



Report of the Chief Electoral Officer of Canada
on the 37th General Election Held on November 27, 2000



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March 19, 2001

The Honourable Peter Milliken
Speaker of the House of Commons
Centre Block, House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
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Dear Mr. Speaker:

I have the honour to submit my report, which covers the administration of my Office since the publication of my last report and, more specifically, the administration of the 37th general election held on November 27, 2000. My report is submitted in accordance with subsection 534(1) of the *Canada Elections Act*, S.C. 2000, c. 9, within ninety days after the return of the writs of election.

Information has been included on the results of the election, together with an account of the events. The official voting results will be published later, in accordance with paragraph 533(a) of the Act.

Yours truly,

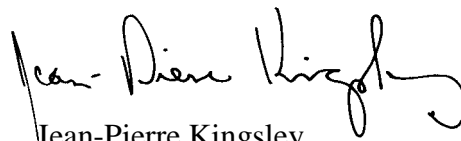

Jean-Pierre Kingsley

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Foreword

A new kind of election

This report to Parliament gives me a welcome opportunity to highlight the changes that have taken place in Canada's electoral system and its management since the June 1997 general election.

The 2000 general election was the first held under the new *Canada Elections Act* and the first to make full use of the National Register of Electors. For these reasons, this event presented some characteristics that differentiate it from the two general elections and many other electoral events that I have administered during the 11 years that I have had the privilege of serving as Chief Electoral Officer.

This can truly be said to have been a new kind of election. It required a fundamental change in the behaviour of all participants – electors, political parties, candidates, returning officers and their staff, and the media, as well as Elections Canada. We all had to learn new approaches and new reflexes, and commit to a new level of engagement.

Now that the event is over, we are consulting the full range of participants in the electoral system as part of our post-election evaluation. This “post-mortem” reviews all the questions raised during the event and will give us the perspectives of all the participants. We already have some results from this exercise, but analysis of the data is not yet complete.

The operation of the National Register of Electors touches everyone involved in the electoral process directly and it is one of the main subjects covered in this report. It can be said that the Register generally met our expectations during the 37th general election. Its performance was in line with projections discussed during wide-ranging consultations with key stakeholders, between 1996 and 2000. We know that with experience, technological progress and the co-operation of our partners, we can aim for even better performance in the future. The feedback received to date indicates that the National Register of Electors is here to stay and that the necessary improvements can and should be made.

The future

There are several other areas where further enhancements will be undertaken, while we continue to maintain a constant state of readiness to deliver electoral events. Once we have completed our consultations, we will initiate action and, later this year, we will submit our recommendations to Parliament. Some of these recommendations will involve legislative changes.

Integrity and openness go hand in hand with accountability. Elections Canada holds itself accountable to Canadians and Parliament through a number of statutory reports and other instruments, presented since the 1997 general election. I felt it would be useful now to present a comprehensive picture of what has happened since 1997, leading to this last event. Consequently, this report includes not only an account of our most recent activities, but also of key developments related to our strategic priorities. This report, now available on our Web site, will be widely distributed, so as to support accountability and generate useful feedback.

Some 166 000 election personnel worked to manage this last event, both at Elections Canada in Ottawa and in a multitude of communities across the land. Like them, I was and remain firmly committed to the participation of all Canadians in the electoral process, to a fair and inclusive system that is accessible to the entire Canadian electorate, and to the integrity and openness of an electoral process that is managed in a professional manner. I trust this report will adequately illustrate how this commitment has served Canada well.

Jean-Pierre Kingsley

Executive Summary

This four-part report of the Chief Electoral Officer of Canada covers the administration of Elections Canada since the 36th general election, and the events of the 37th general election of November 27, 2000.

Part I reviews Elections Canada's main activities since the last general election on June 2, 1997, based on three strategic priorities: maintaining a constant state of readiness to deliver elections, by-elections and referendums; delivering by-elections; and offering public information programs and supporting parliamentarians and other Canadians as they deal with electoral issues.

The National Register of Electors was ready to produce preliminary voters lists by the time the first by-election of the 36th Parliament was called, for March 1998. Between March 1998 and September 2000, we administered 10 by-elections. Developments in electoral geography and information technology improved our ability to prepare for electoral events, and we undertook a training program for returning officers. We maintained readiness to deliver electoral events under the former *Canada Elections Act* at the same time as we prepared to implement the new Act that came into force on September 1, 2000. New features on our Web site and programs for young people highlighted our public education and information activities, and we expanded our relations with registered political parties, the academic community and international organizations.

Part II describes and analyzes the November 27, 2000, general election under 10 themes, underlining Elections Canada's role in making voting accessible by reaching out to all electors and by using technology creatively.

The launch of the election period occurred on October 22. On the whole, setting up local offices, activating computer systems, hiring staff, putting our Web site on an election footing, and supporting the media proceeded as planned.

The system of *special ballots* again was available to electors who could not or who preferred not to vote at their own polling stations during the advance polls or on election day. Across Canada, 138 065 local electors requested ballots under the Special Voting Rules, and we issued special ballots to 33 679 national electors (including 6 487 hospitalized electors) and 19 230 international electors. In the Canadian Forces, 57 082 electors were registered to vote; 5 521 incarcerated persons serving sentences of less than two years also registered.

Reaching out to electors with relevant, timely information was an important function of our *communications* program during the election, first through a pamphlet delivered to every household, and then through advertising. The election marked our largest effort to reach young electors directly, and we also had programs for Aboriginal electors, members of ethnocultural communities and electors with special needs. Our Web site included special election features and a new section devoted to youth, and we made extensive arrangements to meet the needs of the media.

Returning officers were responsible for being *ready in the ridings*, and they and their key staff were given advance training on the new legislation and procedures. For election day, they would set up 883 mobile polls and 56 822 polling stations in 17 340 polling places, paying particular attention to accessibility. Hiring and training some 166 000 local staff was occasionally challenging, but new electronic systems and the Elections Canada Support Network eased the administrative burden somewhat. No emergencies required the use of our contingency plans, and remote areas were served as usual.

In general, *preparing the voters lists* from the National Register of Electors for the first time in a general election proceeded as planned. The quality of the Register's data was close to our reliability target, and the individual voter information cards reached some 80 percent of electors at the correct address, as projected. Revising the various voters lists (including all revisions and election day registrations) produced more than 3.6 million changes.

The new Act introduced changes in the *election advertising* rules, both for the 48 third parties who were required to register with Elections Canada and for candidates and registered political parties. Decisions in a court case during the campaign period affected third party election advertising for 19 days. Our Web site posted the allocation of political broadcasting time by the Broadcasting Arbitrator, and related guidelines.

Following the close of *nominations*, 1 808 candidates were confirmed; about 20 percent were women, who totalled 24.4 percent of candidates in 1997. Of the 12 registered or eligible political parties, 11 endorsed a confirmed candidate in at least 50 ridings. The average election expenses limit for a candidate was \$68 019.37. Candidates' election expenses returns are due by March 27, 2001, and those of registered political parties by May 28, 2001.

The *advance polls* opened on Friday, November 17, and continued on Saturday and Monday, November 18 and 20, providing an alternative for electors who preferred not to vote on election day. The revised voters lists included 20 155 152 electors; the 775 157 people who cast a valid ballot at the advance polls numbered about nine percent more than in the 1997 general election.

On *election day*, registration was made easier for homeless electors. A total of 20 370 921 electors were on the official voters lists. Out of the 56 822 ordinary polling stations, some 120 stations in 14 ridings (of which 71 were in the riding of St. Paul's, Ontario) did not open on time – an unacceptable situation.

After election day, there was still much *more to do*. Returning officers validated the voting results, recording 12 857 773 valid votes among the 12 997 185 total votes cast. Following the validation of the results and five judicial recounts, the returning officers declared 45 new members and 256 previous members elected to the House of Commons, three of whom were not sitting members at the dissolution of the 36th Parliament. The total of registered electors on the final lists was 21 243 473. Each riding's REVISE database of electors will be used to update the National Register of Electors.

To date, the Commissioner of Canada Elections has received 382 complaints related to the election, of which 251 cases have been resolved and 131 are still being investigated. The first election expenses reimbursements to candidates have been issued, and most of the rest will be completed by the end of July. We will finish our audits and reimbursements of political parties' election expenses by mid-June, and the audits of third party reports by the end of April.

Part III discusses what we are doing to measure our performance during the election, and outlines some initial thoughts for improving that performance at the next electoral event. The Chief Electoral Officer's recommendations, including legislative changes, will appear as a separate document in late fall 2001.

Part IV presents tables of preliminary election statistics, and the Broadcasting Arbitrator's report appears in the Appendix.

I. Our Mandate Is ...

Elections Canada is dedicated to helping Canadians exercise their democratic right to vote. We want to make voting as accessible as possible, by reaching out to all potential voters and by using modern technology creatively.

We carry out the mandate entrusted to us by Parliament in three mutually complementary ways:

- by maintaining a constant state of readiness to conduct elections, by-elections and referendums
- by delivering these electoral events
- by offering public education and information programs, and providing support to parliamentarians, political parties and other concerned Canadians as they deal with electoral issues

Since the 36th general election held on June 2, 1997, we have improved our state of readiness for events, we have delivered 10 by-elections, and we have continued to expand our information and educational programs. The following three sections (Event readiness, Delivering electoral events, and Public education, information and support) review our main activities since 1997, as an introduction to the November 27, 2000, general election.

Event readiness

Elections Canada's ability to conduct elections, by-elections and referendums depends on maintaining a constant state of readiness. Because the precise timing of these events cannot be predicted, we have to make sure that the information in the National Register of Electors is as current as possible, that our databases and computer systems are tested, that election supplies are ready to go, and that a core of trained staff and election officers is readily available.

The new Canada Elections Act

Being prepared for elections during 2000 was made more challenging by the introduction of a new *Canada Elections Act*. First passed by Parliament as the *Dominion Elections Act* – and amended or replaced many times over the past 80 years – the Act governs Canada's federal electoral system and the work of the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer. The new Act received royal assent on May 31, 2000, and took effect on September 1, 2000, after formal notice was posted by the Chief Electoral Officer in the *Canada Gazette*. This Act reflects extensive study and debate by members of Parliament, and modifies several aspects of the electoral system to make it more accessible, fair and transparent.

From the time the Act received royal assent until it came into effect three months later, we rewrote, revised and reprinted hundreds of training manuals, forms and information packages, trained local office staff, modified several computer systems, adapted our office processes, and kept the public, parliamentarians and political parties informed. Among other changes, the new Act affected the financing rules for parties and candidates, election advertising by third parties (that is, groups or persons other than candidates, registered parties or their riding associations), the rules for election advertising and publishing or broadcasting survey results, and it created alternative ways of enforcing the *Canada Elections Act* by the Commissioner of Canada Elections.

The National Register of Electors

The National Register of Electors is a permanent list of Canadians who are eligible to vote. Following the final door-to-door enumeration of electors just before the 1997 general election, the Register was completed in time to produce the preliminary voters lists for the March 1998 by-election in Port Moody–Coquitlam, British Columbia. Since then, information from the Register has been used to establish the preliminary lists in every by-election.

Maintaining the Register

The National Register of Electors must be kept up-to-date and accurate between general elections, so that it may generate reliable preliminary voters lists. We also produce updated voters lists from the Register in October of each year for members of Parliament and political parties, as the *Canada Elections Act* requires.

The Register is regularly updated with data from the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency, Citizenship and Immigration Canada, provincial and territorial motor vehicle and vital statistics registrars, and electoral agencies in British Columbia and Quebec (which have permanent voters lists). Voters lists from some provincial and territorial elections have also been used to update the Register, and we are pursuing additional agreements with various provincial, territorial and municipal electoral organizations to use their voters lists.

The *Canada Elections Act* stipulates that active consent is required from individuals for the transfer of their information from federal sources to maintain the Register. Through a service provided by Citizenship and Immigration Canada, for example, 82 percent of new Canadians consented to be added to the Register in 2000. The results of the first year of our agreement with the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency (for the 1997 tax year) show that close to 80 percent of tax filers consented to have their names, addresses, and date-of-birth information forwarded to Elections Canada to update the Register, which is above our original estimate of 70 percent. The rate of consent for the 1998 tax year increased to 83 percent, and increased again to 84 percent for the 1999 tax year. The data from the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency are used only to update information for electors already in the Register. New names cannot be added directly from this data, because Canadian citizenship must first be confirmed.

Canadians have the right to remove their names from the Register without losing their right to vote, and to ask that their information not be shared with other jurisdictions for electoral purposes. From June 1997 to June 2000, fewer than 900 electors opted out of the Register, and 45 opted out of sharing their information with electoral agencies in other jurisdictions.

As part of the Register's maintenance program, starting in 1999 we sent 270 000 verification notices to electors whose information appeared to be incorrect or to have been added more than once to the Register as a result of the 1997 enumeration, and asked them to confirm or correct their information and mail back the notice. This allowed us to remove some 195 000 duplicate records.

We also mail requests to individuals who turn 18 to confirm their citizenship, and to ask their consent to be added to the National Register of Electors. We identify these potential voters by using information from the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency and motor vehicle registrars. In 1999, we wrote to approximately 152 000 young people, and 28 percent of them consented to register. A second outreach project in spring 2000 targeted 392 000 new 18-year-olds; the response rate was 25 percent. As part of the project, we tried a pilot mailing of 28 000 reminder postcards to 18-year-olds in Vancouver, Winnipeg and Halifax who had already been sent the request for consent and confirmation of citizenship, encouraging them to complete the form and return it to Elections Canada. The cities to which we sent postcard reminders showed only a marginal improvement in the consent rate. These outreach activities cover all of Canada outside Quebec; they are not necessary in Quebec because we have an agreement with the Directeur général des élections du Québec for quarterly updates that include the names of new 18-year-olds. The Directeur général des élections du Québec automatically adds new electors as information is received from Quebec data sources, such as the Régie de l'assurance maladie du Québec.

