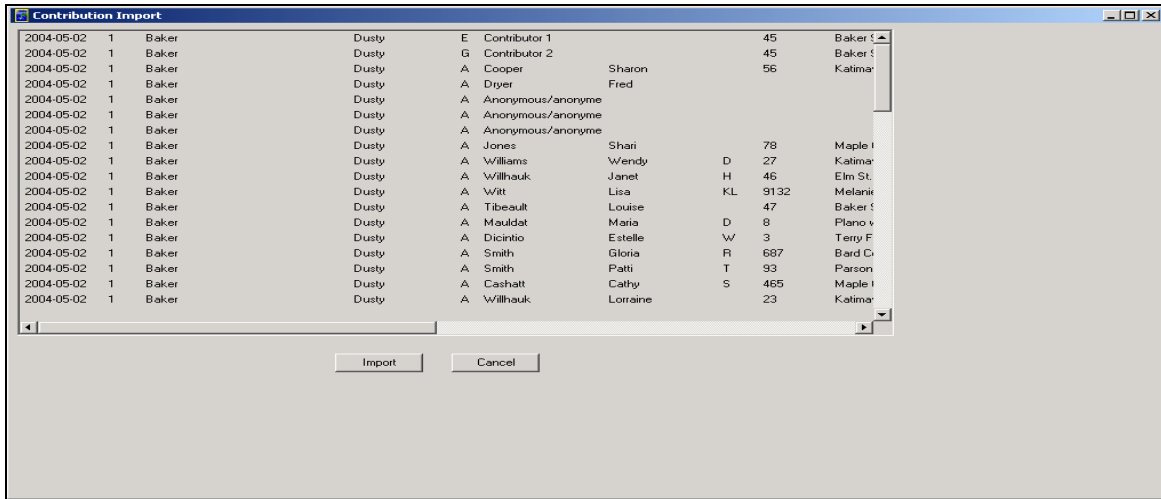1.   Click on the **Utilities** drop-down menu and select **Import Text File of Contributions**.
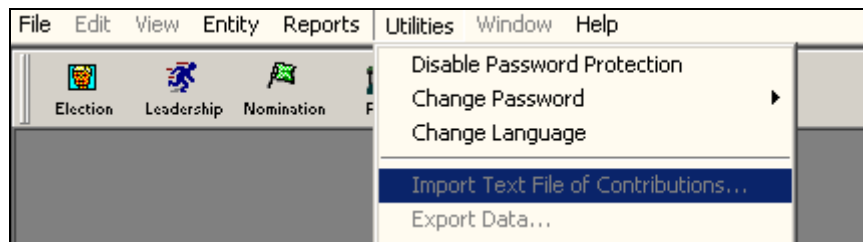
2.   Review the **Import Contribution File** window as follows:
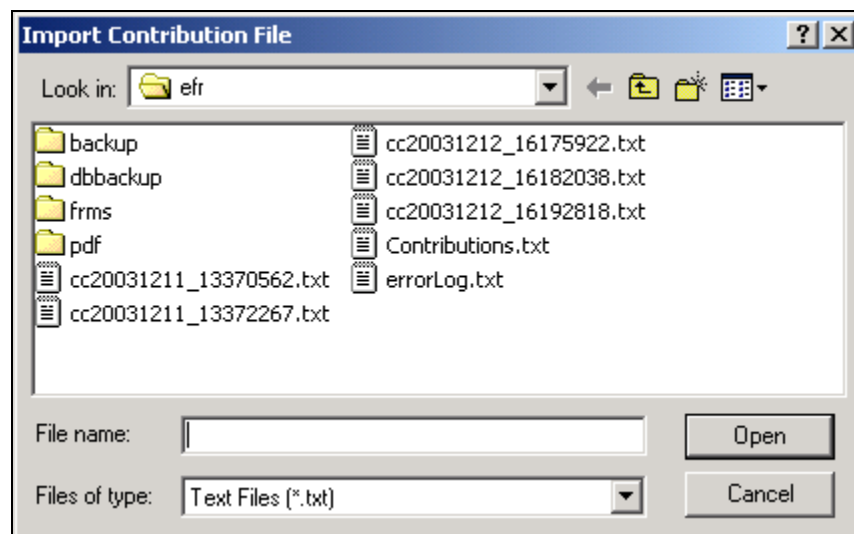
3.   Enter the **Contributions.txt** file into the **File name** field and click on the **Open** button. A new window will appear.

4.   Review the **Contributions Import** window.

5.   Click on the **Import** button to initiate the import process. Once the import process is complete, this small window will appear on your screen:
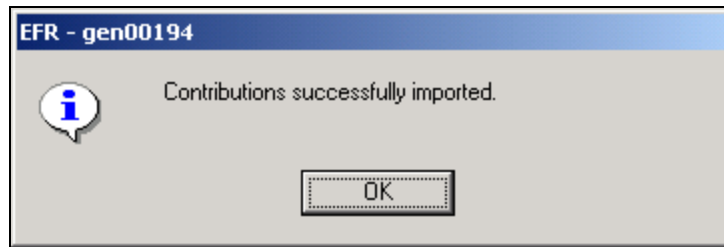
6.   Click on the **OK** button to return to the EFR main window.

| **Note:**	Importing the **Contributions.txt** file must be performed prior to entering any data into the EFR application.

Exporting Data from EFR

Exporting data from the EFR application for use in other applications, such as MS Excel, involves the following steps:

1. Click on the **Utilities** drop-down menu and select **Export Data**.
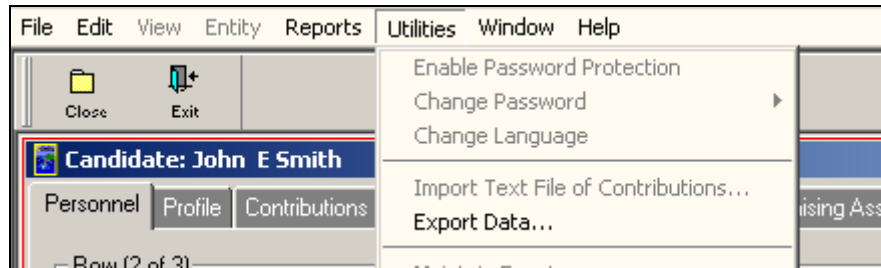
> | **Note:** | Exporting data involves the selection of a **Political Event** and **Entity**. In this example, the candidate (John Smith) was used with the political event date of 2004-05-02. Refer to the **Candidates – User Guide** for additional details on creating a candidate and profile. |

2. Review the new **Export Contributions** window that appears:
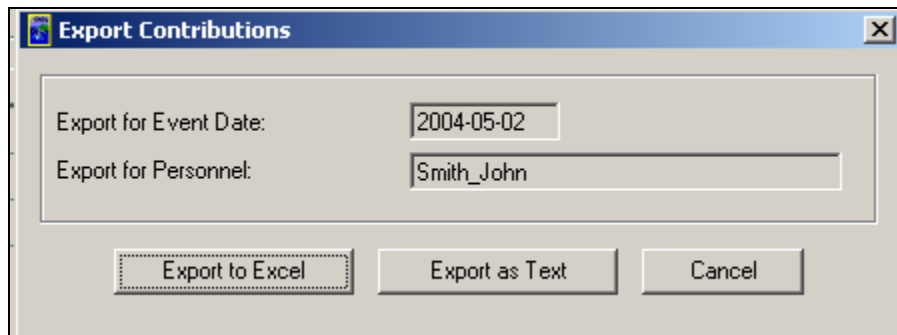
3. Depending on the format you require, click on the **Export to Excel** or **Export as Text** button. Depending on your selection, new windows will appear as follows:

Export to Excel

> **Note:** Notice that the path in which the file is saved is illustrated underneath the **Contributions Filename** column. In this case, the path is C:\Program Files\efr\export\20040502_Smith_John_contributions.xls.
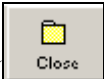
Export as Text
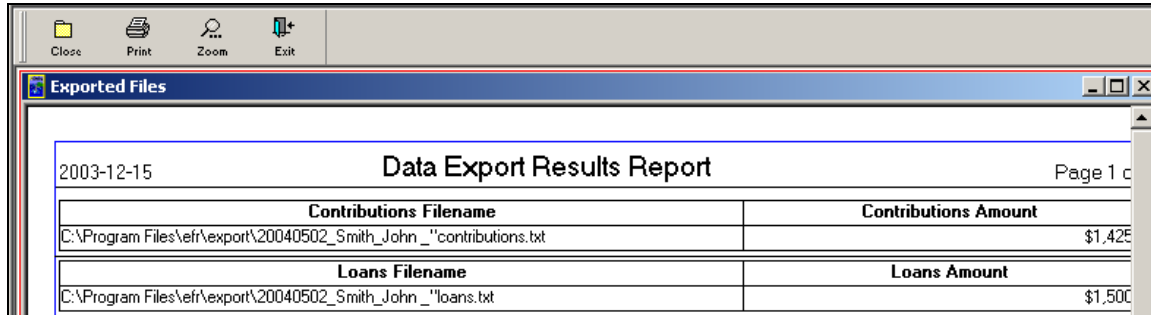
> **Note:** Notice that the path in which the file is saved is illustrated underneath the **Contributions Filename** column. In this case, the path is C:\Program Files\efr\export\20040502_Smith_John_"contributions.txt.

4. You can magnify and print the **Data Export Results Report** by using the **Zoom** and **Print** buttons at the top of the window.