In summer 2000, we commissioned a qualitative and quantitative evaluation of our outreach to 18-year-olds, which found that many of them are unfamiliar with the electoral process and the Register. Some assume that their names are automatically added to the voters lists when they turn 18, or after they check the consent box on the income tax return. We are analyzing this information further to improve the registration rate of young electors.

Advisory Committee to the National Register of Electors

In 1999, the Chief Electoral Officer established an Advisory Committee to the National Register of Electors as a forum for discussing best practices in database management and use. The members came from the Canadian Council of Motor Transport Administrators and the Vital Statistics Council for Canada (representing the data supplier community), from provincial and territorial agencies using permanent lists of electors, and from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. Committee meetings are an opportunity to exchange ideas and information about Elections Canada's initiatives for sharing Register data with other jurisdictions, and to discuss new developments in data management. This

helps all participants improve the currency of their databases and address information, and avoid duplication of effort. The Committee met for the first time on September 8, 1999, and again on April 19, 2000.

Data-sharing agreements

Data-sharing partnerships help to ensure that the quality of the National Register of Electors remains as high as possible, both during and between elections. Since 1997, Elections Canada has signed data-sharing agreements with some 80 electoral organizations at the provincial, territorial, municipal, and school board levels. Revised voters lists from these jurisdictions augment our standard update sources to improve the Register's quality. Under a 1999 reciprocal agreement between Elections Canada and Elections Ontario, we provided data from the Register to build Ontario's new Permanent Register of Electors. Elections Canada, in turn, received Ontario data from lists revised during the 1999 provincial election. Similar agreements were signed from 1997 through 2000 with the Chief Electoral Officers of Alberta and of Newfoundland and Labrador; the city of Winnipeg; and the Ontario Property Assessment Corporation (the agency responsible for establishing the province's preliminary municipal voters lists). We also received data from elections in the Northwest Territories, Nunavut and New Brunswick.

Each agreement includes mandatory security measures. Elector data is personal information that is protected by the *Canada Elections Act* and the *Privacy Act*. Under the *Canada Elections Act*, the information may only be used for electoral purposes.

Costs

Our original business case for the Register projected some \$30 million in savings for each general election or referendum after the costs of creating and maintaining the Register are recovered. Our costs are falling within the estimates. Building the Register cost less than half of what we estimated, and Elections Canada expects to recover the initial investment in the Register along with the corresponding maintenance costs at the 2000 federal election, rather than the one after that, as previously forecast.

The costs of the by-elections held after the 1997 general election, moreover, were on average about \$1.50 per elector lower than those of the by-elections held after the 1993 general election. The estimated cumulative net savings of \$685 000 are primarily related to using the National Register of Electors instead of door-to-door enumeration. Provinces and municipalities that have used Register data to produce preliminary voters lists have also realized cost savings.

Electoral geography

Elections Canada's National Geographic Database – developed and maintained jointly with Statistics Canada to serve each agency's purposes – is a digital map of Canadian streets. Completed in 1999, this national road network is designed for electoral mapping, for making the National Register of Electors more accessible to other jurisdictions, and for readjusting electoral boundaries after the 2001 decennial census. In 2000, we concentrated on updating the database for high-growth centres, in preparation for a potential election call.

For the 2000 general election, we produced 75 000 original maps, with geographical documents, from which we produced over two million copies for use in all the ridings. Based on the results of a mapping survey conducted among returning officers and political parties in 1999, these maps are optimized to fit the needs of users. The maps were first used officially for the September 2000 by-elections in Kings–Hants, Nova Scotia, and Okanagan–Coquihalla, British Columbia.

As new electors are added to the National Register of Electors, or as electors move to new addresses, we can identify where most electors' addresses are located, and in which ridings and polling divisions. Known as geo-referencing, this process allows us to generate lists of electors by polling division for federal electoral events, and to provide lists of electors from our database that can be used by other jurisdictions that have different electoral boundaries. We have geo-referenced 65 percent of elector addresses to date, primarily in urban areas.

The National Geographic Database is proving to be of interest to other government agencies. For example, it was made available to the Department of National Defence for the Year 2000 readiness project carried out by the National Contingency Planning Group. Parts of the database are also being shared with Elections Ontario to support their mapping and electoral operations.

Information technology

Testing new returning office systems

Elections Canada's offices in Ottawa now house a permanent Returning Office Technology Centre for testing and coordinating the distribution of computer software and technology used by returning officers in their 301 locations across Canada. The centre also helps to introduce new technology in those offices.

By-elections give Elections Canada an opportunity to test updated technology and procedures. In the Windsor–St. Clair, Ontario, by-election of April 12, 1999, for instance, we tested a version of our new Returning Officer Workstation software. The software integrates the installation, configuration and set-up of all the software applications used by returning officers during elections. It was generally well-received by the returning

officer's staff, who reported that it was easier to use than the software for the 1997 general election.

The REVISE field registration and list production system was introduced in the St. John's West, Newfoundland, by-election of May 15, 2000. The new system replaces the Elections Canada Automated Production of Lists of Electors (ECAPLE) system that successfully assisted returning officers in managing their voters lists since 1992. Making use of state-of-the-art database management technology, REVISE facilitates the revision of preliminary voters lists produced from the National Register of Electors.

The new Returning Officers Payment System was tested during the September 11, 2000, by-elections in Kings-Hants and Okanagan-Coquihalla. The system helps returning officers track staff budgets, produce financial reports and prepare payment information for poll officials, office staff and landlords of polling stations, before they send all the information to Ottawa so that Elections Canada can process payments.

The September 2000 by-elections served as proving grounds for two other technological projects. An integrated local area network linking computers in each returning officer's office performed well and, as expected, worked with few problems despite the complexity of introducing new systems in the field. And redesigned Event Results System software helped the returning officers tabulate and send summary election results electronically to the media and to Elections Canada's Web site (www.elections.ca). During a general election, it also allows Elections Canada to gather and verify the poll-by-poll results received from the 301 ridings, and to gather, merge and verify the voting results under the Special Voting Rules.

Improving internal systems

The increasing sophistication of computer software has enabled Elections Canada to improve our processes in other areas as well. Our Electronic Candidate Return system, for instance, allows candidates and their official agents to produce their financial returns in electronic form. A new version includes features that had been requested by official agents, and changes brought about by the new *Canada Elections Act*. The electronic version of the documents reduces our data-entry time from an average of three hours to 15 minutes per return. Another computer application supports the processing, review and publication of candidates' financial returns, and lets us calculate the amount of reimbursements to qualified candidates quickly and efficiently.

Our improved Event Management System gives a consolidated view of corporate information for performance analysis, planning and decision-making. An easy-to-understand system with links to almost all our information and data sources, it helps executives plan, identify problems, and react quickly to changing requirements. Other new computer programs for internal use include a Supplies Management System, to monitor and track inventories of election material, and a Financial Information Management System that meets the accounting and reporting requirements of Treasury Board's Financial Information Strategy.

Training and support for returning officers

Our post-mortem assessment after the 1997 general election revealed several areas for improvement in the working relationship between returning officers and Elections Canada. The issues ranged from the introduction of new technology in the field and the need to train returning officers on new systems, to a need for more information and contact from Elections Canada outside the times of the actual events.

To strengthen the necessary sense of partnership with returning officers, we improved our consultation policies from top to bottom. We have introduced a competencies profile, which specifies the body of knowledge, skills and abilities that a returning officer ought to possess. The profile is intended to help us identify returning officers' needs so that we can offer them customized training, and to help returning officers to evaluate their own strengths. To provide more frequent information and contact, in March 1998 we began publishing a regular news and information *Bulletin* for all returning officers and assistant returning officers; it is also available electronically to Elections Canada staff, as a summary of field-related activities.

Elections Canada has consulted more than 100 returning officers on all aspects of electoral administration, from the revision of our strategic plan to our communication campaign. Their feedback has been vital to improving our services to electors and our administrative processes.

New returning officers now receive eight-day training courses, whenever possible. To keep them up-to-date on the latest changes to systems and procedures, and to introduce field staff to pilot projects, we hold two-day briefings at Elections Canada for returning officers and other staff members (usually the assistant returning officers and automation coordinators) in those ridings where seats in the House of Commons are vacant and by-elections are expected. After each by-election, we hold one-day post-mortem sessions with the returning officer and assistant returning officer, and depending on the subjects up for discussion, the automation coordinator, revision supervisor and special ballot coordinator.

As part of Elections Canada's plans to be ready for a general election under the new legislation, a comprehensive training program took place between July 31 and August 26, 2000, in Ottawa. The training brought together 301 returning officers, 301 assistant returning officers and 301 automation coordinators with 25 trainers and presenters from nine different divisions at Elections Canada. The election officers received nearly 25 000 hours of training on our new systems and on recent developments in electoral law and administration.

Delivering electoral events

10 by-elections

Since the 1997 general election, we have administered 10 by-elections: three in Quebec, two each in British Columbia and Ontario, and one in each of Saskatchewan, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland.

Table 1 By-elections, 1998–2000

Date	Riding	Number of candidates	Successful candidate	Political party
March 30, 1998	Port Moody–Coquitlam, British Columbia (now Port Moody–Coquitlam–Port Coquitlam)	8	Lou Sekora	Liberal Party of Canada
September 14, 1998	Sherbrooke, Quebec	8	Serge Cardin	Bloc Québécois
April 12, 1999	Windsor–St. Clair, Ontario	5	Rick Limoges	Liberal Party of Canada
November 15, 1999	Hull–Aylmer, Quebec	9	Marcel Proulx	Liberal Party of Canada
November 15, 1999	Mount Royal, Quebec	4	Irwin Cotler	Liberal Party of Canada
November 15, 1999	Saskatoon–Rosetown–Biggar, Saskatchewan	6	Dennis Gruending	New Democratic Party
November 15, 1999	York West, Ontario	6	Judy Sgro	Liberal Party of Canada
May 15, 2000	St. John’s West, Newfoundland	5	Loyola Hearn	Progressive Conservative Party of Canada
September 11, 2000	Kings–Hants, Nova Scotia	5	Joe Clark	Progressive Conservative Party of Canada
September 11, 2000	Okanagan–Coquihalla, British Columbia	8	Stockwell Day	Canadian Reform Conservative Alliance

The services we provide for a by-election are nearly identical to those for a general election: the only difference is the scale of the effort. For example, we are responsible for training each riding’s returning officer and key members of his or her staff, conducting information sessions for candidates, their official agents and their auditors, and providing a toll-free telephone support network to help them carry out their responsibilities under the *Canada Elections Act*.

After each by-election, we review the financial returns of all candidates, and we table a public report in the House of Commons on all aspects of the by-election. The report also describes Elections Canada's activities since the previous report. For the 10 by-elections, we have published six such reports (when more than one by-election is held on the same day, the events are combined in a single report): in June 1998, November 1998, May 1999, January 2000, July 2000 and November 2000. Each is available on our Web site under General Information, Official Reports.

Once we compile all the by-election voting results, we publish a detailed poll-by-poll statistical report, similar to the report on the last general election: *Thirty-sixth General Election 1997: Official Voting Results*, in CD-ROM, diskette and printed versions, with a printed synopsis. Our three by-election reports – *By-elections 1998: Official Voting Results*, *By-elections 1999: Official Voting Results* and *By-elections 2000: Official Voting Results* – are also available on our Web site under General Information, Official Reports.

Table 2 Voter turnout for the 10 by-elections

By-election	Electors	Valid votes cast	Voter turnout
Port Moody–Coquitlam	80 586	28 672	35.7%
Sherbrooke	76 101	36 446	48.6%
Windsor–St. Clair	71 152	31 827	45%
Hull–Aylmer	69 893	17 643	25.5%
Mount Royal	62 841	17 200	27.5%
Saskatoon–Rosetown–Biggar	46 656	15 650	33.7%
York West	49 959	13 529	27.4%
St. John's West	72 697	32 107	44.3%
Kings–Hants	69 319	27 176	39.5%
Okanagan–Coquihalla	68 902	27 619	40.3%

Accessibility

Elections Canada is committed to making voting accessible to all Canadians, through level access to polling stations, alternative procedures for casting a ballot, and special measures to provide information about the electoral process.

To aid electors with a physical disability, returning officers provided level access to all but one of the 2 030 polling stations in the 10 ridings during the by-elections. If a polling site does not have level access, the voter information card must indicate this fact and electors have the option of asking the returning officer for transfer certificates authorizing them to vote at another nearby poll with level access, or to vote using a special ballot.

Other accessibility measures include Elections Canada information and advertising in several heritage languages, templates that make marking the ballot easier for electors with visual impairments, information in large print, and on-call sign language interpreters.

Enforcing the *Canada Elections Act*

The Commissioner of Canada Elections, appointed by the Chief Electoral Officer, is responsible for making sure that the *Canada Elections Act* is complied with and enforced. The Commissioner, Raymond A. Landry, C.M., may prosecute on his own initiative, after conducting an inquiry at the request of the Chief Electoral Officer, or after receiving a written complaint within six months of an alleged offence. Prosecution must begin within 18 months of the date the offence was committed. Penalties on conviction vary according to the circumstances and the nature of the offence, and could include imprisonment, fines, or both. Additional penalties may also apply, such as performing community service, compensating a victim, or losing the right to run as a candidate in a federal election for either five or seven years.

Following the 1997 general election, by October 2000 the Commissioner had received 873 complaints of alleged offences relating to the election. He authorized 26 prosecutions for the offences of voting when not qualified, failure to submit a financial report and defacing campaign signs. Two cases resulted in acquittals, the proceedings were stayed by the court in nine cases, and 15 offenders were convicted. Details of the convictions are published on our Web site under Electoral Law & Policy, Sentencing Digest.

For the 10 by-elections from 1998 to 2000, the Commissioner received 30 complaints; six files remain open. For the St. John's West by-election of May 15, 2000, three complaints were filed relating to advertisements and financial requirements; two files remain open. Because complainants have six months to file their complaints, the Commissioner may not yet have received all complaints arising from the September 11, 2000, by-elections in Kings-Hants and Okanagan-Coquihalla. There are presently nine complaints; four are resolved and five remain open; these include four under review and one before the courts. The four alleged offences under review for the Okanagan-Coquihalla by-election concern the liability of an election officer, the voters list, and advertising during a blackout period. As for the fifth file, the Commissioner has given his consent to a prosecution under section 328 for premature transmission of election results. The matter is expected to be heard in November 2001. The 18-month deadline to prosecute will not expire until sometime in 2002, depending on when the Commissioner received the complaint and when the alleged offence was committed.

Table 3 Complaints of alleged offences, 1998–2000 by-elections

Date	Riding	Number of complaints	Resolved	Cases prosecuted	Under review
March 30, 1998	Port Moody–Coquitlam	2	2	–	–
September 14, 1998	Sherbrooke	9	9	–	–
April 12, 1999	Windsor–St. Clair	1	1	–	–
November 15, 1999	Hull–Aylmer	2	2	–	–
November 15, 1999	Mount Royal	–	–	–	–
November 15, 1999	Saskatoon–Rosetown–Biggar	2	2	–	–
November 15, 1999	York West	2	2	–	–
May 15, 2000	St. John’s West	3	1	–	2
September 11, 2000	Kings–Hants	3	0	1	2
September 11, 2000	Okanagan–Coquihalla	6	4	0	2

Public education, information and support

New developments in voter education and information

Web site

Elections Canada’s Web site has become a popular and authoritative source of information, to judge by the number of visits it receives weekly, especially during electoral events, and the queries we receive by e-mail. During an average week in 2000, for example, the site received about 6 600 visitors; during the week of the by-election votes in Kings–Hants and Okanagan–Coquihalla, in September 2000, this number jumped by more than 30 percent.

First launched in 1995, the Web site was completely redesigned in 2000 to be more convenient to navigate. New features include the text of the laws governing federal elections, a sentencing digest reporting cases dating back to the 1992 referendum, the *Compendium of Election Administration in Canada*, sections on electoral reform and political party name changes, and two searchable election financing databases that incorporate information on candidates and on registered political parties. The election financing databases, an important factor in ensuring openness and transparency in the electoral process, have received much attention from the media and other observers, both in Canada and internationally. Special sections were added to the site for the by-elections, with information for electors before, during and after the events. Features included a profile of each riding, with a map and the names of the candidates.

Educating young Canadians

Making information about voting accessible to young people is an important first step in encouraging them to vote when they reach 18 years of age. We have continued to participate in Salon Pepsi Jeunesse, an annual youth fair held in Montréal. It attracts over 120 000 visitors, mostly between the ages of 12 and 19. At one recent fair, we ran two major election simulation projects involving Secondary IV and V students: the election of the Personnalité Jeunesse du Grand Montréal and the election of the Personnalité Jeunesse de l'Est du Canada, with participants from many regions. Attracting more than 2 000 voters a day over five days, this event is Elections Canada's most significant election simulation.

We also take part in the national Forum for Young Canadians held in Ottawa. This is a structured educational program held four times a year to enable selected senior high-school and CEGEP students from across Canada to learn about Canadian governmental processes. At Forum sessions, the students plan the election of a Canadian representative to a simulated world parliament, and the Chief Electoral Officer addresses the students, answers their questions and announces the election results.

To assist teachers, agency representatives attend several educators conferences across Canada. There they deliver workshops where election simulations are introduced as learning strategies to teach a given curriculum subject, such as history, in conjunction with teaching the electoral process.

Since its release in May 1998, *Exploring Canada's Electoral System*, an interactive CD-ROM, has proven popular with young Canadians. So far, we have sent out 16 000 copies in response to individual and school requests. We promote the CD-ROM through flyers, our Web site and various youth conferences; reply cards returned by users have confirmed its effectiveness for Canadians learning about voting in Canada.

In 1999, we launched a Web site module called *Explore A History of the Vote in Canada*. Developed for the virtual Social Progress room at the Canadian Museum of Civilization in Hull, Quebec, the first two phases of the module (*Journeys* and *Timeline*) survey the general history of the vote in Canada from the 18th century to the present. A new third phase, *Chronicle*, introduced in August 2000, examines the contemporary period in detail, beginning with the creation of the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer in 1920. It includes *SElections*, Elections Canada's new electronic trivia game, which helps young people learn about the history of the vote in Canada.

Public information

In December 1997, the Right Honourable Roméo LeBlanc, then Governor General of Canada, launched an important new book published by the agency, *A History of the Vote in Canada*. The book chronicles the evolution of democracy over 240 years of Canadian history.

Since the 1997 general election, our travelling exhibit, *Serving Democracy – Behind the Ballot Box* has been displayed in Moose Jaw and Yorkton, Saskatchewan; Whitehorse, Yukon; Fort Smith and Yellowknife, Northwest Territories; Richmond and Vernon, British Columbia; Paipoonge and Guelph, Ontario; Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island; and Mount Pearl, Newfoundland.

Responding to demands for information is an important part of our work. We get enquiries from the public, new Canadians, political parties, members of Parliament, researchers, libraries, provincial and municipal organizations, governmental and non-governmental organizations, and international and educational institutions. From January 1998 to December 1999, Elections Canada's Enquiries Unit responded to 98 538 calls on our toll-free line (1 800 INFO-VOTE), and another 5 344 e-mail enquiries; in 2000 (excluding the 36-day general election period) we answered 46 362 calls and 1 235 e-mail messages.

Reports and publications

Elections Canada maintains an active publications program, from reports required by Parliament and by the *Canada Elections Act* to books, booklets, magazines and electronic publications supporting research and deeper knowledge about Canada's electoral system. In the last three years we have published 28 items in paper or electronic versions, and often both. Most are also available on our Web site.

Parliamentary reports

Like other parliamentary and governmental agencies and departments, Elections Canada publishes an annual *Report on Plans and Priorities*. This core document is an expenditure plan for the forthcoming fiscal year; it discusses the agency's objectives, initiatives and planned results, with details of human resources, costs of our activities, and resource requirements for a three-year period. It is tabled in Parliament by the President of the Treasury Board. Three have appeared since the last general election: for 1998–1999, 1999–2000 and 2000–2001.

The companion document, also tabled in Parliament annually, is our *Performance Report*, in which we account for what we have achieved compared to the performance expectations set out in our *Report on Plans and Priorities*. Four have been published since the last general election: for 1996–1997, 1997–1998, 1998–1999 and 1999–2000.

Reports under the Canada Elections Act

The *Canada Elections Act* requires the Chief Electoral Officer to publish reports on each general election (for 1997 in August 1997) and on each by-election (six reports during 1998–2000). In the interests of transparency and greater public knowledge, these reports discuss the administration of elections and the operations of Elections Canada. For the same reasons, we publish documents detailing the election expenses of and contributions to candidates and registered political parties. As a follow-up to the 1997 general election we published *Candidates' Returns Respecting Election Expenses for the 36th General Election* (September 1998), and *Registered Political Parties' Fiscal Period Returns* for 1997, 1998 and 1999. Since 1997, we have reported on *Contributions and Expenses Reported by Candidates and Registered Parties* – and since 1998 on *Registered Political Parties' Fiscal Period Returns* – in searchable on-line databases on our Web site.

Other Elections Canada publications

Our other publications include *Canada's Electoral System* (July 1998), which looks at Canada's parliamentary system of government, highlighting milestones in our electoral history and the behind-the-scenes administrative machinery that supports the voting process. The *Compendium of Election Administration in Canada* (1999 and 2000) is a comparative analysis of electoral legislation at the federal level and in each province and territory in Canada. The legal provisions in each jurisdiction are summarized under key themes: redistribution of electoral boundaries, administering elections, registering electors, voting, nominating candidates, registering political parties, election financing, enforcing electoral law, referendum and plebiscite provisions, and major recent court cases concerning electoral law. The 2000 edition also includes election- and referendum-related statistics.

We launched the twice-yearly periodical *Electoral Insight* in 1999 to stimulate discussion about electoral administration and to encourage the collaborative spirit that is growing among electoral agencies and our stakeholders and partners. The magazine publishes articles by academics, election officials and specialists on elections both in Canada and in other jurisdictions. The three issues published as of November 2000 have as their themes *Review of Electoral Systems* (June 1999), *New Ways of Building Democracy* (November 1999), and *Technology in the Electoral Process* (June 2000).

As part of our service to the international community, Elections Canada coordinated the French translation of the first-ever electronic encyclopedia of election administration, a major compilation of analytical and comparative texts and good-practice examples for organizing, supporting and studying free and fair elections. The Administration and Cost of Elections (ACE) Project is an initiative of the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, the International Foundation for Election Systems, and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. The French, English and Spanish versions are posted on the Web at www.aceproject.org.

Liaison with Parliament and political parties

House of Commons Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs

Following the appearance by the Chief Electoral Officer before the House of Commons Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs on November 20, 1997, the Committee undertook a series of consultations in its review of the *Canada Elections Act*. It considered the *Report of the Chief Electoral Officer on the 36th General Election* in its examination of Canada's electoral system. The Committee tabled its report on June 18, 1998, recommending that electoral reform be undertaken.

On October 28 and November 22, 1999, the Chief Electoral Officer again appeared before the Committee during its consideration of Bill C-2, the new *Canada Elections Act*. The Bill had been referred to the Committee on October 14, 1999, after it received first reading in the House of Commons. Elections Canada staff acted as technical experts to support the Committee's deliberations on the Bill.

At the Committee's meeting on March 21, 2000, the Chief Electoral Officer informed members about new electoral maps planned for the next election. He also made presentations to the Committee on April 28, 1998, April 20, 1999, and May 18, 2000, to explain Elections Canada's plans and performance reports.

Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs

On April 12, 2000, the Chief Electoral Officer appeared before the Standing Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs, during the Committee's consideration of Bill C-2. He also appeared before the Committee on February 3, 1999, and June 14, 2000, while the Senate considered five bills to change the names of 16 ridings.

Advisory Committee of Political Parties

With the support of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, the Chief Electoral Officer established and chairs a new advisory committee that brings together representatives of political parties and Elections Canada officials. The Advisory Committee of Political Parties was struck to act as a forum for sharing information, fostering good working relations, consulting on legislative changes, and resolving administrative issues that may have an impact on parties and candidates. In June 2000, membership in the Committee was extended to parties that are eligible for registration. Since its initial meeting on May 15, 1998, the Committee met 11 times before the 37th general election was called.

Special briefings on the new Canada Elections Act

In June 2000, Elections Canada held a briefing session on the new *Canada Elections Act* for registered political parties and parties that were eligible for registration. The presentations gave the parties an overview of the changes to operational and campaigning provisions, and to rules dealing with the registration of political parties, election financing for parties and candidates, enforcement, communications, and third parties. In addition, we provided information about the quality of the Register's data and the importance of revision. Later briefings, six weeks before the election call, also covered the quality of the Register's data, and included discussion of the process for revising the lists during an election.

The Chief Electoral Officer offered to provide further sessions for the caucuses of parties represented in Parliament; the Bloc Québécois, Canadian Reform Conservative Alliance, Progressive Conservative Party of Canada and New Democratic Party accepted his offer in September and October 2000. He also held two briefing sessions for senators and independent MPs, and for parliamentary staff.

Relations with the academic community

Since the last general election we have strengthened our partnerships with university professors and academic research centres. We provided financial support, for example, to the Centre for Election Studies at the University of Waterloo to develop an electronic database of federal election results since Confederation. We participated in the 2000 Canadian Election Study, and sponsored a study at Concordia University on the national and local factors that influence citizen participation in the electoral process. We invited three academics to the sixth meeting of the Advisory Committee of Political Parties on April 23, 1999, to give an overview of different electoral systems and how they might apply in the Canadian context. And academics are regular contributors to our journal *Electoral Insight*.

Elections Canada was a sponsor of the XVIII World Congress of the International Political Science Association, held in Québec in August 2000, where the Chief Electoral Officer made a presentation on election financing. We were also sponsors of an academic Symposium on Electoral Reform in Canada at Carleton University, Ottawa, on October 27–28, 2000. The Symposium, at which the keynote speaker was the Chief Electoral Officer, concentrated on the financial aspects of electoral reform, technological influences, and the roles of groups, parties and movements.

International activities

Elections Canada takes an active part in international electoral activities by receiving delegations and by offering observers and technical support staff to international agencies to help plan and conduct fair elections in countries that request advice and assistance.

Since the 1997 general election, we have been pleased to receive individual and group delegations from 34 countries and territories: Australia, Bangladesh, Belarus, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, China, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Czech Republic, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Gabon, Haiti, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Jamaica, Japan, Kenya, Kosovo, Lesotho, Mauritania, Mexico, Poland, Russia, Senegal, Slovakia, South Africa, Sweden, Togo, Uganda, Ukraine and Yugoslavia.