5. Click on the **Close** button (⬜ Close) to return to the **Candidates** tab page.
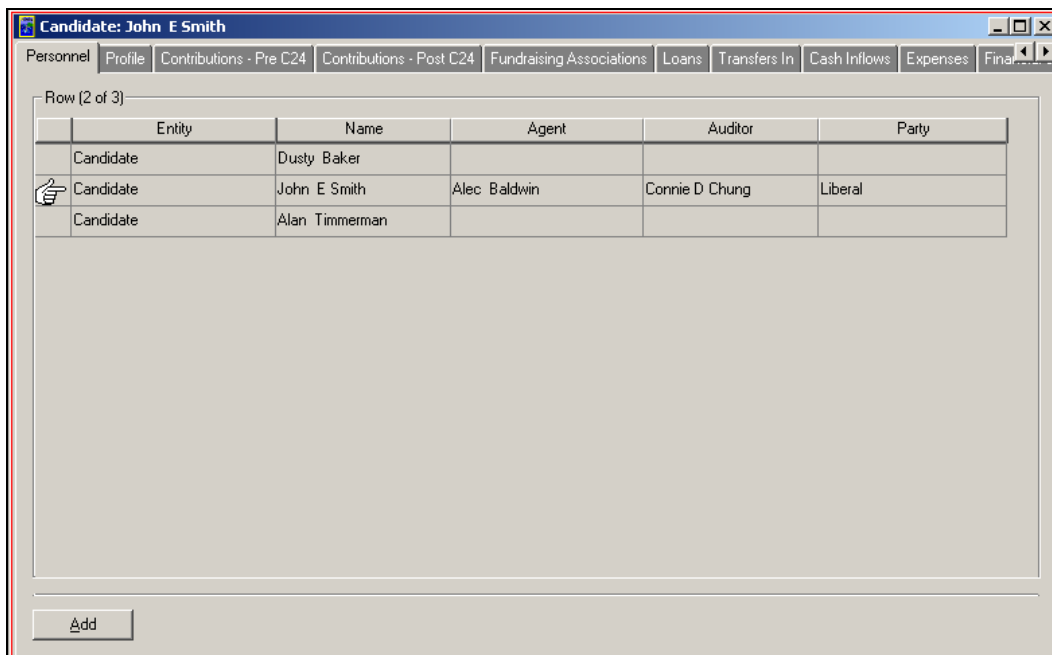
Working with Code Tables

Code tables are used to establish the baseline data for the application. The EFR **Code Tables** utility feature allows you to maintain the code tables in the following five (5) tab pages:
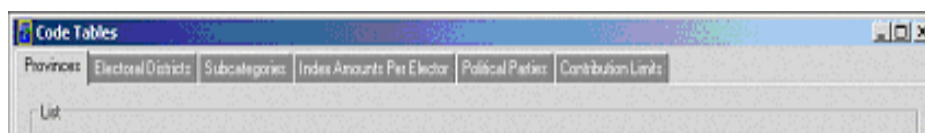
- Provinces
- Electoral Districts
- Subcategories
- Index Amounts Per Elector
- Political Parties

To access the code tables:

1. Click on the **Utilities** drop-down menu and select **Code Tables**.
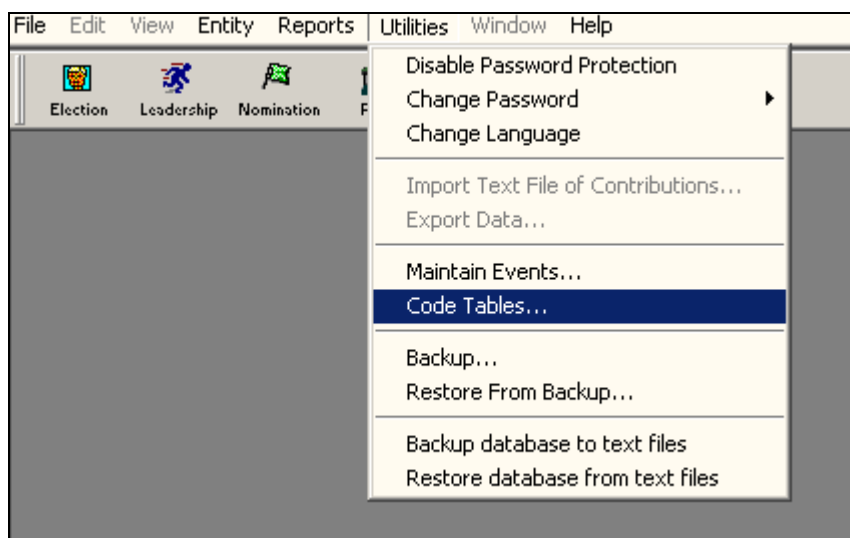
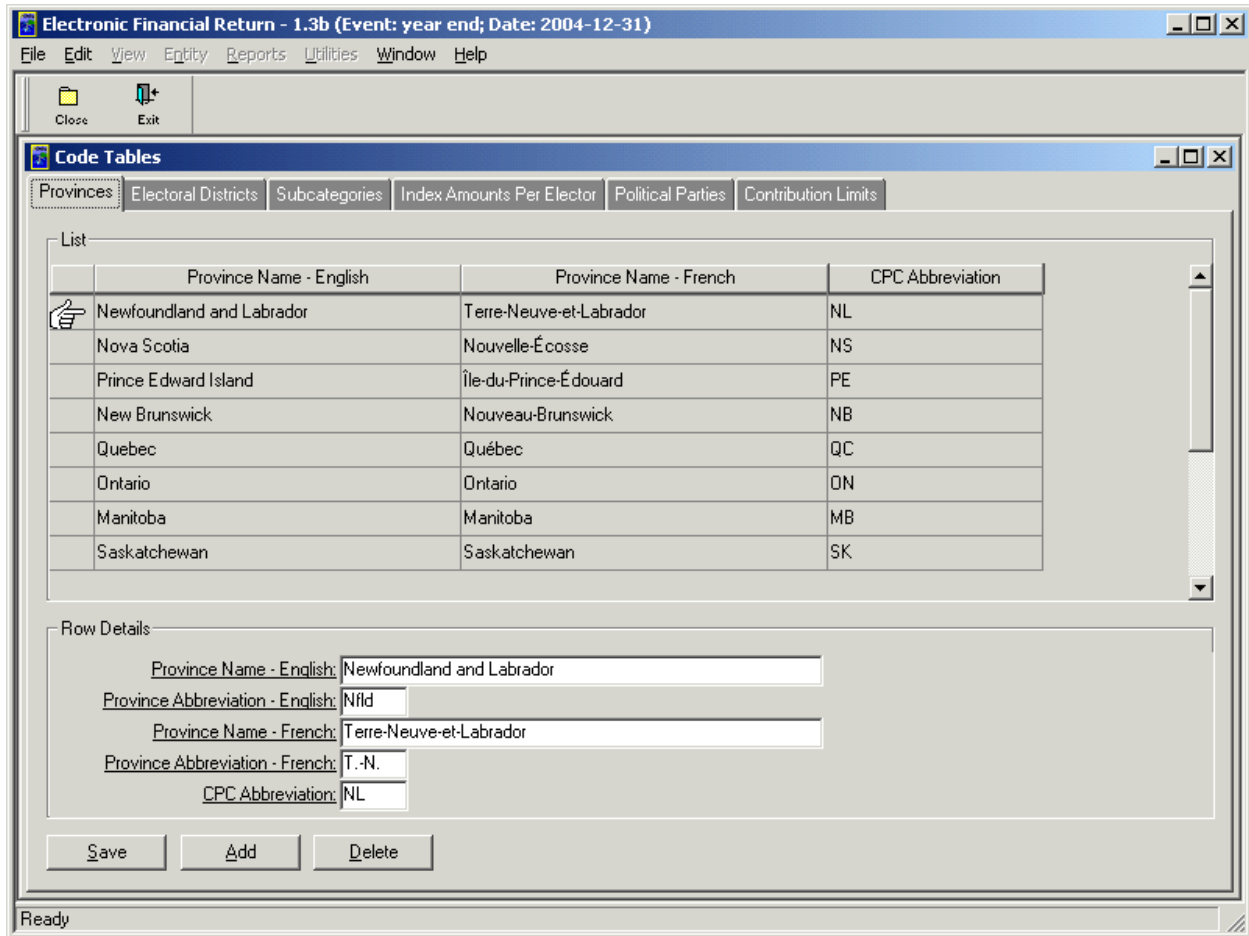

2. Select one of the six (6) tab pages in the **Code Tables** window.

Provinces

To enter data in the **Provinces** tab page:

1. Click on the **Provinces** tab.

2.   Select (click on) the province you want to work with (the hand pointer indicates the active row).

> **Note:**   The **Provinces** tab page consists of two sections: **List** and **Row Details**. Changes you
> make in the **Rows Details** section will appear in the **List** section.

3.   Click on the **Add** button. The **Row Details** area will clear.

4.   Enter the **Province Name – English**, **Province Abbreviation – English**, **Province Name –
      French**, **Province Abbreviation – French**, and **CPC (Canada Post) Abbreviation** information
      into their respective fields.

5.   Click on the **Save** button. You will notice the new province information is listed as a new row within the **Provinces** tab page.
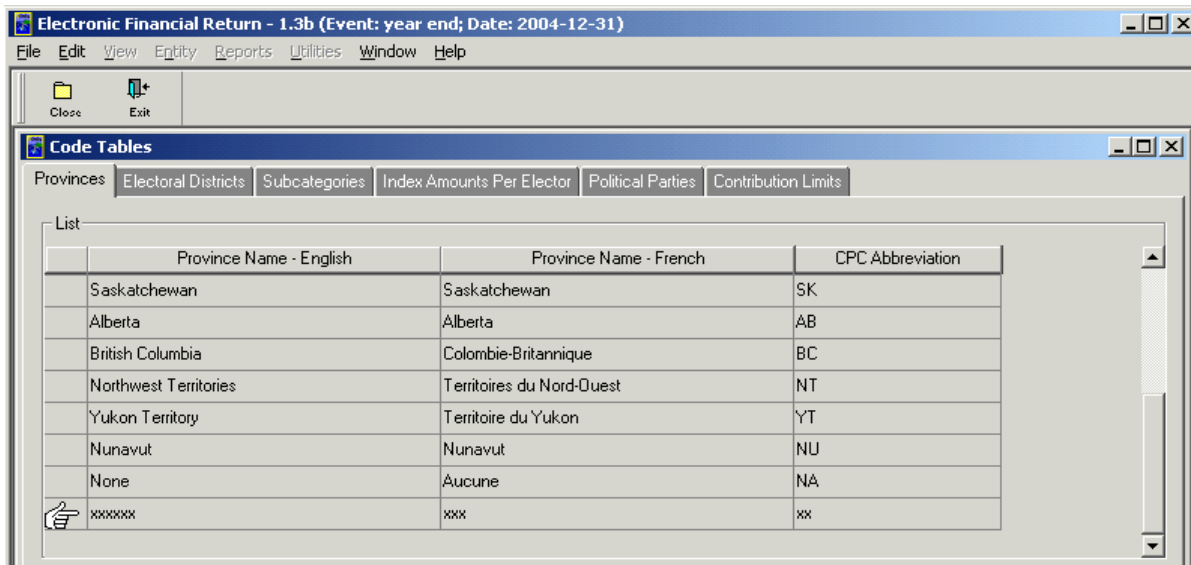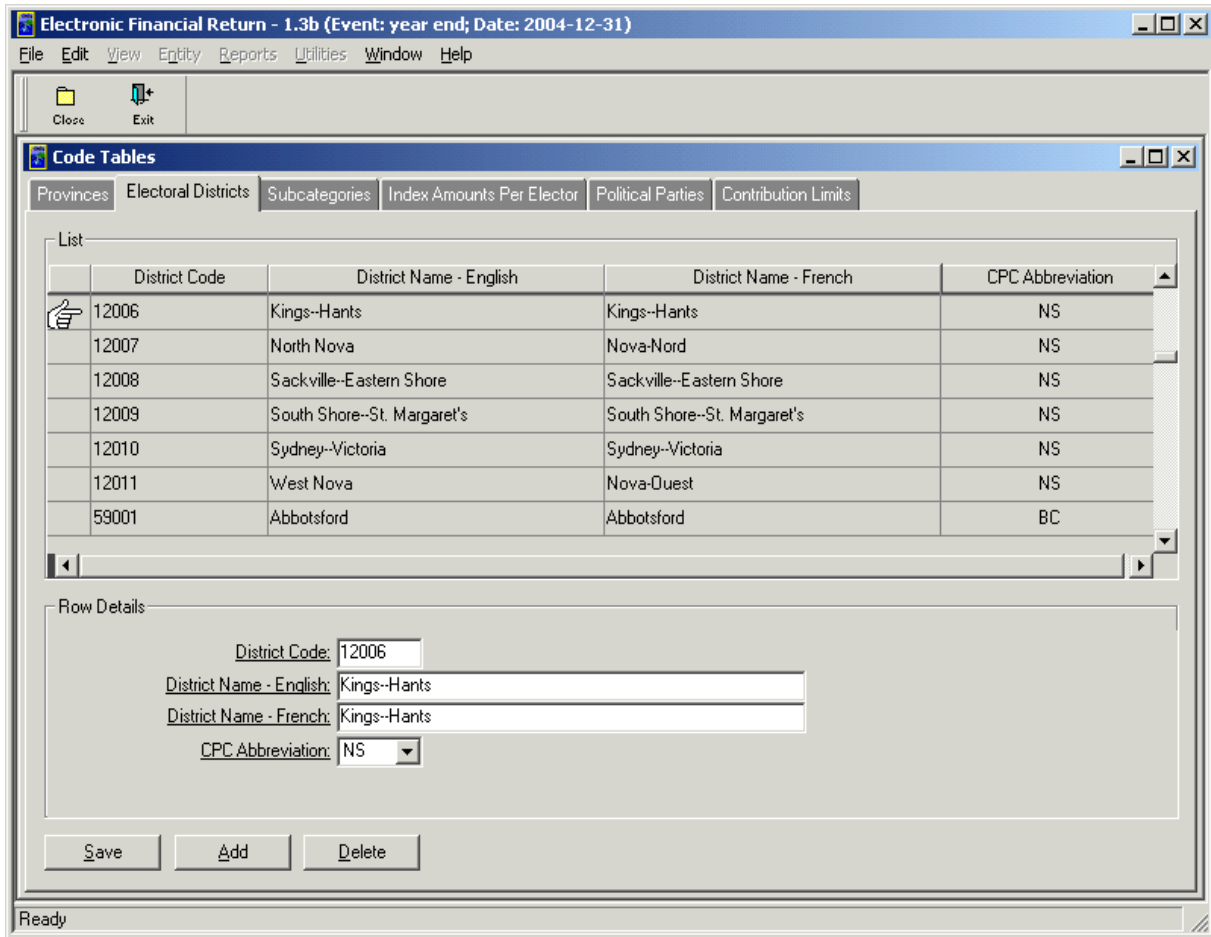

Note:	You can add and delete information by using the **Add** and **Delete** buttons. Only two (2) characters are allowed for the **CPC (Canada Post Corporation) Abbreviation** field. You should add and delete a province only as the Canadian Constitution is amended.

Electoral Districts

To enter data in the **Electoral Districts** tab page:

1.   Click on the **Electoral Districts** tab.

| | Note: | The **Electoral Districts** tab page consists of two sectional areas (**List** and **Row Details**). Contained within the **List** section are four columns: a **District Code**, a **District Name (English)** and **District Name (French),** and a **CPC (Canada Post Corporation) Abbreviation**. The **Rows Details** section summarizes each row that is selected by the hand pointer. |

2. Click on the **Add** button. The **Row Details** section will clear.

3. Enter the **District Code**, **District Name – English**, **District Name – French**, and **CPC Abbreviation** information into their respective fields.

4. Click on the **Save** button. You will notice that the new electoral district information is listed as a new row within the **Electoral Districts** tab page.

| | | Note: | You can add and delete electoral districts information by using the **Add** and **Delete** buttons. Only two (2) characters are allowed for the **CPC (Canada Post Corporation) Abbreviation** field. You will amend the electoral district table only to correspond to Elections Canada's changes to electoral districts. |

Subcategories

To enter data into the **Subcategories** tab page:

1. Click on the **Subcategories** tab page.
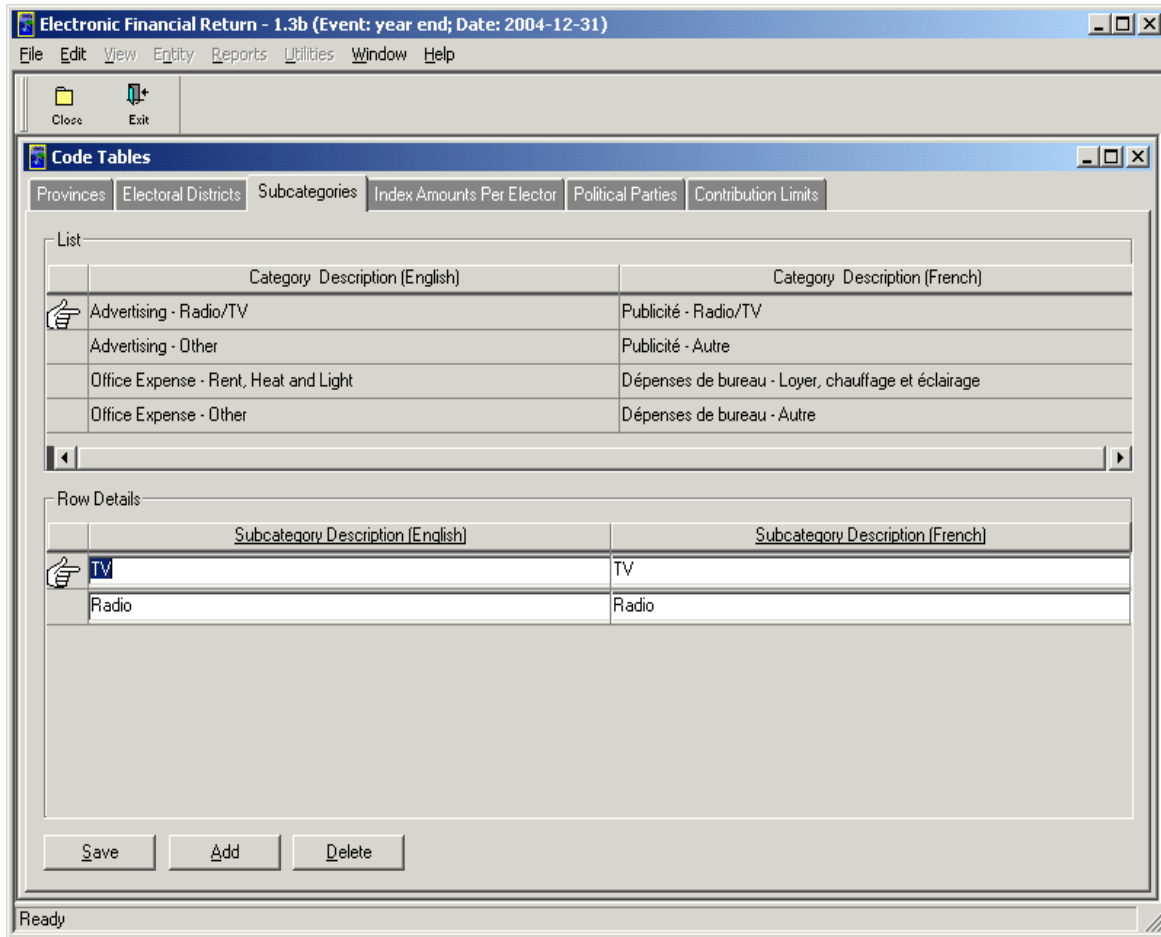
Note: The **Subcategories** tab page consists of two sectional areas (**List** and **Row Details**). Contained within the **List** section are two columns: **Category Description** (**English**) and **Category Description (French)**. The **Rows Details** section summarizes each row that is selected by the hand pointer. This section contains two columns: a **Subcategory Description (English)** and **Subcategory Description (French)**.