During the same period, Elections Canada participated in electoral missions to 14 countries and territories: Benin, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia, East Timor, Gambia, Guatemala, Guyana, Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan, Malawi, Mexico, Uzbekistan, the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and Yemen.

As part of Elections Canada's efforts to support democratic development around the world, we hosted the fourth conference of the Inter-American Union of Electoral Organizations on July 27–28, 1998. The theme of the conference was *Intercontinental Consultation: The Search for Constructive and Innovative Options* and it focused on such topics as the financing of political parties and candidates and electoral conflict prevention and resolution. The delegates were senior officials of electoral agencies from North, Central and South America.

In 1999, we were hosts of the first meeting of the Global Electoral Organization (GEO) Network, on April 11–14 in Ottawa. The network is sponsored by the International Foundation for Election Systems, the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, and the United Nations Electoral Assistance Division. The conference had three aims: to bring together election management associations to exchange information on programs they conduct to benefit their members and the electoral processes of their regions; to identify bilateral programs that could be established; and to discuss common needs. Participants included representatives from 12 associations of election management bodies, and from more than 15 bilateral development agencies, foreign ministries and international financial institutions.

II. The November 2000 General Election

This section of our report describes the 37th general election, and outlines the work done by Elections Canada and returning officers to carry out our mandate.

The launch

For Elections Canada, the 37th general election began on Sunday, October 22, 2000, when Her Excellency the Right Honourable Adrienne Clarkson, Governor General of Canada, signed a proclamation ordering the Chief Electoral Officer to issue the writs of election. A “writ” – from the Old English for writing – is simply a legal order: in this case, an order from the Chief Electoral Officer to each of Canada’s 301 returning officers, instructing them to conduct the election of a member of Parliament.

Even before the writs were printed and signed by the Chief Electoral Officer, he faxed all returning officers to authorize them to begin hiring staff and to open their offices because of the tightly scripted 36-day election calendar.

Local offices set up

At this point, returning officers and assistant returning officers were trained, and they had already identified potential locations for their offices and level access polling stations. Each returning officer would need an average staff of 500 by the end of the election, filling 50 different positions. Within 24 hours, the first staff to be hired were starting to set up some of the office equipment needed for the election. Eventually, each office would receive an average of nearly two tonnes of supplies, such as forms, signs and equipment. Nationally, for example, we distributed 3 631 000 sheets of special paper to print ballots, 64 000 ballot boxes and 63 645 voting screens. By the end of the election, some 166 000 staff were working for Elections Canada in the local offices, nearly all of them hired with little advance notice, and requiring training and supervision during the 36-day campaign. For the first time, returning officers each had a training officer to help train registration and poll officers.

One person in each local office – the automation coordinator – did not require further training, because all 301 had taken a five-day course at Elections Canada during the summer before the election. The automation coordinator was responsible for supporting the office’s computer applications, and for managing the data processing of updated elector information and the production of the various voters lists during the election.

This was the first election during which returning officers were authorized to appoint liaison officers to work with communities with special needs, including ethnocultural communities and Aboriginal and homeless electors. Liaison officers could be appointed in ridings with one or more shelters for the homeless, in ridings where Aboriginal or ethnocultural communities represented at least 10 percent of the total population, and in

ridings with one or more First Nations reserves or other concentrations of Aboriginal Canadians, such as Métis or Inuit settlements and First Nations communities not classified as reserves.

Some 135 ridings met at least one of these criteria, including several that were entitled to more than one type of liaison officer, or to more than one of the same type. A total of 81 liaison officers were appointed: 52 officers for Aboriginal communities (out of 114 eligible ridings), 7 for ethnocultural communities (out of 27 eligible ridings), and 22 for homeless electors (out of 65 eligible ridings). In a number of ridings, the liaison work was carried out by the returning officer, the assistant returning officer or another local staff member.

All systems activated

Post-mortem evaluations of the 1997 general election by returning officers led us to undertake an in-depth study of the business processes and the use of information technology in the offices of returning officers. In preparation for the 2000 election, we began to develop and introduce improvements. The installation of local computer networks in each office and the contracted technical support both went smoothly in most electoral districts, with further support provided by the help desk at Elections Canada for the duration of the election. In some cases the delivery of equipment was delayed, affecting the production of voter information cards by the local office. Within five days of the issue of the writs, several thousand pieces of electronic equipment were distributed and operational, and 7 000 telephone lines were installed. Because of bad weather and airport bottlenecks in some areas, we chartered aircraft for emergency deliveries of some supplies, especially in the North.

Once the equipment was ready, automation coordinators installed the main computer applications for managing the election in each riding. Returning officers were required to use the Event Management System daily to report electronically on the progress of activities in their offices, to give senior managers at Elections Canada an overview of any unforeseen problems, and to help them identify trends that might require decisions before difficulties emerged. Once the revision of the voters lists began (the time during an election when the preliminary voters lists are brought up-to-date and voters can register), the Elector Search Utility allowed revising agents to confirm electors' former residences outside the riding, saving those who had moved from having to supply identification documents before they could register to vote. Revisions to the voters lists were entered on the REVISE system, which also produced voters lists for the riding. During and after the election, local office staff used the Returning Officers Payment System to record information for paying election workers and suppliers, and to generate the necessary forms and documentation. The Event Results System was used to tabulate results for all polling stations on election night and send them to Ottawa, where they were posted on the Elections Canada Web site.

Before the systems were up and running, we had distributed the electronic versions of each riding's preliminary voters lists to the local offices. Using the National Geographic Database and our Electoral Maps and Reports Production system, we had also sent out some 75 000 polling division maps and 140 000 related documents such as street indexes and poll keys. Throughout the campaign, we produced more than 2 million maps for distribution to political parties, local riding associations, candidates and election administrators.

Expanded staff

In Ottawa, Elections Canada staff expanded dramatically: from 200 to 900, almost overnight. Simply hiring enough qualified people was no easy task, given the low unemployment rate, the need for bilingual workers, and the conditions of work for these short-term positions (long hours, shift work and a stressful environment). Before the election, we had pre-screened applicants to build up an inventory of potential temporary staff, with help from the Public Service Commission of Canada and the provincial electoral offices.

Enquiries from electors

Many of the temporary staff were trained to be enquiries officers, ready at their rows of telephones and computer terminals to answer calls from the public seven days a week, from 7:00 a.m. to 1:00 a.m., Eastern standard time. For this election, the toll-free 1 800 INFO-VOTE lines were first answered by an interactive voice response system providing different messages tailored to important dates on the election calendar. At any time, a caller could speak to an enquiries officer to get answers to questions about whether the caller was on the voters list, what riding he or she lived in and, if the caller still needed to register, the location of the office of the returning officer in that riding.

For the first two weeks, there were difficulties hiring and training sufficient staff. The Enquiries Unit staff still answered an average of more than 5 000 calls daily. Then, on November 8, the volume of calls nearly quadrupled. Our householder pamphlet and television ads had suggested electors phone us if their voter information card had not arrived by that date. We brought in and quickly trained additional staff from local post-secondary educational institutions, and from our government partners: the Government Enquiries Centre and the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency both provided major assistance. Statistics Canada and the House of Commons also provided staff. Some 650 additional staff members gradually came on board, and by mid-November, the standards of service had improved.

During the election period, we answered more than 529 000 calls, of which some 460 000 required the involvement of an enquiries officer. On election day, we had a total of 951 people in two shifts answering questions from 53 000 callers.

We were also prepared to answer questions by e-mail. Our team of 12 agents and 5 writers received some 13 300 e-mail messages, which they either answered directly or forwarded to appropriate specialists within Elections Canada.

Redesigned Web site

The Web site had been redesigned in September, with certain election-specific features. Visitors could research information on previous elections, by-elections and referendums, check results and learn about the Canadian electoral system in general. The site included the full text of the *Canada Elections Act*, a variety of background information, and data on the expenses of the parties and candidates in the last general election, on the contributions they received and on the sources of those contributions. An innovation allowed users to set up their own personal screens to view election results as they came in, after all the polls were closed. They could customize their screens to show past and live results by political party, by electoral district, by city or any combination the user wanted to see.

Supporting the media

Recognizing the important role that the print and broadcast media play in keeping Canadians informed, Elections Canada's media relations staff worked extended hours throughout the election, and set up a network of media relations representatives covering 11 regions. The *Media Guide* for the 37th general election, available in print and CD-ROM versions and posted on our Web site, gave background information on our media services for the general election, Elections Canada's role, the election calendar, changes to the electoral law, the electoral system, voters, voting, candidates and political parties, third parties, enforcing the *Canada Elections Act*, broadcasting, and electoral statistics – in short, almost everything that a journalist would need.

On the day the election was called, we sent out news releases on the launch, media contacts, new rules for third parties, and an important announcement about mail-in ballots for Canadians abroad. Throughout the campaign, more than 40 releases kept journalists up-to-date on key events and evolving electoral issues. Reporters were present when the Chief Electoral Officer signed the writs on October 25, and he held his first interviews with Radio-Canada and CBC television the following day. Several other interviews would follow.

Special ballots and the Special Voting Rules

Parliament has sought to make voting accessible to every Canadian elector, no matter where he or she might be. This desire for accessibility has a long history: the advance poll, for example, was created many years ago to allow people who planned to be travelling on election day to vote. Similarly, mobile polls have existed for some time, allowing residents of institutions for seniors or persons with a physical disability to vote without leaving their residences. In hospitals, the ballot box is transported from room to room. Electors who are unable to read can ask friends, relatives or the deputy returning officer to help them vote. And an elector who has a physical disability that prevents him or her from completing a ballot, and who is unable to go to the local office, may call the returning officer and ask to vote at home.

The special ballot is possibly the most significant of the recent voting tools. Extended to general use in 1993, it enables citizens to vote by mail or in person at the office of the returning officer, using a special system of envelopes to preserve the secrecy of the ballot. This system is useful for persons with illnesses or disabilities who would have difficulty getting to a polling station. Electors who live in isolated communities also use it, as do prison inmates, travellers and Canadians who are abroad at election time. The *Canada Elections Act's* provisions governing special ballots are known as the Special Voting Rules.

Voting by special ballot

From the elector's point of view, there were three significant facts about special ballots in this election. The elector had to make sure his or her application to register was received by Elections Canada before 6:00 p.m. on November 21, find out who the candidates were in his or her riding, and make sure that the completed ballot reached Elections Canada in Ottawa by 6:00 p.m. on election day, November 27 (or the returning officer, by the close of the polls in the electoral district, for the elector voting by special ballot in his or her own riding). Early in the campaign, we issued news releases with information about the special ballot for Canadians abroad and for Canadians in Canada who did not wish to vote at the advance or ordinary polls, and about the deadline for special ballot registration. Ten days before election day, we sent another reminder to the media on the impending deadline for registering to vote by special ballot.

Applying to vote by special ballot

Before and during the election, application forms and guides were available across the country, through Canadian High Commissions, embassies and consular offices around the world, and on our Web site. Electors could request the applications in person from a returning officer, or by telephone, fax, e-mail, courier or regular mail, or could download the form and guide in English or French from our Web site. During the election, some 39 400 special ballot application forms were downloaded.

A formal application served two purposes: it gave the person's consent to be added to the National Register of Electors if the elector had not yet registered (or to update the person's information if he or she was already registered), and it allowed election officers to issue a voting kit containing a ballot. An application by mail or by fax had to be accompanied by a photocopy of proof of identity and residence. Once the kit was issued, the appropriate officer would strike through the person's name on the voters list and mark it with an *S*, to indicate that the person could not vote again at a polling station.

An elector within his or her riding (a *local* elector) had to return the application to the returning officer for that riding in person or by fax, courier or mail. All applications from local electors were processed by a coordinator in the local office. If the elector appeared in person with his or her completed application or completed an application in the office, he or she only had to show the identification documents to the coordinator, rather than providing photocopies.

An elector absent from his or her riding, either in Canada or abroad (a *national* elector), could return the application to any returning officer or directly to Elections Canada in Ottawa, either in person or by fax, courier or mail. As with local electors, a national elector appearing in person with his or her completed application only had to show identification documents to the election officer; otherwise, applications from national electors had to be accompanied by a photocopy of proof of identity and residence. Applications received by a returning officer by fax, courier or mail were forwarded to Ottawa for processing.

An elector residing outside Canada (an *international* elector) used the same application form as a national elector, but with one difference in voting eligibility if he or she was actually living outside Canada, rather than simply travelling temporarily. The elector must not have been living outside Canada for more than five consecutive years since the last visit to Canada, and must intend to resume residence in Canada. The five-year limit does not apply to federal or provincial public servants, people working for an international organization of which Canada is a member and to which Canada contributes, or to someone who lives with an exempt person.

Local and national voting

Once the application and identification were verified, the elector was issued a special ballot voting kit, either in person or by mail. The kit consisted of a special write-in ballot, three envelopes and an information folder. The voter was instructed to write the name of the candidate of his or her choice on the ballot, seal it in the unmarked inner envelope, and seal the inner envelope in an outer envelope that the voter signed and dated, declaring that he or she had not previously voted, and that he or she would not attempt to vote again. The outer envelope was also marked with an individual bar code, which was checked electronically before the ballot could be counted, to ensure that nobody voted twice. The voter then enclosed the outer envelope in a pre-addressed return envelope.

The local elector who wanted to vote before the regular ballots were printed, or who wanted to take a ballot home, used the special ballot, writing in the name of the candidate of his or her choice. The voter then returned the ballot (sealed in the envelopes) to the local returning officer by mail, courier or in person; the ballots were deposited in a sealed ballot box until election day, when they were counted.