2.   Click on the **Add** button. The **Row Details** section will clear.
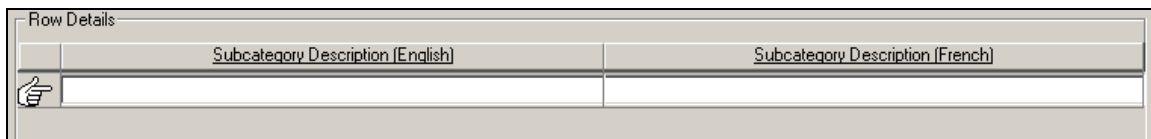
3.   Enter the **Subcategory Description** (English and French) into their respective fields.
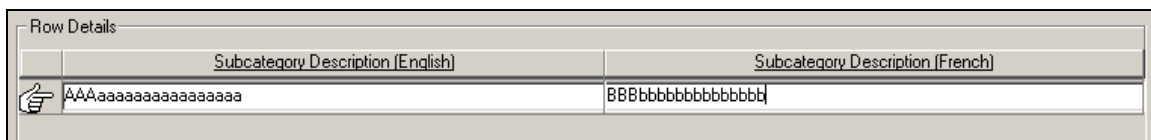
4.   Click on the **Save** button to save the new **Subcategory Description** information.

5. Click on the **Save** button. You will notice the new subcategory information is listed as a new row within the **Row Details** section.
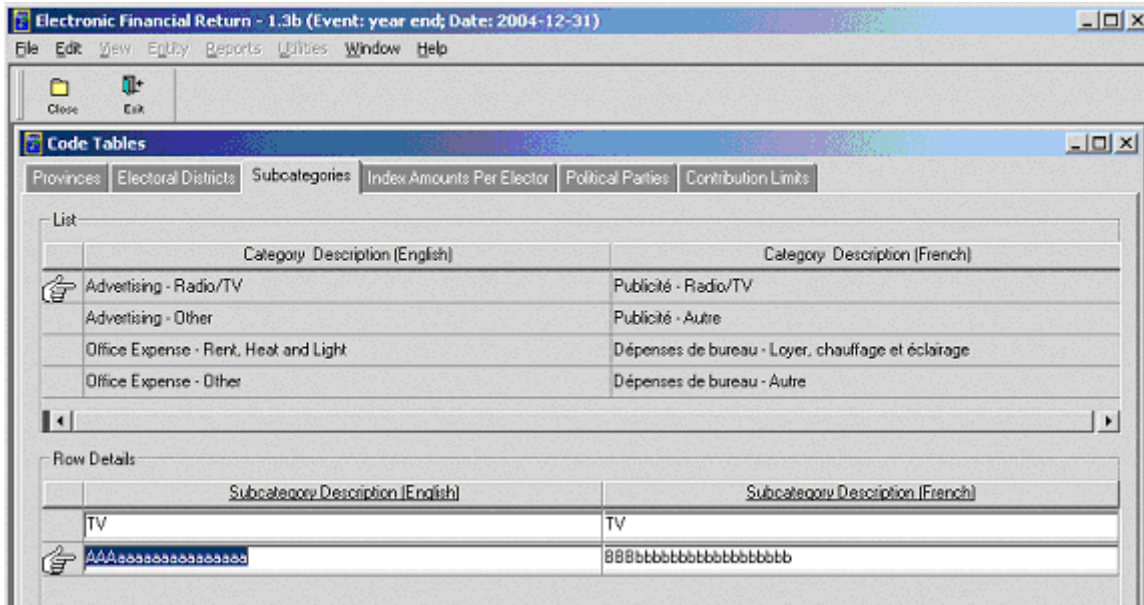

Note:	The new **Subcategory Description** (English and French) listed within the **Row Details** section is an actual subcategory of the highlighted row **Advertising – Radio/TV**.
	You can add and delete subcategory information by using the **Add** and **Delete** buttons.

Index Amounts Per Elector

To enter data into the **Index Amounts Per Elector** tab page:

1. Click on the **Index Amounts Per Elector** tab page.
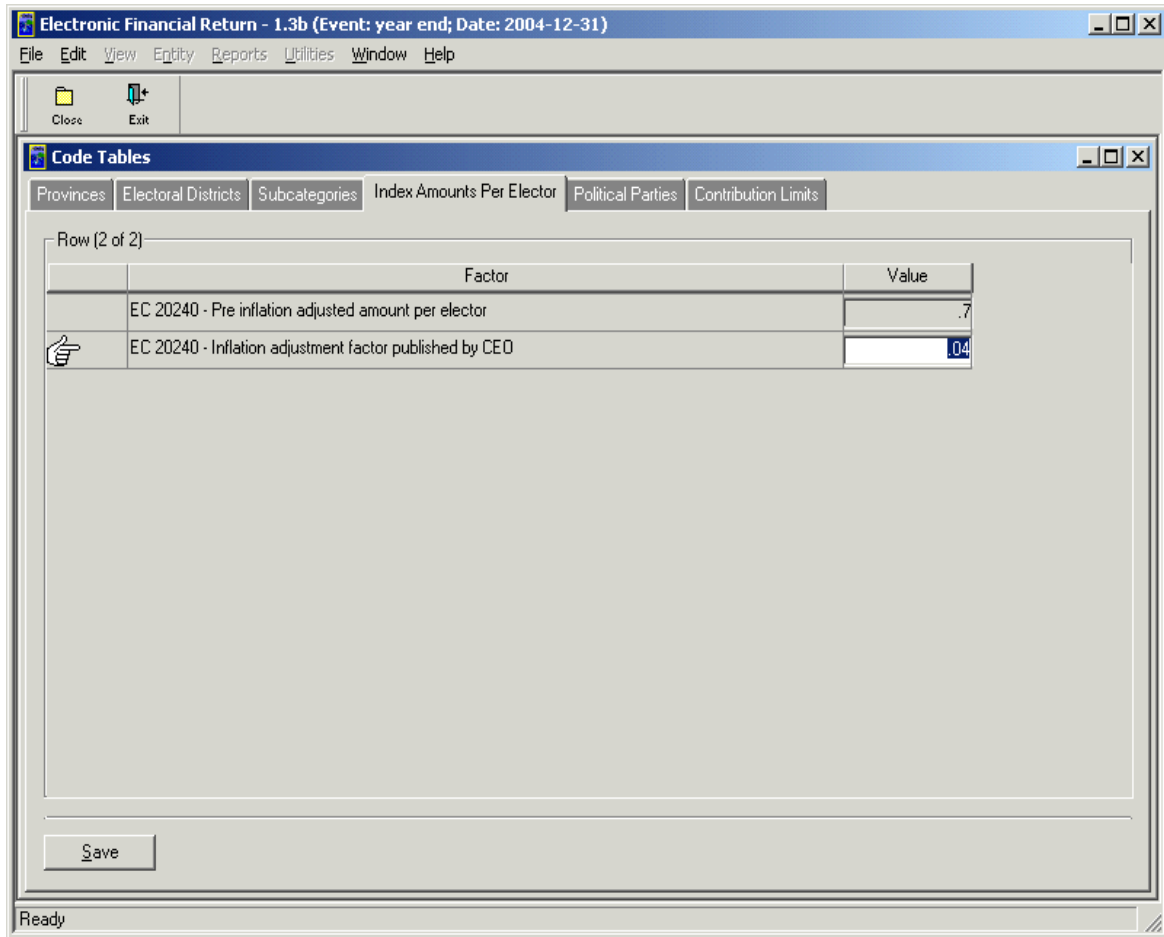
> **Notes:** The **Index Amounts Per Elector** tab page consists of one sectional area. Contained within the **Index Amounts Per Elector** tab page are two columns (**Factor** and **Value**).

2. Enter a **Value** for the **EC 20240 – Inflation adjustment factor published by CEO** line item.

3. Click on the **Save** button to save the new value.

Political Parties

To enter data into the **Political Parties** tab page:
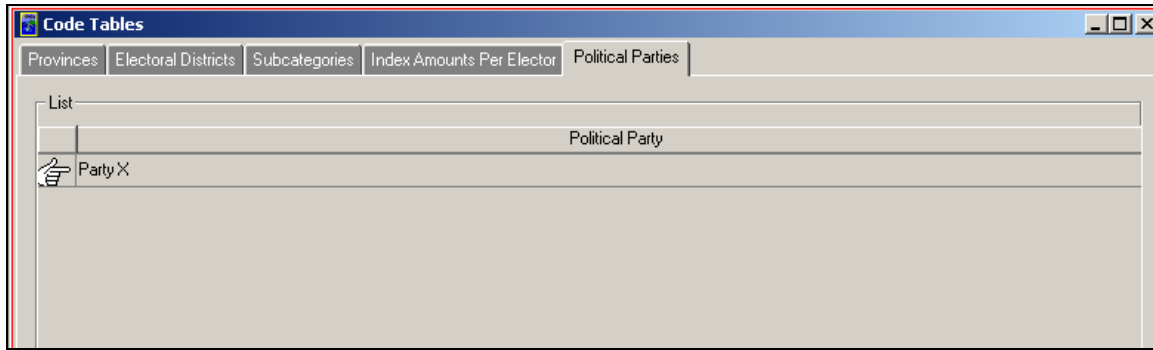
1. Click on the **Political Parties** tab page.
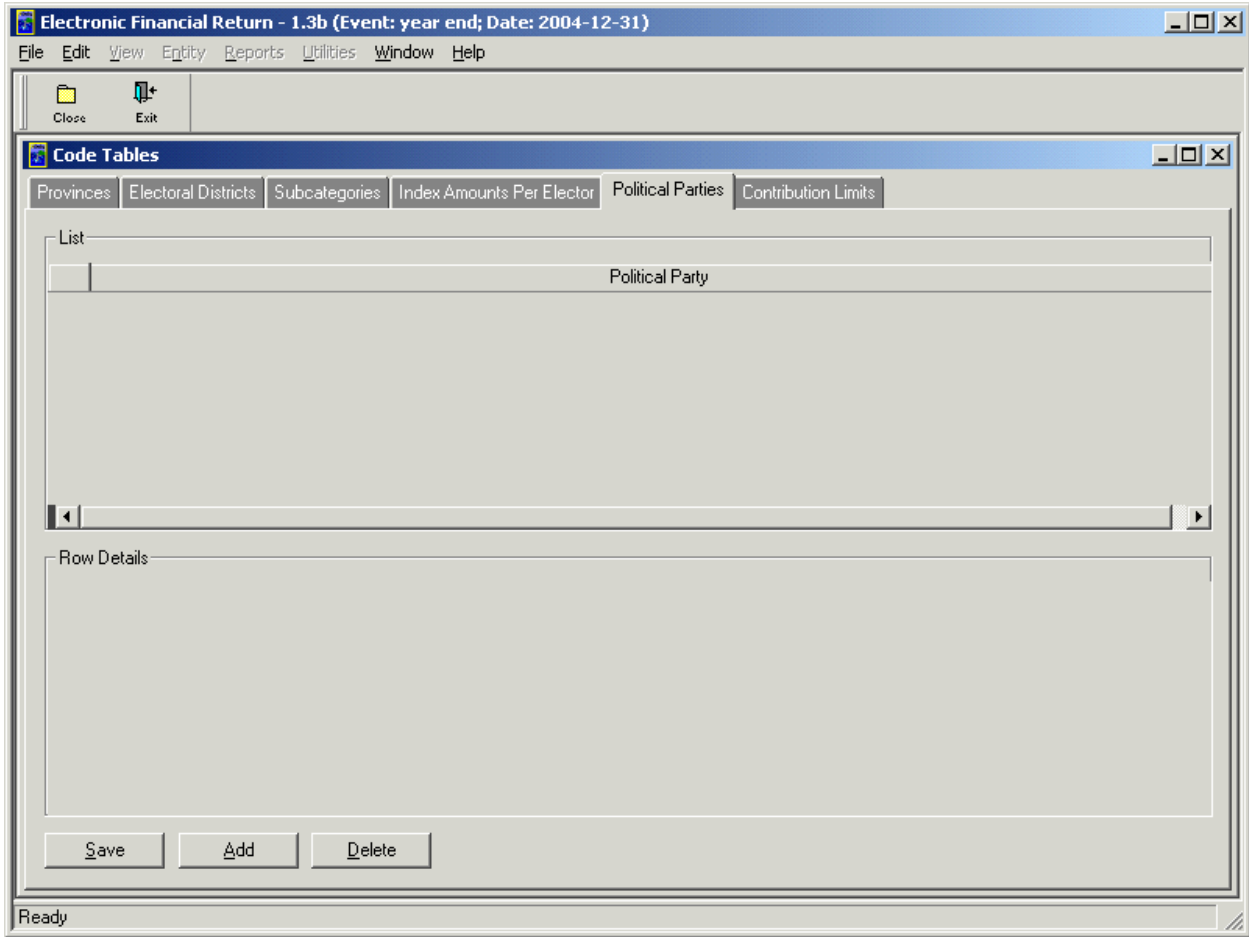
| Note: | The **Political Parties** tab page consists of two sectional areas (**List** and **Row Details**). |

2. Click on the **Add** button. The **Row Details** section will appear as follows:

3. Enter the information for the new political party into the **Row Details** section.

4. Click on the **Save** button. A new political party will appear in the **List** section as follows:
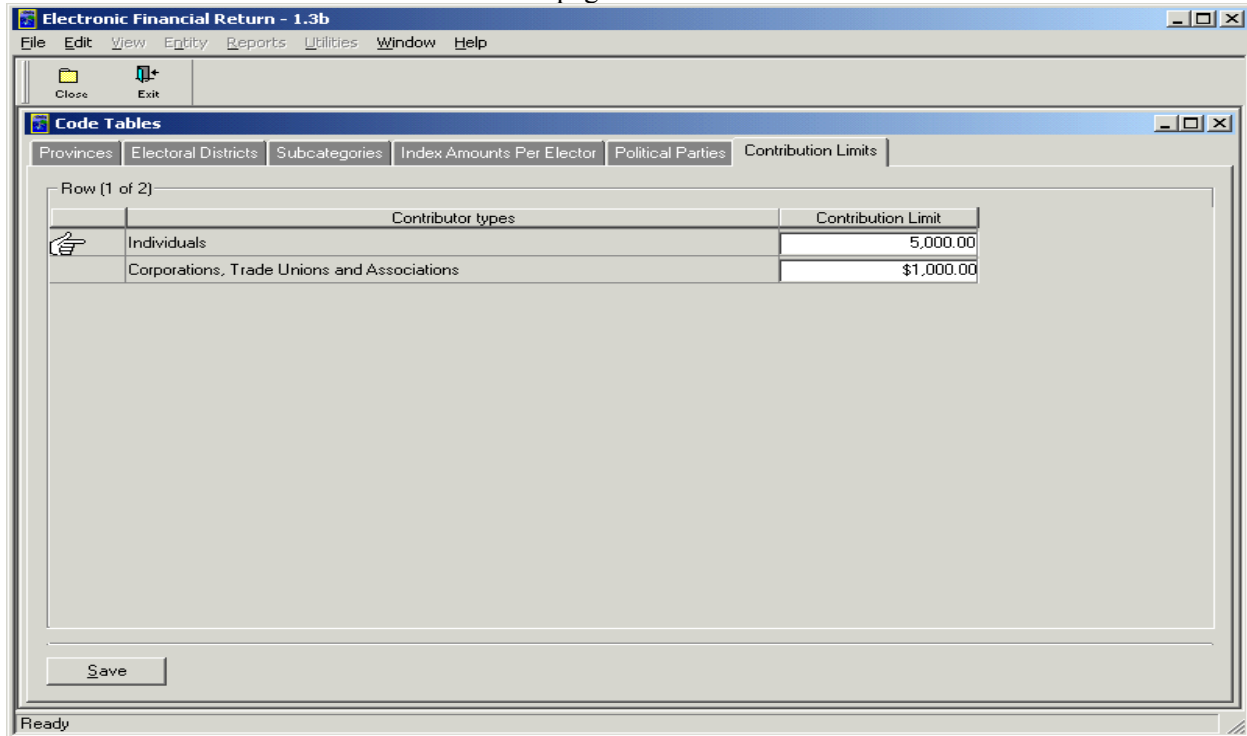
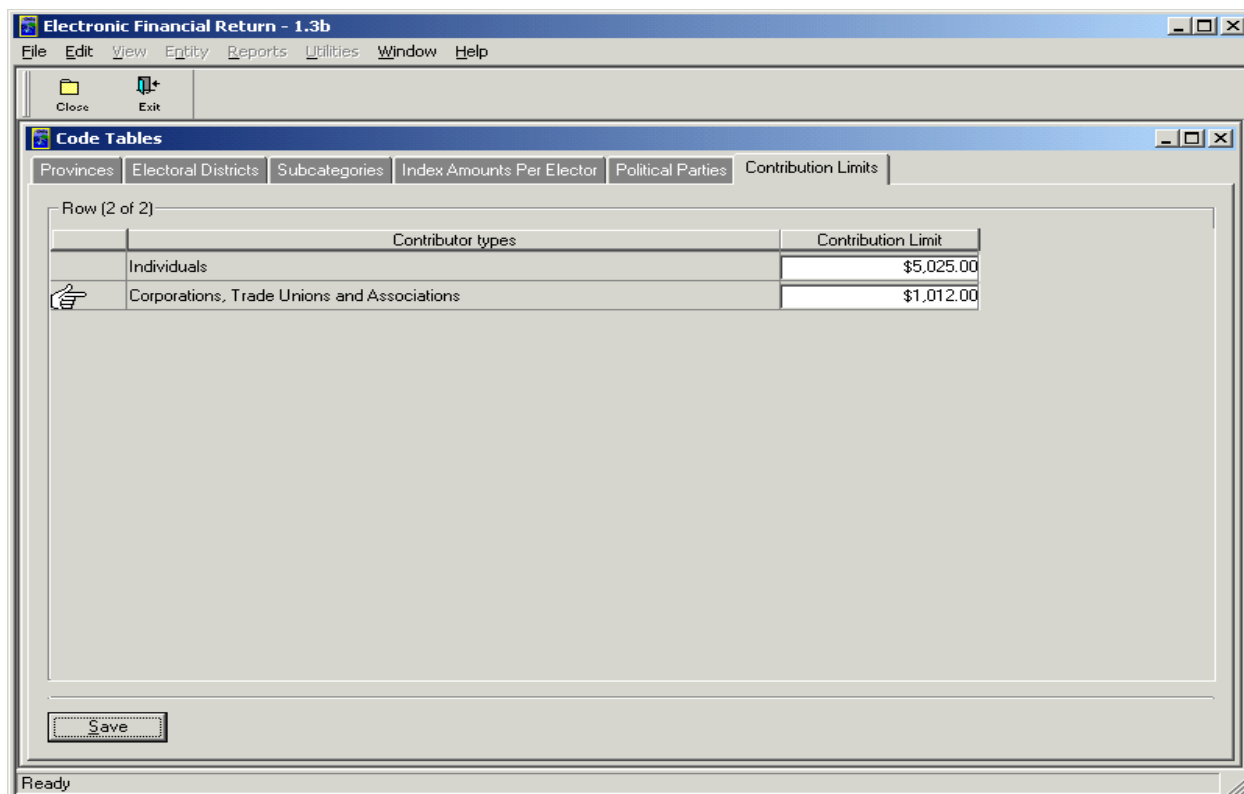> **Note:** You can add and delete political party information by using the **Add** and **Delete** buttons.