Anyone who voted in person in the local office after the regular ballots had been printed received a regular ballot with the names of the candidates printed on it, marked the ballot then and there, sealed the ballot in the envelopes and deposited it in the same sealed ballot box as the write-in ballots.

After the polls closed, all the local ballots were counted together in each riding. Across Canada, 149 223 local electors requested ballots under the Special Voting Rules. Of those, 138 065 returned their ballots before the prescribed deadline.

A national elector could receive his or her special ballot voting kit either by mail or in person from any returning officer to whom the elector submitted the application, and could vote immediately or later. In either case, it was the voter's responsibility to make sure that Elections Canada in Ottawa received the ballot before 6:00 p.m. on election day. The ballots were counted at Elections Canada, and the results sent to the appropriate returning officers to be included in each riding's totals.

Elections Canada issued special ballots to 33 679 national electors, and 25 963 returned them by the deadline; 2 422 ballots came in after the deadline.

International voting

To reach out to Canadians abroad, we published notices of the election in 12 widely read newspapers in the United States and Europe, and signed an agreement with the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade for the Department to act as a partner of Elections Canada outside Canada.

Diplomatic missions and consular offices provided information about the right to vote and the electoral process, distributed registration forms and guides, responded to enquiries about registration and voting procedures, made the names of confirmed candidates available to electors, and received completed registration forms and completed special ballots for forwarding to Ottawa.

A Canadian abroad could ask a diplomatic mission to send the completed registration form to Elections Canada by fax, could use the mission as the delivery address to receive a special ballot voting kit, and could ask the mission to notify the elector of its arrival. After November 8, the Department's headquarters sent the list of confirmed candidates for all ridings to each mission. Electors could call or visit the missions to obtain the list of candidates.

Out-of-country voters were entitled to return their completed ballots to any Canadian High Commission, embassy, consular office or Canadian Forces base in time for them to reach Elections Canada in Ottawa no later than 6:00 p.m., Ottawa time, on November 27. Diplomatic missions sent the ballots to Ottawa as they received them by the next diplomatic classified bag; missions not served by the diplomatic classified bag service were given diplomatic courier runs for forwarding ballots. Consular offices headed by honorary consular officers forwarded the ballots by commercial courier to their supervising missions, which forwarded them to Ottawa.

We issued special ballots to 19 230 international electors, and 7 700 ballots were returned on time; 1 598 special ballots arrived after the deadline.

Canadian Forces voting

Members of the Canadian Forces – including teachers and administrative support staff at Canadian Forces schools outside Canada – voted in the general election by special ballot wherever they were stationed. When they enrol, members of the Canadian Forces are asked to complete a form called a *Statement of Ordinary Residence*. The address given on the form determines the federal riding in which the member's vote is counted, and the military elector information is maintained in a permanent register by the Department of National Defence.

Voting from afar

Because of the remote postings of women and men in the Canadian Forces, even getting the election material to them wasn't always easy. The diplomatic bag containing special ballot voting kits for service members stationed in the Middle East, for example, still had not arrived at the Canadian Embassy in Tel Aviv after 11 days in transit. The opportunity to send a second set of kits arose when the Speaker of the House of Commons and other dignitaries boarded a Canadian government jet to attend the funeral services for Mrs. Leah Rabin, widow of the former Israeli Prime Minister, in Israel. The Canadian military attaché in Tel Aviv met the plane to ensure prompt dispatch of the kits to some 275 electors serving in various United Nations units and with the Multinational Force and Observers in the Middle East.

When they enrol, members of the Canadian Forces are asked to complete a form called a *Statement of Ordinary Residence*. The address given on the form determines the federal riding in which the member's vote is counted, and the military elector information is maintained in a permanent register by the Department of National Defence.

As part of our regular communication activities, in May we sent out a pamphlet to every member of the Canadian Forces explaining the *Statement of Ordinary Residence* and how to update it. Once the election was called, we distributed a second pamphlet explaining the special ballot voting process. Instructions for voting were posted at the polling station set up in each unit, which had to be open for a minimum of three hours a

day for not less than three days, between November 13 and 18. A deputy returning officer appointed by the commanding officer was on hand to issue voting kits (containing the special ballot and envelopes) and to receive the sealed ballots.

Before receiving a ballot, voters had to complete and sign a declaration on the outer envelope, stating that their names were as shown on the envelope and that they had not voted previously in the election. The unit's deputy returning officer then sent the ballots to Elections Canada in Ottawa, unless a voter chose to mail his or her own ballot.

There were 57 082 registered electors in the Canadian Forces, serving in 1 201 units both in and outside Canada. They cast 19 080 ballots; 50 special ballots arrived after the deadline.

Voting in acute care hospitals

Elections Canada adopted procedures to enable patients hospitalized in acute care facilities, either inside or outside their ridings, to exercise their voting rights conveniently. The special ballot was the most effective way of reaching patients, although it was difficult to estimate the number of electors who would vote while hospitalized. Some would have voted at an advance poll or by special ballot at the office of a returning officer, and some would be able to vote on election day.

We first sent a letter to the administrators of Canada's 823 acute care hospitals in 253 ridings, explaining the procedures for voting and asking for their co-operation in helping patients to vote. We also sent a memorandum to each returning officer, recommending that he or she arrange for special ballot voting with the hospital administrators in the riding. Each returning officer was responsible for making sure that acute care patients in the riding were given the opportunity to vote, and designated one hospital special ballot coordinator for every group of 200 acute care beds.

On November 19, the hospital special ballot coordinators distributed notices to patients in each acute care bed, announcing that they would be visiting on November 20 and 21 to register every eligible patient who wished to vote. They dealt with two categories of hospitalized electors: those in facilities located in their own ridings (local electors), and those hospitalized outside their own ridings (national electors).

A total of 6 487 hospitalized national electors took the opportunity to register, and they submitted 6 330 ballots.

Voting in correctional institutions

Every incarcerated elector serving a sentence of less than two years was eligible to register and to vote under the Special Voting Rules. A liaison officer in each of 198 correctional institutions coordinated elector registration by distributing applications for registration, and posting notices about the election in prominent locations throughout the institution. Registration took place from November 14 to 16.

To determine the elector's riding, the application recorded the elector's address of ordinary residence: that is (in this order), the elector's last address of residence before incarceration; or if not known or available, the residence of the spouse, the common-law partner, a relative or a dependant of the elector, or a relative of the elector's spouse or common-law partner, or a person with whom the elector would live if not incarcerated; or the place of arrest; or the last court where the elector was convicted and sentenced.

A polling station was set up in each institution, and inmates voted on November 17, from 9:00 a.m. until everyone who wanted to had voted, but no later than 8:00 p.m. Each voter handed the ballot sealed inside the inner and outer envelopes to the deputy returning officer, who put it in a mailbag that was couriered to Elections Canada in Ottawa for counting.

Of the 23 116 incarcerated persons in Canada who were eligible to vote, 5 521 registered to vote by special ballot, and 5 194 of those cast ballots.

Communications

Keeping potential voters, candidates, political parties and the media informed was essential during the election, especially given the new requirements of the *Canada Elections Act* and the numerous legal deadlines for various stages of the campaign. Our information had to be easy to understand and accessible to every Canadian elector. To achieve this goal, we developed an integrated multimedia information program that adapted our central message to reach various population segments.

Public information

Look inside...

On September 15, 2000, shortly after the new *Canada Elections Act* came into force, we placed full-page newspaper ads in 104 dailies and many weeklies to alert the public to changes in the Act that would affect them during the next election. After this, we made our first direct approach to electors on October 27, one month before election day, when we started publishing advertisements in daily newspapers to tell electors to expect our pamphlet (called a householder, because it went to all households) and the voter information card in the mail. The householder – *Look inside for everything you need to vote* – explained the voter information card, when to register to vote, how to make changes to information on the voters lists, the hours and dates of voting at the advance polls and on election day, how to vote by special ballot, and how to contact the national Elections Canada office. This pamphlet mentioned that targeted revision could occur in new developments and areas in which people tend to move frequently. It also stated that an elector who did not get a voter information card and had not yet registered could still register to vote on election day, upon presentation of appropriate proof of identification. Like most of our information products, the householder included our toll-free telephone numbers and Web address.

We arranged with Canada Post to deliver the pamphlet to every household in Canada between October 30 and November 1 – 11.6 million bilingual copies in all. In addition to being translated into 31 languages, the householder was made available in Braille, large-print, diskette and audio-cassette versions distributed directly to segments of the public who might otherwise experience difficulty in casting their votes.

Advertising

Our multimedia national advertising campaign had a simple aim: to catch the attention of as many Canadians as possible, and inform them of the need to register to vote. During the 36-day campaign, our newspaper advertisements appeared between three and five times in up to 104 daily papers and several community newspapers, while our radio and television ads were broadcast in 46 television and 68 radio markets across the country. Each different wave of advertising was timed to coincide with a specific stage of the election calendar:

- just before the householder and voter information cards were to arrive through the mail, urging people to watch for this important information
- just after the voter information cards were scheduled to arrive in the mail, asking people who did not get a card or who received an incorrect card to contact Elections Canada
- on or around November 17, to promote the advance polling option, including registration at the advance polls
- during the last six days before election day, to highlight the fact that people could register to vote on election day

To meet specific needs that emerged during the election period, we also organized three advertising blitzes.

- First, we placed two-page print ads in daily newspapers covering large metropolitan areas where we expected high numbers of revisions to the voters lists and where riding names or boundaries could cause confusion: Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary, Regina, Saskatoon, Winnipeg, Ottawa, Toronto and Montréal. The ads included riding maps and information about the Elections Canada offices in each area, and appeared on Saturday, November 11, Sunday, November 12 or Tuesday, November 14.
- Second, we developed a revision campaign and public service announcements on radio that focused on regions where we expected high numbers of revisions to the voters lists.

- Third, on November 23 and 24, we published ads in daily newspapers in those metropolitan areas where returning officers were having difficulty recruiting staff to work at the polling stations on election day: Vancouver, Victoria, Toronto and Halifax. This campaign was called *Looking for work on election day?*, and was backed up by advertising using 30-second scripts that were sent to radio stations.

The television ads were designed to encourage as many electors as possible to register before election day, so that voting would not be impeded by large numbers of last-minute registrations. To help people understand their options, we provided information about revision and election day registration in other ads. For example, we used newspapers and radio stations to disseminate information about voting on election day. We placed print advertisements in 102 dailies across Canada between Friday, November 24, and Sunday, November 26, and in 148 weeklies across Canada between Wednesday, November 22, and Sunday, November 26. Another 27 radio stations aired messages specifically to Aboriginal communities in 18 languages, including English and French, from Wednesday, November 22, to Monday, November 27. Advertisements were also aired on more than 300 radio stations across the country on the morning and early afternoon of election day.

Community newspapers

In our efforts to reach all potential voters, we often used media tailored to specific groups, such as newspapers published in French outside Quebec or in English within Quebec, rural and community newspapers, as well as student newspapers and cultural newspapers.

The *Official Languages Act* requires that advertising published in a majority-language newspaper must also be published in a minority-language newspaper if there is one in the same area. Where there is none, the ad can be published in both languages in the majority-language newspaper. During the election period, we bought a mix of radio, television and print ads in the minority language, wherever those media were available.

To complement our advertising in daily newspapers, we placed ads in no less than 172 community newspapers, as well as in weekly, student and cultural newspapers. Most of the community newspapers we selected were published in smaller towns and rural areas, where large dailies did not enjoy the strongest readership.

International advertising

As part of our drive to register Canadian electors living outside the country to use the special ballot, we published messages in the *New York Times* and *Le Francophone International*. We knew that, in November, many Canadians would be spending time in warmer areas of the United States. For our Snowbird Campaign, as we called it, and with the advice of the Canadian Snowbird Association, we targeted Canadians in California, Arizona, Texas and Florida by advertising in 15 widely read newspapers in those states.

As well, in Canada our print ads in 104 daily and many weekly newspapers asked people to notify friends or family who were away that Canadians abroad can vote.

Reaching out to youth

Young people aged 18 to 24 are less likely than other electors to exercise their right to vote. We embarked on our largest effort to reach young Canadians directly during this election. This was done in parallel with our advertising directed to young electors – such as youth-oriented television spots on popular music stations, radio spots on rock stations and ads in student newspapers – and the youth section on our Web site.

The Chief Electoral Officer wrote to all student associations and organizations, describing his plan to write to Canadians who had turned 18 since the June 1997 general election, and enclosing a copy of his letter. The personalized letter, mailed to some 428 000 young Canadians on November 2, 2000, noted that electors should register early so that they could vote, and gave information about contacting Elections Canada. The Chief Electoral Officer also told the student associations about our Web site (enclosing a small colour poster describing the site), and asked for their help in encouraging young electors to register and vote.

On several Web portals popular with youth, we placed a banner advertisement that linked to the householder and other information on our own Web site. And as mentioned above, we advertised in several student newspapers published by major colleges and universities.

The returning officer of the Algoma–Manitoulin riding in Ontario was particularly hospitable to future voters when a Grade 5 class asked to visit one of his polling stations to see how elections work. Although groups of non-voters are not normally allowed in a polling station, he secured the Chief Electoral Officer's permission to let the students visit one of the advance polls, to the delight of all concerned.

Ethnocultural communities

One of our basic communications principles was to ensure that Canadians from various backgrounds could recognize themselves in our information material. To encourage voting by Canadians who may not be fluent in either official language, we undertook several public relations and advertising projects informing members of ethnocultural communities about the election and the electoral process.