Contribution Limits

To enter data into the **Contribution Limits** tab page:

5. Click on the **Contribution Limits** tab page.

6. Enter the information for the new contribution limits established April 1 of every year.

7.   Click on the **Save** button. The contribution limits will now be updated in EFR.

Note: Contribution limits are adjusted each April 1. The revised limits are published in the *Canada Gazette* by the Chief Electoral Officer.

Backups
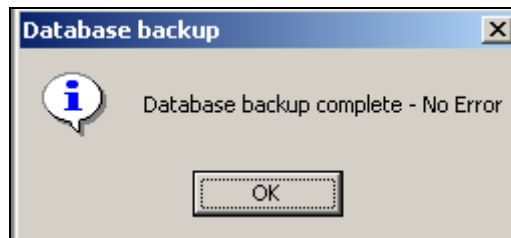
To backup data within the EFR application:

1.   Click on the **Utilities** drop-down menu and select **Backup**.
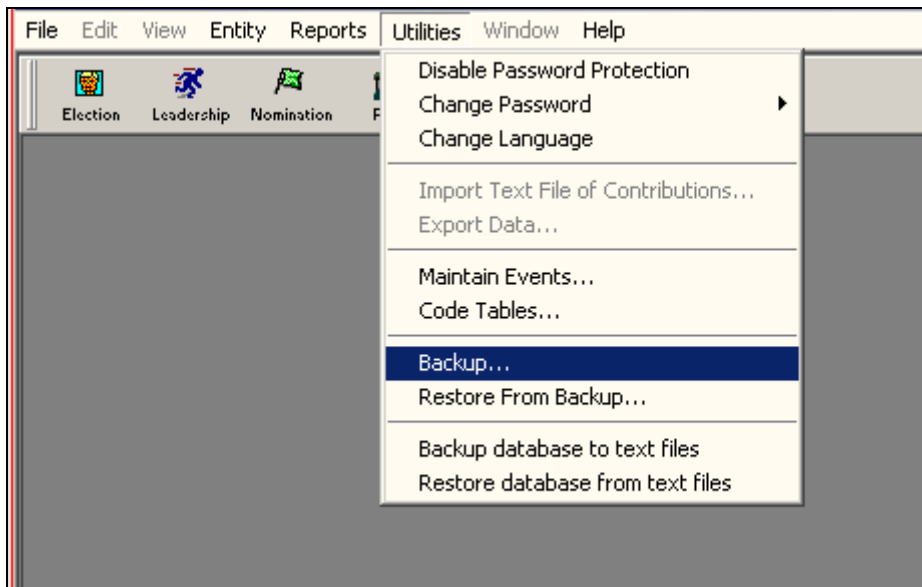
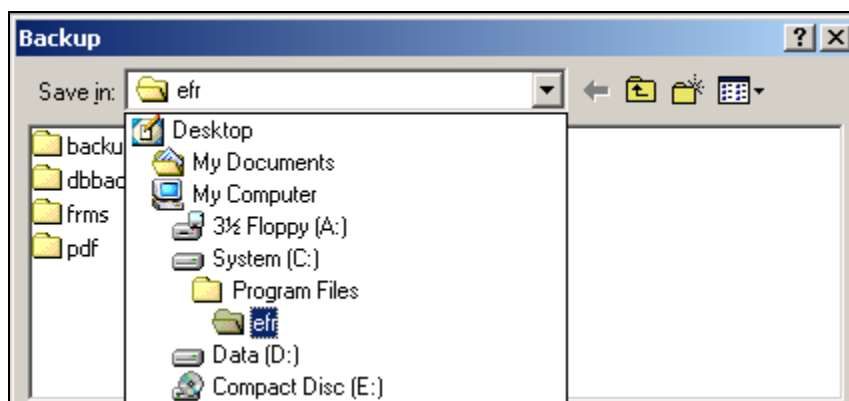2.   Review the new **Backup** window that appears.
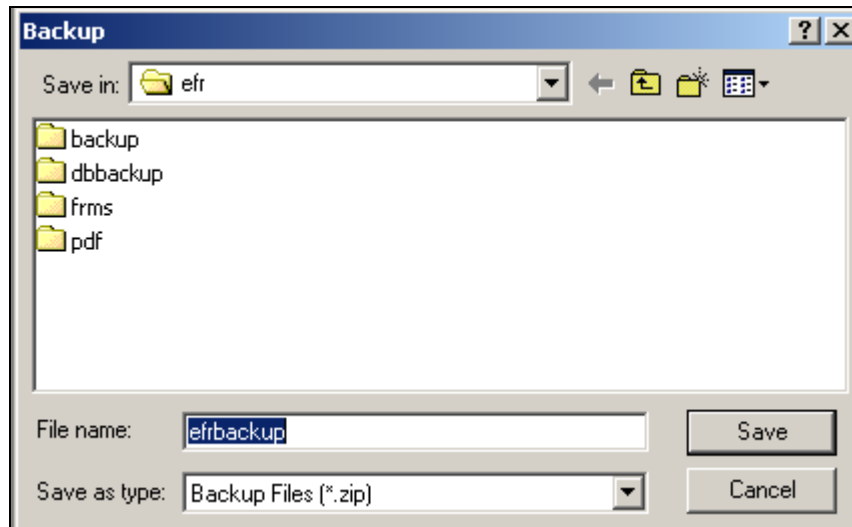
3.   Click on the **Save** button. A message window will appear stating that you have successfully backed up the EFR data.

4.   Click on the **OK** button. You will return to the EFR main window.
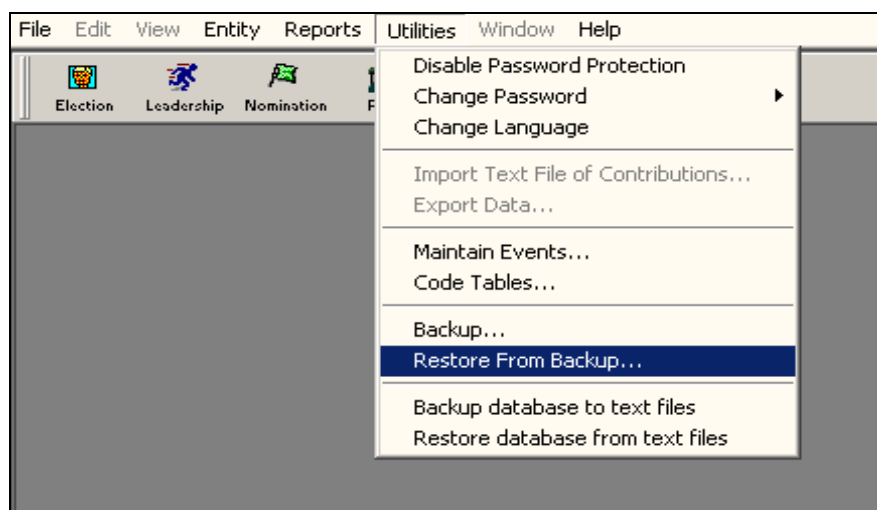
Note: The actual path (the database file location) in which the EFR data is automatically stored is shown in the following illustration.
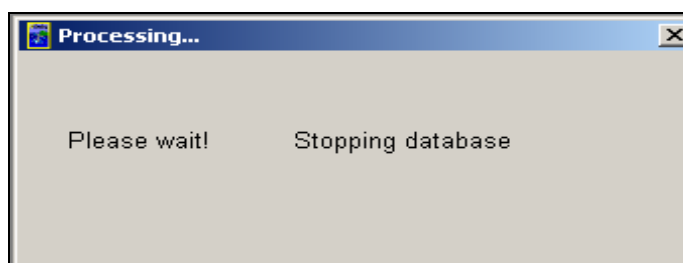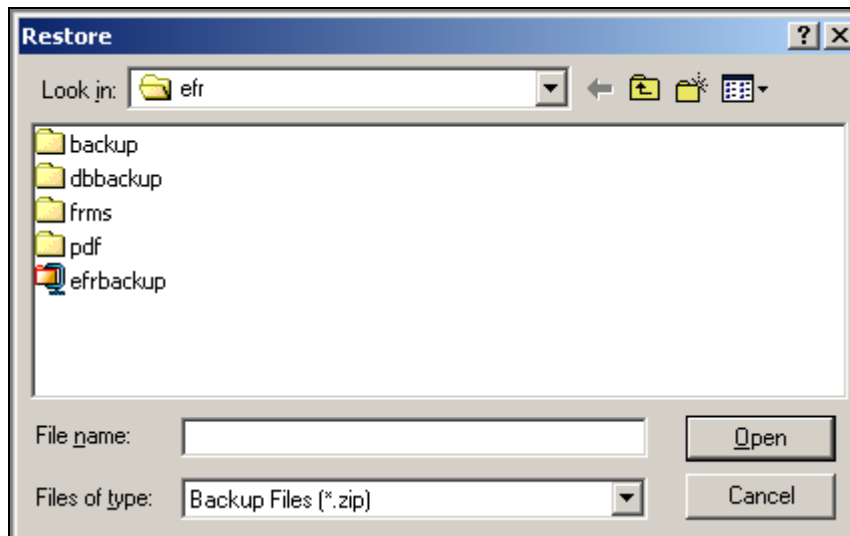
Restore From Backup

To restore an EFR application database:

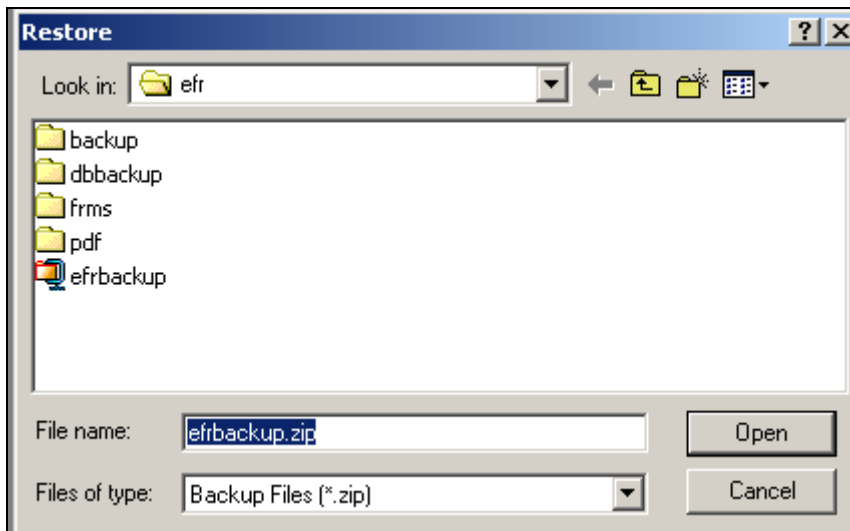1. Click on the **Utilities** drop-down menu and select **Restore From Backup**.