As well as providing the householder pamphlet in 31 heritage languages on the Web and in print, we distributed information kits to 33 national ethnocultural associations, 26 Citizenship Judges and 34 Citizenship Courts, and sent out a letter and order form for the householder to 1 822 ethnocultural organizations. In response to these mail-outs, we received requests for information in all of the languages from 151 ethnocultural organizations and associations, and we mailed out 79 640 copies of the householder for the associations to distribute within their communities.

We produced newspaper ads in 19 heritage languages for 60 dailies and weeklies across the country, radio ads in 24 heritage languages for airing on 30 radio stations, and television ads in English and French illustrating Canada's multicultural mosaic, which were broadcast on eight stations targeting ethnocultural audiences.

Information for Aboriginal electors

Elections Canada recognizes and respects a fundamental value of Aboriginal communities: the special role of Elders and youth. Since the 1993 general election, our Elders program at polling stations on certain First Nations reserves has offered information and interpretation services for electors, and generally provided assistance to voters who may not be familiar with the federal electoral process. At the 1997 general election, the program was extended to Inuit and Métis communities, and young people from the community joined Elders in providing election day support.

For this general election, returning officers (or Aboriginal liaison officers appointed by them) were responsible for the Elders and youth program in the 114 eligible ridings. More Aboriginal communities participated in the program than in previous elections: 91 communities, compared to 62 in 1997. The communities were located in 31 ridings, up from the 20 that participated in 1997.

We distributed information kits to five national Aboriginal associations, published print versions of the householder in five Aboriginal languages (Plains Cree, the northern dialect of James Bay Cree, Ojibwe, Inuinnaqtun and Inuktitut) and on our Web site, and sent a letter and order form for the householder in Aboriginal languages to 1 175 provincial and regional Aboriginal organizations, tribal and band councils and Friendship Centres. We received requests for information in the five languages from 24 Aboriginal organizations and associations, and mailed out more than 4 000 copies of the householder for the associations to distribute in their communities.

We also published general information ads in English, French and four Aboriginal languages in 44 Aboriginal publications across the country, aired ads in English and 23 Aboriginal languages on 28 specialized radio stations, and broadcast television ads in English, French, Inuktitut and Inuinnaqtun.

Voters with special needs

Producing suitable election information for potential voters with special needs involved several different formats, as well as the advice and active co-operation of a number of associations. For example, we provided a general information kit in Braille, large print and on audio-cassette and diskette, prepared the householder in plain language, promoted access to our teletypewriter (TTY) phone service for electors with a hearing impairment in our publications and advertisements, aired our news releases on Voiceprint and La Magnétothèque (an audio news and information service for people with impaired vision), and hired a special needs liaison officer to communicate with target associations during the event.

We first distributed information kits to 25 national associations for persons with special needs, including literacy organizations, and then sent out a letter and order form for materials in alternative formats to 1 722 special needs organizations. We also issued a nationwide news release on the many voting options available, and posted an order form for information kits in alternative formats on the Web site. We received requests for information in alternative formats from 303 special needs organizations and associations, and the TTY service responded to numerous requests for information.

We mailed more than 75 000 large print, 11 000 audio-cassette and 800 Braille householders, covering all members of the Canadian National Institute for the Blind, and 5 000 householders in the same mix of formats to members of the Institut Nazareth et Louis-Braille in Quebec. Officers of the Canadian Council of the Blind also received the backgrounder, *Accessibility of the Electoral System*.

The Movement for Canadian Literacy worked with Elections Canada to produce the householder in plain language, posted it on their Web site and distributed it to literacy educators across the country. Similarly, the Fédération canadienne pour l'alphabétisation en français helped us to prepare the plain-language householder in French, and distributed 5 000 copies to more than 300 francophone literacy educators and their students.

The Canadian Association of the Deaf produced an American Sign Language video, highlighting important dates in the election calendar and information on the voting process. The video was distributed to more than 150 of their affiliates and member agencies. A similar video was produced in LSQ (langage des signes québécois) and distributed through appropriate community associations.

The general election on the Web

We improved the features and capacity of our Web site during the summer of 2000, and once the election was called, we continued to use the Web for a significant portion of our communications activities. We had added an expanded electoral districts database, for example, that let users find a profile of any riding (its population, estimated number of electors, and so forth), the past election results for the riding, a map, the name, address and phone numbers of the returning officer, and the addresses of any additional local offices where they existed. We provided links to provincial and territorial election information, and we updated the list of candidates daily until all candidates were confirmed on November 8. And for election night, we included a link to each riding's on-line results.

A new feature was a set of answers to frequently asked questions about the general election, with new questions and answers added during the election period as we analyzed requests made to the Enquiries Unit. A map showed the voting hours for each time zone in Canada, and we updated the site daily with news releases and other information for the media. The news releases usually appeared on the Web less than an hour after the media relations team issued them.

After the election was called, the large number of calls to our 1 800 INFO-VOTE line led us to ask our Web team to add the capacity for visitors to search for ridings by postal code and to find the office of any returning officer. It took our team, including staff from our Electoral Geography section and the Internet service provider, three days to add the feature to the electoral districts database. All an elector had to do was log on to the Web site and enter a home postal code to find out the name of the riding and the address and phone number of the office of the returning officer. This is a good example of the type of new functions we will add to our Web site to make it more relevant and useful.

On-line election publications

On the day the election was called, we posted the Web version of the householder in English and French, and within two weeks, we had it on our Web site in 31 languages. We wanted to make sure that language was not a barrier to receiving information on the election.

One of the more popular Web documents was *Voting by Canadians Away from Their Homes or Their Electoral Districts*, the application and guide for registering to vote by special ballot. The registration form was downloaded in PDF format by 39 400 people. Another very popular item was the targeted revision registration form, which was downloaded by 56 782 visitors.

Our Web site included a searchable database of contributions to candidates and their election expenses, a searchable database of election expenses incurred by registered political parties, and a list of registered third parties, updated daily as the list grew. A redesigned electronic candidate's return on the Web site (also available on CD-ROM) let candidates and their agents produce and submit their financial returns in electronic form, and we posted a number of downloadable manuals and forms for third parties, candidates, political parties and their agents and auditors.

For young Canadians

Reaching out to young electors – and introducing young Canadians to elections and voting – are important priorities for Elections Canada. Beginning in late September 2000, we introduced the much-enlarged on-line youth section of our Web site. During the election, young people could download two educational kits: *Canada at the Polls!* and *I Can Vote!*

The text of our householder was available, as was our Web module, *Explore A History of the Vote in Canada*, and an order form for the free CD-ROM, *Exploring Canada's Electoral System*. We invited younger visitors to play our on-line trivia game *SElections*, and offered election-related links to other youth sites.

The Web site was promoted through banner ads on the most popular Canadian portals. The youth section attracted more than 54 000 visitors during the election period. *I Can Vote!* was downloaded 6 414 times, and *Canada at the Polls!* totalled 3 851 downloads.

Election night

On election night, Web site visitors had the opportunity of watching the results unfold in real time, with a wide menu of choices. They could look at the results Canada-wide, province-wide, or city-wide, as well as by riding; or they could call up results for party leaders, or the candidates leading in each riding. Visitors could also compare the incoming results with those of the 1997 general election, and view up to 144 results pages on one screen.

Right from the beginning of the campaign, visitors were able to plan what results they wanted to see on election night by setting up a customized presentation window and saving it by various means. They could also choose to have the final election results of the ridings they selected e-mailed to them after election night. These features were designed to be accessible even to users of low-end computers.

On election night, our Web site started showing election results at approximately 10:15 p.m. Eastern standard time (EST), as it was illegal for anyone to publish election results nationally before all the polling stations closed at 10:00 p.m. EST. We continued to publish updated real-time results until all polling stations reported in.

Anticipating a high demand, we had set up 10 computer servers to show results instantly on election night. The very large number of simultaneous hits at 10:00 p.m. delayed the showing of initial results by about 15 minutes. Although many visitors found that pages were slow to load for part of the evening, our Web servers did not break down. Our site received more than 137 000 visitors on election day alone (amounting to approximately 9 million hits), compared to nearly 980 000 visitors for the whole 36-day election period. This represents significant growth in comparison to the 1997 election, when some 70 000 people visited our site over the same number of days.

Media information and issues

To serve media outlets in all parts of the country, we established a temporary network of regional media representatives. During the campaign, they handled local and regional requests from the press, radio and television, gave interviews and advised returning officers on media issues. They received and replied to some 6 200 media enquiries, including about 600 requests for interviews. The regional representatives were also responsible for establishing links with local radio stations and community newspapers, introducing themselves by distributing the printed and CD-ROM versions of our media guide. Our Web site included a section specifically for the media, where they could easily find most of the information of interest to them in one place.

Our media relations team at Elections Canada dealt with national issues, provided senior managers with media-monitoring reports, coordinated media requests for interviews with the Chief Electoral Officer, and issued 41 news releases, which were also posted on our Web site. The releases were generally of two kinds: informative (such as reminders about deadlines and special stories of interest to electors), and responses to specific issues (such as a court decision on third parties and voter turnout at the advance polls). The national media tended to give greater coverage to topics like the homeless vote, youth participation, the Internet, the National Register of Electors, and comparisons between the Canadian and American electoral systems. The Chief Electoral Officer was interviewed 25 times by various national radio, television, newspaper and magazine journalists, and by CBS News and the BBC. RDI – Radio-Canada’s French all-news television channel – produced two special documentaries on what goes on behind the scenes of an election, broadcast on November 26 and 27. Their introduction to election night included a series of interviews with election workers to find out what happens before voting begins and after the polling stations close.

We also used news releases and letters to the editors of newspapers to keep electors up-to-date with accurate information when difficulties arose. By the end of the campaign, nine explanatory and clarifying letters to newspaper editors from the Chief Electoral Officer were published on a variety of topics in the *National Post*, the *Financial Post*, *The Edmonton Journal*, *The Leader-Post* (Regina), *The Windsor Star*, *The London Free Press*, *Le Devoir* and *The Ottawa Citizen*.

One matter reported in the media was the large number of calls affecting access to the 1 800 INFO-VOTE telephone information service; as we progressively added more staff and became increasingly effective, we issued two news releases telling electors about the expanded phone enquiries capacity.

Official languages

Since the Chief Electoral Officer’s report on the September 11, 2000, by-elections in Kings–Hants and Okanagan–Coquihalla, the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages received six complaints about our print advertisement “Canada’s Election Law Has Changed,” published in all daily newspapers and several community newspapers across Canada in mid-September. These complaints have been resolved to the satisfaction of the Commissioner’s Office.

For the general election, all election officers were trained to carry out their responsibilities to provide service in both official languages. As usual, returning officers were instructed to recruit bilingual workers. In areas of the country where it was difficult to recruit bilingual staff, an alternative was to give unilingual election workers descriptive cards explaining to electors how to obtain service in either official language. A toll-free 1 800 number for bilingual service from Elections Canada was available, all election-related information was available in both official languages, and our Web site is fully bilingual.

Early in the election period, staff of Elections Canada and of the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages established procedures for responding to complaints within 24 hours. During the election, the Commissioner received 46 formal complaints (compared to 52 during the 1997 general election). Given that some 166 000 election officers across Canada were interacting with up to 20 million electors over a 36-day period, we were encouraged by the small number of complaints. We are confident that our hiring, training and awareness measures were largely successful.

The Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages is currently completing its analysis of all the complaints before submitting a final report on each complaint to Elections Canada.

Ready in the ridings

Canada's 301 returning officers opened their offices no later than four days after the election was called. Each one issued a formal public Notice of Election, "of which all persons are asked to take notice and to govern themselves accordingly and in obedience to Her Majesty's writ of election directed to me." With this ringing enjoinder, each office was open for business and ready to receive nominations from candidates.

Returning officers

Returning officers have to be exceptionally versatile, and able to work under constant pressure. Their duties require a wide range of skills, from dealing with electors and meeting their needs, to managing human and material resources, financial planning, information technology, contract negotiation, public relations, and more.

Although the bulk of the returning officers' work was done during the 36-day election period (when they worked 12 hours a day or more, every day), they had many other responsibilities before the election. In spring 2000, for example, they conducted the first of two planning exercises to make sure that they and their assistant returning officers

were ready for a possible election. They reviewed their polling division boundaries and advance polling districts, and confirmed the number of acute care hospitals and long-term care institutions in their ridings to plan for special ballot voting and for mobile polls.

Many returning officers new to the job

Since the last general election, new returning officers were appointed by Order in Council for 72 ridings, some receiving their appointments not long before the election call. This meant that one in five returning officers had not previously conducted an election. We were able to schedule 25 officers for our complete 8-day training program; another 16 had time to complete our intensive 4- to 5-day program, and 19 had time only for a condensed 3-day training session.

Following the resignation of the previous incumbent, the returning officer for Nepean-Carleton, Ontario, was appointed only three days before the election was called. During the campaign, the returning officer for Cumberland-Colchester, Nova Scotia, was suddenly hospitalized, and the assistant returning officer took over. The returning officer for Nunavut was absent from the riding for six days during the election period, during which the assistant returning officer served as acting returning officer.

They updated their lists of potential polling locations, identified areas to be targeted during the revision period, consulted local representatives of political parties about their planning, prepared a plan for training their election officers, set up itineraries for staff if travel to outlying locations would be required, identified potential training officers, and recruited an automation coordinator and assistant automation coordinator.