2. Review the following two windows that appear automatically.

3. Type **efrbackup.zip** into the **File name** field, then click on the **Open** button.

4. When the backup is complete, the **Database Restore** window will appear automatically to indicate that you have successfully restored the EFR database.
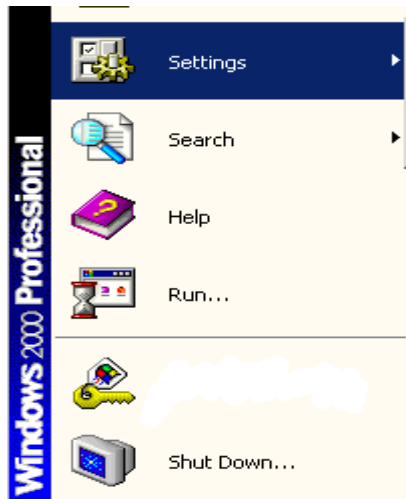
Uninstalling the EFR Application

Note: The following procedure is illustrated in Windows XP. The procedure is similar in earlier versions of Windows; however, the steps may vary.
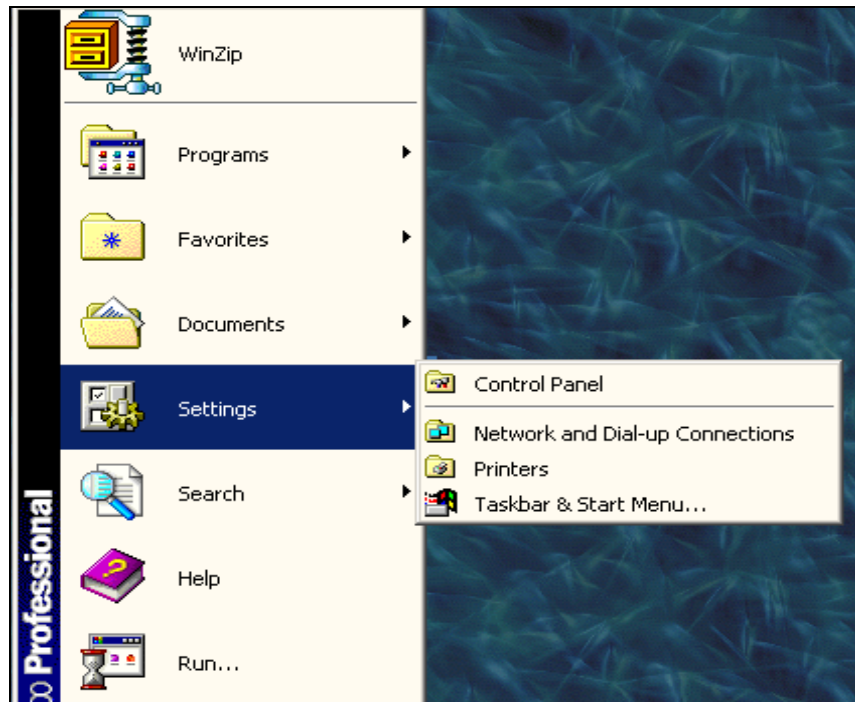
To uninstall the EFR application:
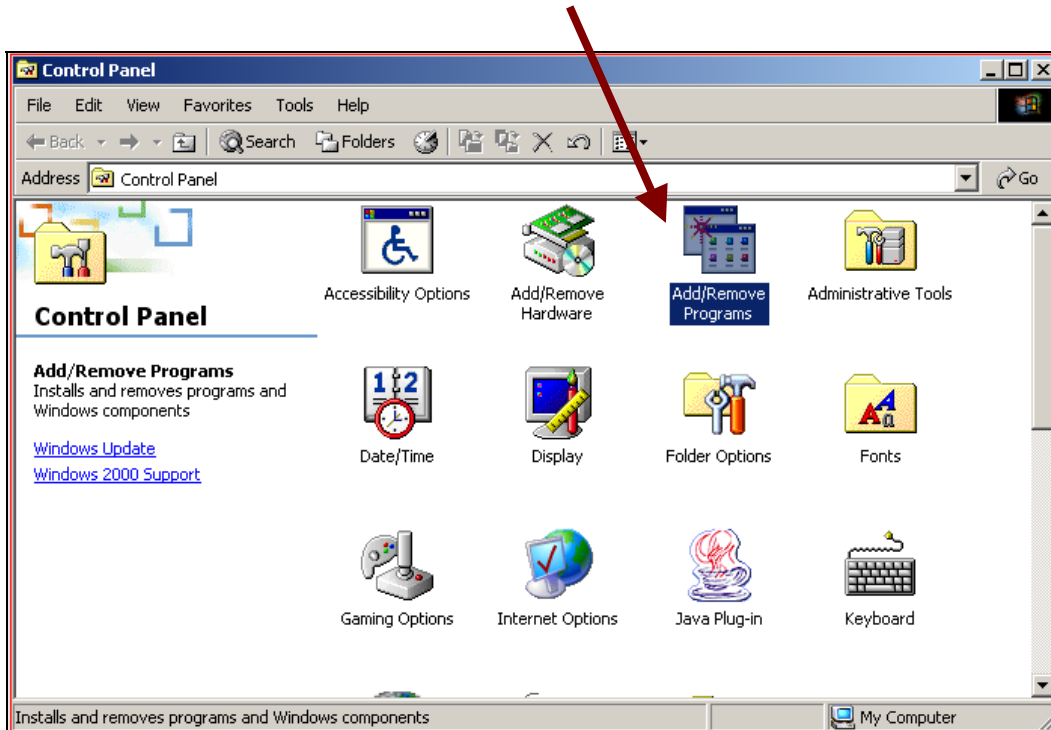
1. Click on the **Start** button.
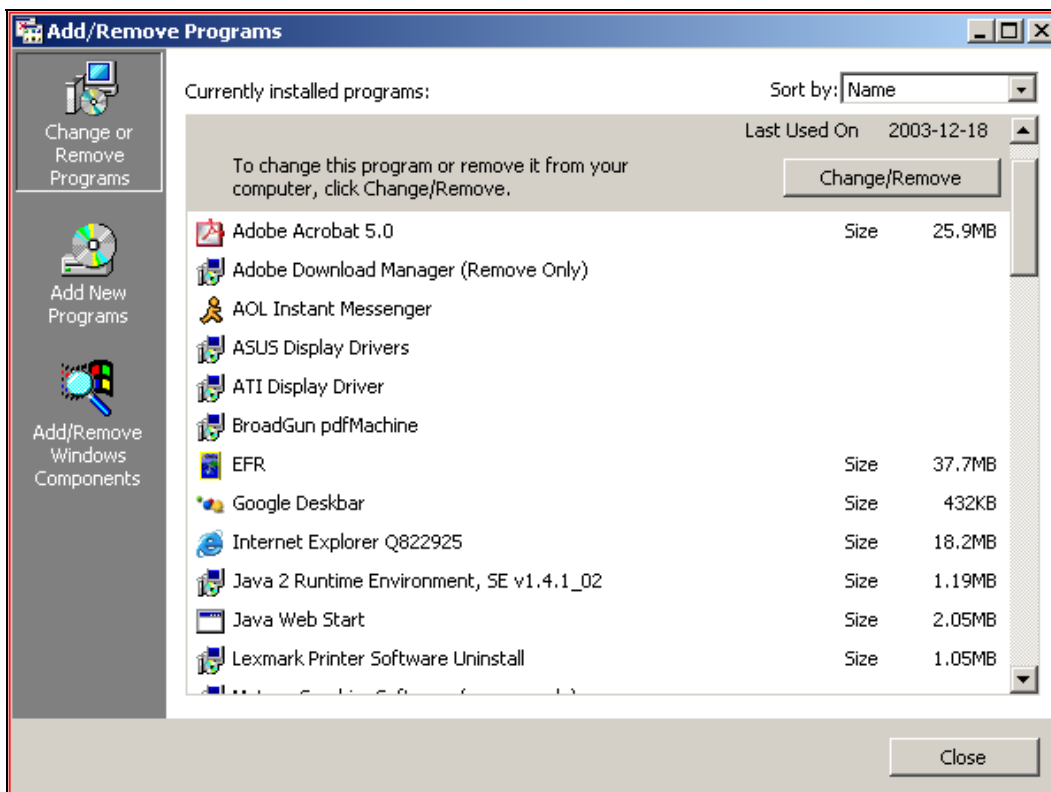
2.   Scroll up to **Settings**.
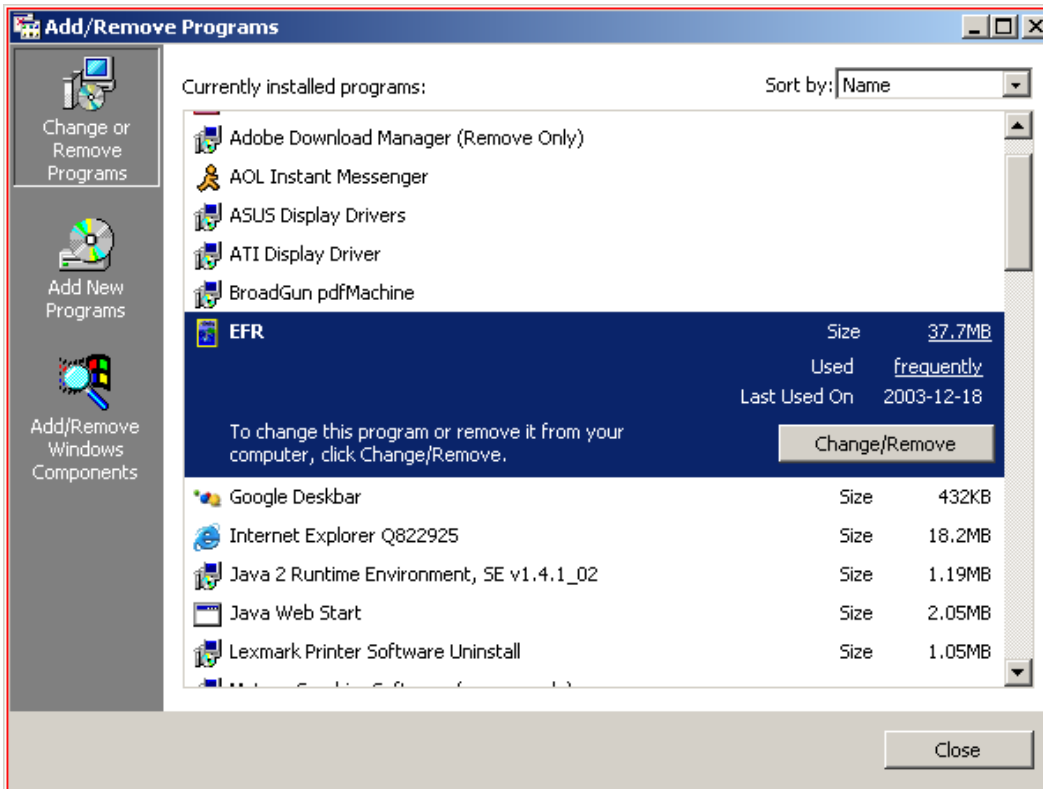