In August, their second planning exercise included identifying potential office locations, and preparing lists of the furniture, equipment, supplies and suppliers they would need. They also contacted political party representatives who would provide the names of possible revising agents, reviewed their telephone and fax requirements, found local printers for material such as ballots and voters lists, customized the *Information Manual for Local Office Staff*, and reviewed their preliminary election budgets, among other tasks.

In response to recommendations made after the 1997 general election, we provided all returning officers with a new reference CD-ROM, *Returning Officer's Manuals*, a compendium of 17 election-related manuals and the *Canada Elections Act*.

Returning offices and polling sites

The task of finding an office was not always straightforward for returning officers, because they are prevented by law from signing a lease before an election is called, and because of election requirements. Offices have to be available with little advance notice, they must have level access, and they should be able to support the computer and telecommunications needs of a returning officer. The address should also be easy for electors to find and reach. Similarly, securing the 17 340 polling sites that were necessary for the election occasionally posed difficulties. Before the issue of the writs, in the Quebec ridings of Joliette, Repentigny, Jonquière, Chambly, and Beauport–Montmorency–Côte-de-Beaupré–Île-d'Orléans, the returning officers had been given verbal confirmation that they could lease sites in several schools; once the election was called, however, the parents' Comité d'établissement of the schools withheld permission, and the returning officers only had a few days to choose alternative locations. Affected by this late change were polling divisions serving some 117 875 electors. Later on in the campaign, a strike of custodians in two Ontario ridings forced the relocation of advance polls affecting 50 polling divisions, as well as a further 43 polling stations on election day.

In two ridings, one in British Columbia and the other in Ontario, the returning officers encountered a lack of suitable polling facilities in one area in each riding. In both cases, they consulted local candidates, who agreed to a polling site outside the riding boundaries but close to the majority of the electors in the area. The Chief Electoral Officer used his authority under subsection 17(1) of the *Canada Elections Act* to approve using polling facilities outside the boundaries of Burnaby–Douglas, British Columbia, and Mississauga Centre, Ontario. The polling site used in Burnaby–Douglas was across the street from the electoral district limits, and served three advance polls and five ordinary polls. The

polling site used in Mississauga Centre was located just outside the boundaries and served five ordinary polls.

Approximately one quarter of the polling stations were located in community centres, one quarter in educational facilities, and the balance in places as varied as hospitals, fire halls and band offices, all chosen to make voting as accessible as possible.

Accessibility

Elections Canada has worked to remove the obstacles electors may encounter at the polls by making continuing improvements to administrative practices. Parliamentary committees that have reviewed the *Canada Elections Act* over the years have made additional recommendations. Amendments to the legislation in 1992, 1993, 1996 and 2000 have produced services that are better adapted to the needs of Canadian voters, particularly persons with disabilities. Returning officers received accessibility training and awareness sessions, to help them recognize the needs of persons with disabilities in their ridings.

Mobile polls

The Act provides for establishing mobile polling stations to collect the votes of elderly or disabled persons residing in institutions. Mobile polls served polling divisions with two or more health care institutions; the ballot boxes were carried by election officers who travelled from one institution to the next, and the mobile poll remained open at each place only as long as it took for the residents to vote. From coast to coast, 883 mobile polling stations serving 2 543 institutions were established in 256 ridings.

Accessible voting

Voting has been made more accessible by allowing electors to register at the advance polls as well as on election day, when the polls were open for 12 hours. The special ballot allowed Canadians to vote by mail or in person at the office of a returning officer; while all electors could use the special ballot, it was particularly useful to persons with disabilities who would have difficulty reaching a polling station.

Level access

Under the Act, every polling station is required to have level access. If returning officers are unable to obtain suitable premises equipped with level access, they may (but only with the Chief Electoral Officer's prior approval) locate a polling station in premises without such access. Accessibility was indicated on the voter information card, sent to every registered elector. Transfer certificates were available up to the Friday before election day to allow electors with disabilities to use other polling stations with level access, if their polling stations did not provide such access.

We have modified buildings and offices used during elections everywhere in Canada to provide level access; most of these modifications are permanent. By arranging to have ramps built, returning officers in 85 ridings modified 239 facilities to provide level access. The facilities served 36 advance polls and 1 069 ordinary polls. Of the 17 340 polling sites used on election day, only 89 (0.5 percent) did not provide level access, compared to 406 (2.3 percent) at the 1997 general election.

An elector who was registered for a special ballot, who could not go to the office of the returning officer, and who could not mark the ballot because of a disability, could vote at home in the presence of an election officer and a witness.

At the advance polls and on election day, any person with a visual impairment could ask the returning officer for a voting template, and assistance in marking the ballot was available.

Hiring and training local staff

As in the past, deputy returning officers, poll clerks and registration officers were nominated in each riding by the candidates representing the two registered political parties whose candidates came first (the deputy returning officer and half the registration officers) and second (poll clerks and half the registration officers) in the previous election in the riding. This system typically meant that each of these two candidates would have had to provide the names of as many as 300 qualified people.

Getting enough names from the candidates and parties has always presented problems for returning officers, who have had to develop their own contingency lists over time. Moreover, new returning officers do not always obtain those lists of personnel from their predecessors. The problem is compounded when people who have been trained for these positions do not turn up for work on election day for various reasons.

This election was no exception. Because some candidates did not supply the names of enough workers, the Chief Electoral Officer gave special authorization for those returning officers to recruit from outside their ridings. They had to advertise for election day workers in some ridings, and were occasionally swamped with applicants at the last minute. Nevertheless, the returning officers were successful in finding some 166 000 election workers without insurmountable problems.

This was the first election at which returning officers were authorized to appoint liaison officers to work with special needs communities in their ridings. They appointed 22 officers for the homeless, 7 for ethnocultural communities, and 52 for Aboriginal communities. Also new for this election were three other positions: an assistant automation coordinator, made necessary by the increased sophistication and automation of the local office; a training officer, to provide training sessions for poll officers; and in more populated ridings, a recruitment officer to help recruit the hundreds of poll officers required.

The electronic office

The number of office systems relying on electronic data transmission increased after 1997, when the Event Management System, the Election Payment System, ECAPLE (the Elections Canada Automated Production of Lists of Electors system) and the Event Results System were the main systems providing electronic data to Elections Canada. In 2000, REVISE (which replaced ECAPLE) and the Returning Officers Payment System (which replaced the Election Payment System) were added in local offices. REVISE transmitted daily revision counts (the number of changes made to the preliminary voters lists) that improved revision monitoring and analysis at Elections Canada. It also sent final voters list data electronically after the election. As a result of the new payment system and excellent co-operation from staff in the local offices, we were able to pay some 95 percent of election day workers and landlords within four weeks of election day compared to six weeks after the 1997 election.

The Returning Office Technology Centre at Elections Canada in Ottawa could download electronic files or retrieve data from each of the 301 ridings' local area network servers across Canada. The telecommunication system proved robust enough to allow Elections Canada to receive most of the data promptly by modem line, although there were isolated cases of transmission failure. If retrieving the data was critical, we could gain access to the file server through the modem line.

For this election, returning officers had a new software application for the voter information cards. The program gave returning officers their complete database of polling sites, drawn from the national database, and allowed them to update the database if polling locations changed after the issue of the writ. The program then produced the different versions of the voter information cards, ready for the printers, saving approximately three days' work. The updated databases were also transmitted to the national database at Elections Canada, where Enquiries Unit staff could respond to electors who asked where they could vote.

For the first time, returning officers received nearly 50 forms in electronic format, rather than myriad paper copies. This saved printing, handling and shipping costs as well as storage space.

Support for local offices

To assist returning officers and their staff, a new Elections Canada Support Network was set up in Ottawa, with seven different help desks: for election coordination, computer

An accident and a theft call for swift action

Before the advance polls, one tragic incident temporarily affected the distribution of ballot paper to 58 ridings. On November 2, a Canada Post tractor-trailer was involved in a serious accident east of Kenora, Ontario, that killed the two drivers. The truck was carrying ballot paper that was destroyed in the ensuing fire. Within 10 hours, our Distribution Centre dispatched a second shipment, and the paper arrived in the ridings in time for the ballots to be printed after the close of nominations.

Returning officers reported only one instance of equipment theft: computer equipment stolen during a break-in on October 29 from the office of the returning officer in the riding of Stoney Creek, Ontario. Once the police allowed the office to reopen, our supplier installed new equipment and software within 48 hours; no private elector information was stolen.

applications, elector registration and revision, Special Voting Rules, finance, computer and telephone equipment, and general network support. With one toll-free telephone number and an interactive voice response system, callers could get swift assistance for any issue that came up. Three levels of expertise were available from 70 advisors, 18 hours a day from Monday to Friday, 15 hours on Saturdays, and 9½ hours on Sundays. The service answered an average of 1 332 calls a day.

Contingency plans for emergencies

In the ridings, each assistant returning officer was responsible for dealing with security-related situations, including the possibility of closing the office because of a weather emergency, fire, gas leaks, heating system breakdowns, and so forth. Each

office had complete security plans covering the safety of the staff and electors, and procedures for keeping the office's information, information technology equipment and premises secure. For the first time, returning officers were authorized to install an alarm system or to have a uniformed security guard on site throughout the election period. On election day, every local office had a uniformed security guard on duty to control the flow of traffic and control access to restricted areas.

Elections Canada prepared a contingency plan in case the Chief Electoral Officer had to use his discretionary powers under sections 17 and 59 of the *Canada Elections Act*. Section 17 covers an emergency, an unusual or unforeseen circumstance or an error that makes it necessary for the Chief Electoral Officer to adapt any provision of the Act. Section 59 covers fire, flood or any other disaster that requires the Governor in Council to withdraw the writ in a riding – that is, to stop the election in that riding. We called on the expertise of Emergency Preparedness Canada for help in preparing the plan, and obtained a list of contacts for a variety of urgent situations.

One of those situations was the possibility of a snowstorm that could affect the opening of polling stations. In our daily reports, we included a review of national weather forecasts. Only one weather emergency arose, when a snowstorm in the riding of Erie–Lincoln, Ontario, threatened to shut down three advance polls. Although the mayor of Fort Erie declared a state of emergency, the returning officer was able to keep the polls open despite the storm. Section 59 has never been used.

The Chief Electoral Officer used section 17 several times during the election, mainly to add registration officers at advance polls; this occurred in 51 ridings. On one occasion in Vancouver East, British Columbia, a candidate decided to bring busloads of people to vote at the advance polls; invoking section 17, the Chief Electoral Officer authorized the returning officer to add a deputy returning officer and teams of poll clerks at the polling site. He used section 17 for this purpose in two ridings. Under subsection 22(5) of the Act, the Chief Electoral Officer also authorized a number of returning officers to hire election officers from outside their ridings, and to hire election officers between the ages of 16 and 18.

Ready in remote areas

Distributing election supplies in remote areas, principally in the North, is a challenge that we now take in stride. In some ridings, the absence of roads and the foggy and snowy

Special delivery for special ballots

Getting special ballot kits in and out of Eureka in Nunavut was an example of the lengths to which returning officers had to go to serve all electors in their ridings. Seven electors worked at the weather station on Ellesmere Island in the High Arctic – the jump-off point for adventurers heading for the North Pole, with the coldest average annual temperature in Canada. Scheduled commercial flights only go as far as Resolute, so the returning officer for the riding of Nunavut had to charter a plane to carry the supplies to Eureka.

weather made delivery of supplies by air somewhat uncertain. Thanks to the efforts of regional Canada Post officers, the Department of National Defence, and (in one case) the captain of a ferry that crosses the Mackenzie River, ballot boxes and other supplies finally reached eight northern communities that had been briefly cut off.

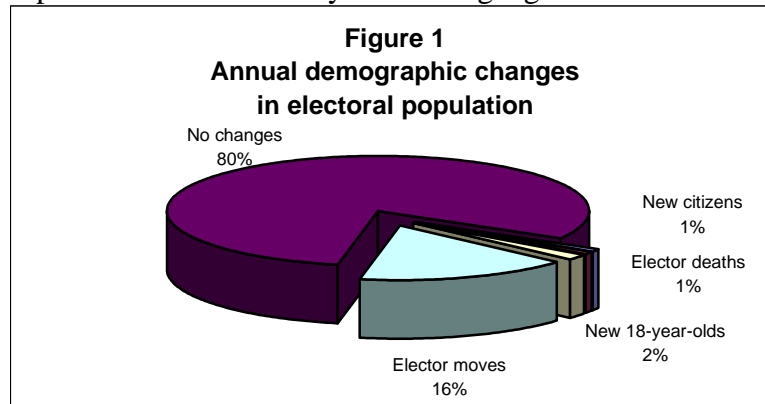
Preparing the voters lists

The day the election was called, Elections Canada staff sent electronic files and printed copies of each riding's preliminary voters lists to the returning officer – 301 sets of lists with the names and addresses of nearly 19.4 million electors. This was the first general election for which the preliminary lists were produced entirely from the National Register of Electors and the registers of international and Canadian Forces electors.