3.   Select **Control Panel**.

4. Review the **Control Panel** window and double-click on the **Add/Remove Programs** icon.
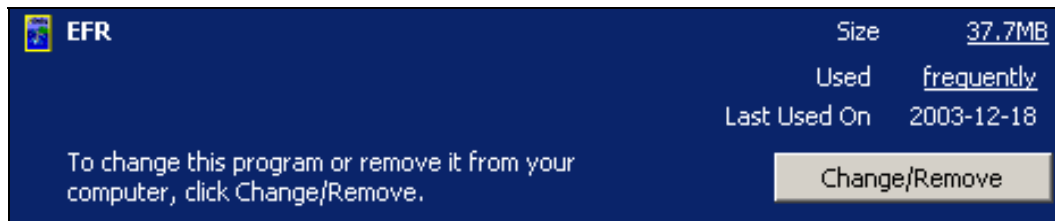

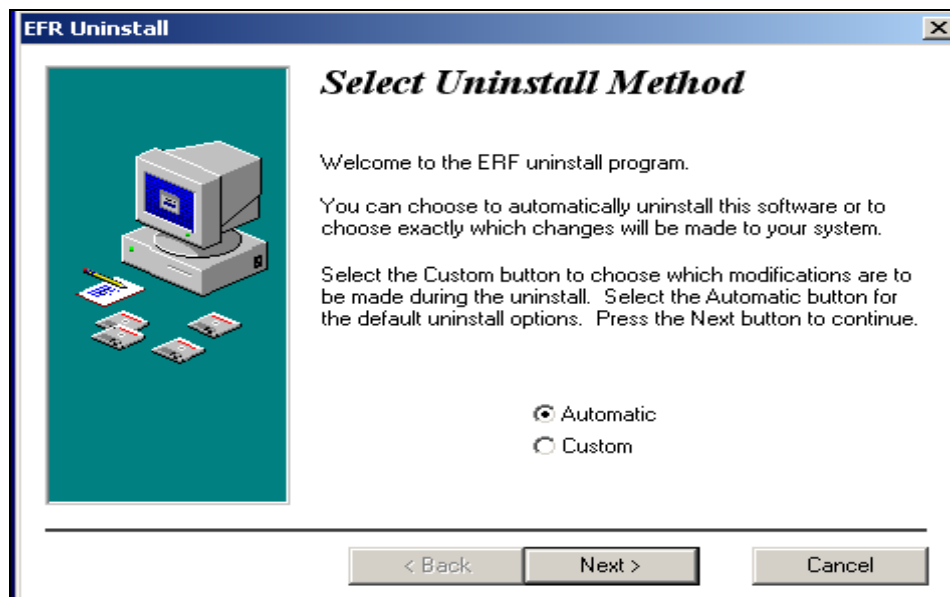5. Review the **Add/Remove Program** window that appears as follows:

6. Select the **EFR** application that is listed under **Currently installed programs**.

7. Click on the **Change/Remove** button to initiate the uninstall process.

8. Review the **EFR Uninstall** window that appears:

9. Ensure that **Automatic** is selected, then click on the **Next** button. The uninstall method will commence, and the EFR files will be removed from your PC.

> **Note:** Click on the **Cancel** button to stop the EFR Uninstall process. You will be prompted to confirm the cancellation by the following window:
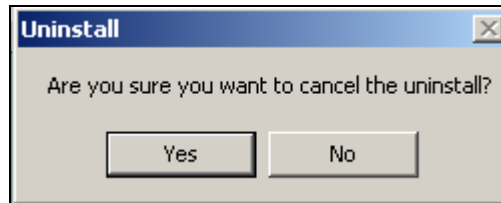
10. Click on the **Yes** button. You will return to the **Add/Remove Programs** window (as described in Step 5).

Contact Information

Please direct your questions or comments concerning the EFR Application / User Guide to:

Mailing Address: Elections Canada
257 Slater Street
Ottawa ON
K1A 0M6

Telephone: 1 800 486-6563
(613)993-2975

**TTY:**   1 800 361-8935
(613)991-2082

Facsimile: 1 888 523-9333
(613) 990-2530

Web Site: www.elections.ca

Appendix: Common Terminology

Tab Page

A tab page is the area of the screen where information is displayed/entered/changed. It encompasses a collection of related information. To navigate from one tab page to another, click on the appropriate tab page heading. The availability of tab pages depends on information on other tab pages.
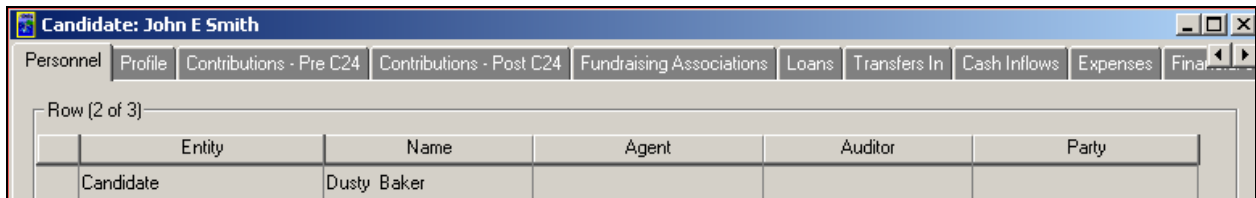

Toolbar

A toolbar is a row, column, or block of on-screen buttons. When these buttons are clicked with the mouse, certain functions of the application are activated. Toolbar buttons offer a quick way to access a specific component or certain application functions. They may be used instead of the menus.

Menu Bar

A menu bar is a list of options from which a user can make a selection in order to perform a desired action, such as choosing a command or applying a particular format to part of a document.
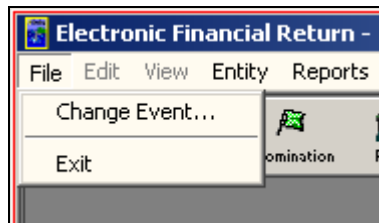
| Note:	The **Window** and **Help** menus are standard Windows features.

Click vs. Double-Click

Clicking is usually performed to select or deselect an item or to activate a program or program feature. Clicking refers to pressing and releasing a mouse button once without moving the mouse.

Double-clicking is a means of rapidly selecting and activating a program or program feature. Double-clicking refers to pressing and releasing a mouse button twice without moving the mouse.

Tip: If you find double-clicking the icon troublesome, try clicking the icon once with the left-mouse button, and then pressing the **Enter** key.

Command Buttons

Command buttons are shaped like a pushbutton in a dialogue box. By clicking a command button, the user causes the software to perform some action, such as opening a file that has just been selected using the other controls in the dialogue box.
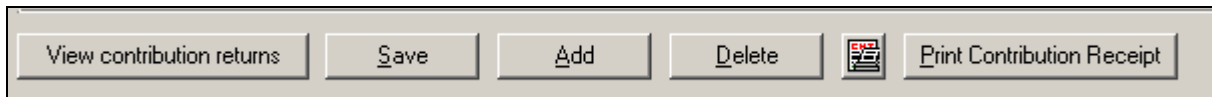
Radio Buttons

Radio buttons provide a means of selecting one of several options. A radio button appears as a small circle that, when selected, has a smaller, filled circle inside it. Radio buttons act like the station selector buttons on a car radio. Selecting one button in a set deselects the previously selected button. Thus, one, and only one, of the options in the set can be selected at any given time. In contrast, check boxes are used when more than one option in the set can be selected at the same time.

Check Box

Check boxes are used to enable or disable one or more features or options from a set. When an option is selected, an "X" or a check mark appears within the box. Unlike radio buttons, check boxes allow you to select more than one option.

Hand Indicator

The hand indicator is an image of a hand placed in the left margin of a list. It indicates the user's current selection.

Drop-down List

A drop-down list is a list of available values specific to a category. The list of values opens when you click the downward arrow at the right of the field. You make a single selection by clicking one of the available options listed. You may select or change an item when the drop-down list has a white background (that is, when it is enabled).

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