The Register's data quality

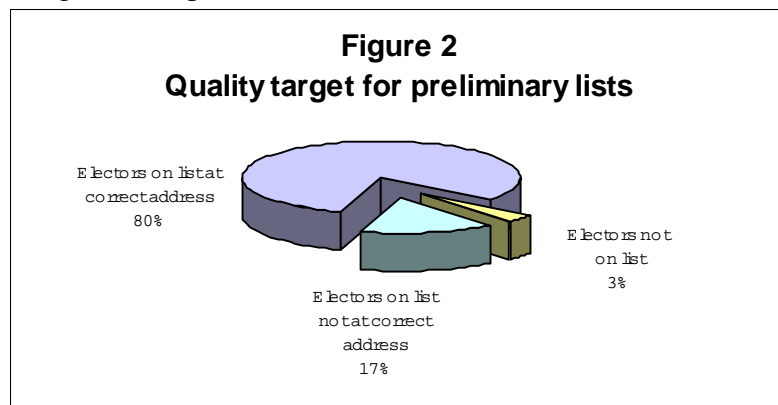
In our 1996 study of the Register's feasibility, we indicated that our reliability target was 80 percent, based on the 1993 experience of successfully conducting a general election

using a one-year-old final voters list that had declined to an average 80 percent level of reliability during the year. As Figure 1 shows, voter information inevitably changes over the course of a year. This happens because of demographic changes: some people move, some die, and others become eligible to vote by turning 18 or receiving Canadian citizenship.



Through comparisons between lists of electors dating back to 1984 and Statistics Canada census data, we know that an average of five percent of electors (about a million

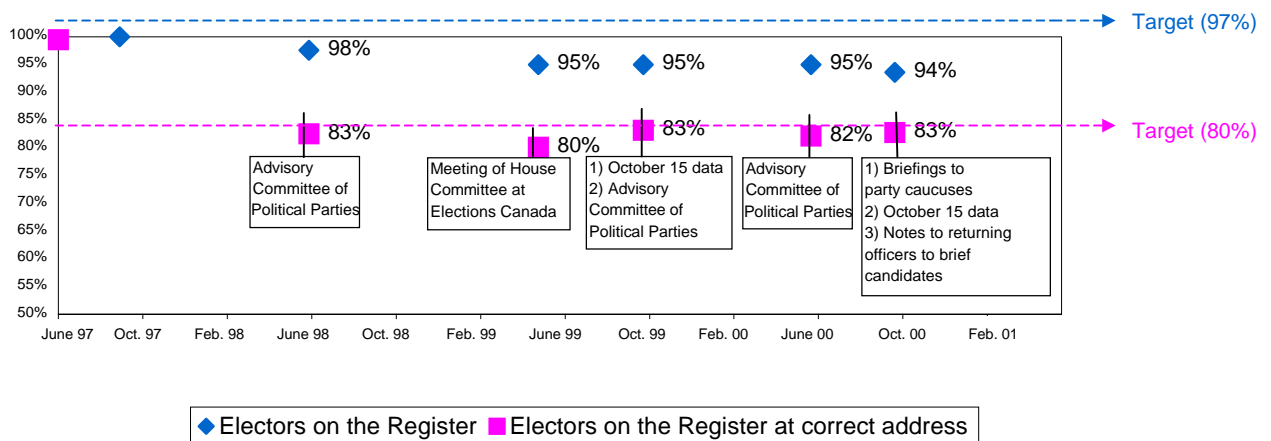
Canadians) are not included on the voters lists, even with door-to-door enumeration. This five percent was, therefore, not included in our calculation of quality targets. Figure 2 indicates our quality targets for the preliminary lists.



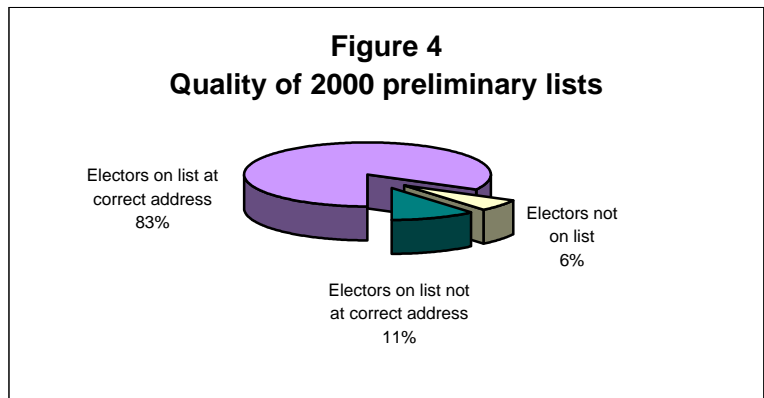
Since the 1996 feasibility study, we have adopted a more effective method of measuring the quality of the Register's data. This involves two measurements: coverage (the percentage of all electors who are listed) and currency (the percentage of electors listed at the correct address). Using these measures, the Register's quality targets for the 2000 general election were to have 97 percent of electors included, and 80 percent of electors listed at the correct addresses.

Since June 1998, Elections Canada has regularly reported to members of Parliament and political parties on our estimates of the quality of the information in the Register. Data quality analyses are provided with the voters lists sent annually to MPs and political parties. Figure 3 shows the various briefings that have taken place.

Figure 3
Reports on Register data quality



By fall 2000, we were very close to our quality target. We estimated the proportion of electors listed in the Register to be 94 percent, slightly lower (by three percent) than our reliability target, owing largely to the low proportion of new 18-year-olds added to the Register. We estimated the percentage of electors listed in the Register at the correct addresses to be 83 percent, slightly above our reliability target. Overall, the quality of the 2000 preliminary lists was



comparable to that of the preliminary lists used for the 1993 general election. We had procedures and resources in place for what we expected to be some 3 million changes to the preliminary lists during the revision period of the election.

Four iterations of the voters lists

Although Canadians commonly refer to *the* voters list, in fact there are four different lists for each polling division in any general election or by-election: the preliminary, revised, official and final voters lists.

The *preliminary* lists for each riding are produced by Elections Canada and sent to the returning officers immediately following the issue of the writs. The returning officers provide an electronic and a printed copy to candidates when their nominations are confirmed.

Each returning officer produces *revised* voters lists for the riding 10 days before election day, and sends an electronic and a printed copy to confirmed candidates. The revised lists include additions, removals, corrections and address changes made to the preliminary lists during revision, and are used during voting at the advance polls. The names of people who registered to vote by special ballot are marked with an *S*, to indicate that they cannot vote a second time at the advance polls or on election day.

Three days before election day, the returning officer distributes electronic and printed copies of the *official* voters lists to candidates. Each deputy returning officer receives a copy of the official list for his or her polling division. The official lists reflect removals from, and additions, corrections, and address changes made to the revised lists. The names of people who voted at the advance polls are crossed off the official lists, to indicate that they cannot vote again on election day.

After election day, returning officers prepare electronic lists that include voters who registered on election day, and send them to Elections Canada. There, staff prepare electronic and printed copies of the *final* voters lists to be distributed to registered political parties and members of Parliament.

Revision

The process of adding new names to a voters list, correcting existing information and removing names is known as revision.

The formal revision period lasted for four weeks, from October 25 to November 21 (so that the official voters lists could be produced the following day), although unregistered voters could still register to vote on election day itself, November 27. To respond to revision requests from electors, each returning officer appointed revising agents selected from lists provided by the registered political parties whose candidates came first and second in the riding during the previous election. Elections Canada estimated the projected volume of revision requests for each riding, and advised the returning officer, who could use this information to determine staffing levels. Returning officers, in turn, were asked to inform the candidates.

An elector may want to be registered because he or she has recently acquired Canadian citizenship or turned 18, or may never have registered to vote before. If the elector is already registered, he or she may want to correct existing information, such as a name, civic address or mailing address; to report a recent change of address; to be removed from the voters list for personal reasons; or to remove a former resident from the list because that person either has died or has moved.

We devised revision procedures to make them convenient for electors, while respecting the need to maintain the integrity of the electoral process. If an elector has moved within the riding, for instance, or a previous occupant must be removed from the list, both changes can be done over the phone, with appropriate identification checks. If an elector was previously on a voters list in another riding and has moved, the change requires a signature on the application form, but not proof of identity. Identification is required only if the elector is not already listed somewhere in the Register.

Special initiatives

To improve the accuracy of the preliminary and revised voters lists, Elections Canada undertook several special projects based on last-minute information that we received from outside sources immediately before and during the first week of the election. The results gave returning officers a head start on their revision activities, helping to reduce their reliance on elector-initiated revisions and registrations at the advance or ordinary polls.

Information from Canada Post allowed us to modify some 388 000 place names in mailing addresses to meet the corporation's delivery standards, and to update more than 48 000 rural mailing addresses in New Brunswick and another 14 000 post office box addresses nationally. We completed the project in time to correct the data for the voter information card mailing labels. We are improving our address management procedures to capture such large-scale changes in the future without waiting for scheduled updates.

We were able to determine the polling division numbers for 197 000 electors for whom address changes had been made recently in the Register, but who had been left off the lists because their addresses were not yet assigned to polling divisions. We printed revision forms for these electors and shipped them to returning officers, who added the names to the preliminary voters lists before they mailed out the voter information cards. This matter will be resolved, for the most part, once we have completed our geo-referencing activities before the redistribution of electoral boundaries that will follow the 2001 census.

We received new elector data from Alberta, Manitoba and Quebec just before and immediately after the writs were issued. Normally, the information would have been incorporated into the Register during its next scheduled update cycle. Instead, we were able to accelerate the process over a two-week period, and provide an additional 481 400 revisions to returning officers. With information received from the Chief Electoral Officer of Alberta, we updated the addresses of 120 000 voters, based on the

late summer provincial confirmation, and added 67 000 new 18-year-olds. The release of a one-year backlog of data from the Manitoba Registrar of Vital Statistics allowed us to remove the names of 8 400 deceased people before the voter information cards were mailed. And a release from the Directeur général des élections du Québec gave us data to incorporate 217 000 elector moves and 45 000 new 18-year-old electors, and remove the records of 24 000 electors who had died.

In Quebec, young electors who have just turned 18 are automatically added to the provincial voters lists, and the information is passed on to the National Register of Electors. Elsewhere in Canada, we write to these new electors to get their consent to have their names added to the Register and to confirm their citizenship. At the beginning of the election, we sent registration reminder letters to 428 000 young people who turned 18 after the 1997 general election. This included 373 000 who had previously been invited to list their names in the National Register of Electors, but had not responded, and 55 000 newly identified 18-year-olds.

Targeted revision

Targeted revision, an important activity that returning officers carried out during the second week of the election period, was directed at specific areas where electors are less likely to appear on the voters lists at their current home addresses. Returning officers were required to determine these areas after consulting political parties and MPs as part of event preparations in spring 2000. In general, they concentrated on recently developed areas such as new subdivisions, areas known for high mobility, including clusters of apartment buildings and student residences, and institutions such as nursing homes and chronic care hospitals.

Pairs of revising agents visited the targeted areas and took registration information directly at the door, or if no one was home after two visits, left a mail-in registration package for residents. Registering at the door was more convenient for electors – if they mailed in their registrations, they would have to fill in a form, and provide photocopies of identification documents. Preliminary statistics show that revising agents visited approximately 515 000 addresses, and completed registration forms for 192 000 households, reaching an average of 1.7 electors per household. The information on the preliminary lists for all electors at 174 000 of the addresses visited was confirmed as correct. The targeted revision exercise provided effective coverage of high-mobility areas; Table 4 shows the details.

Table 4 Targeted revision

Number of addresses visited	515 000
Number of forms completed	192 000 (37% of addresses visited)
Number of kits left at the door	149 000 (29% of addresses visited)
Number of addresses where registrations were confirmed	174 000 (34% of addresses visited)

The voter information card

Ten days after the election was called, most returning officers began to mail out personalized voter information cards to everyone whose name appeared on the preliminary voters lists. Each card showed the name and address of the registered elector, the location, dates and hours of voting at the advance polls and on election day (polling stations with level access were marked with a wheelchair symbol), and the address, telephone number and office hours for the office of the riding's returning officer. While Elections Canada supplied the address labels, generated from Register data, returning officers provided the local voting information that appeared on the cards, and arranged the printing and mailing. Returning officers also mailed or handed voter information cards to persons they added to the lists through targeted revision and other special initiatives.

After the elector's name, the label included the words "or occupant." Because the purpose of the cards (as well as confirming registration) was to inform as many people as possible about where they could vote, and where to call if they were not registered, Elections Canada had arranged with Canada Post that cards addressed to people who had moved should not be redirected. By including "occupant" in the address, we encouraged the electors who would not receive their own cards to read the important returning officer and voting information for their address. They could then contact the returning officer to register, and have the former occupants' names removed.

Before the voter information cards were mailed, a householder pamphlet was delivered to every residence in the country, giving basic information on the election and alerting electors to expect the cards. The mailing of the card was accompanied by extensive Elections Canada advertising on television, radio and popular Web portals, as well as in daily and weekly newspapers. Returning officers' staff were trained in procedures they should follow to answer electors' questions and requests.

Despite our efforts to make sure that all mailing addresses in the Register were valid, we knew that some cards would probably be returned by Canada Post as undeliverable. Some addresses in New Brunswick required special attention, because the province had converted rural route addresses to numbered civic addresses for the 911 emergency telephone system. In the end, only 100 000 cards were returned across the country, or about 0.5 percent of the national mailing. Returning officers received outstanding co-operation from Canada Post and its local coordinators in resolving problems. If an elector did not receive an information card, or received one that required

corrections, our advertising program encouraged him or her to contact Elections Canada. In a few ridings, the cards were mailed out several days late; since our television, radio and daily newspaper advertising was timed to coincide with the cards' arrival, these delays increased the number of calls to our toll-free enquiries line.

The effectiveness of revision

By the time the polls closed on election day, we had handled more than 3.6 million revisions, including electors registered at the door during targeted revision and the special initiatives data sent to returning officers by Elections Canada early in the campaign. Some 63 000 electors registered during the advance polls, and almost 1.05 million on election day. We had projected 660 000 election day registrants, based on our estimates of the quality of the preliminary voters lists and the volume of revisions processed during the election. We were prepared for a million.

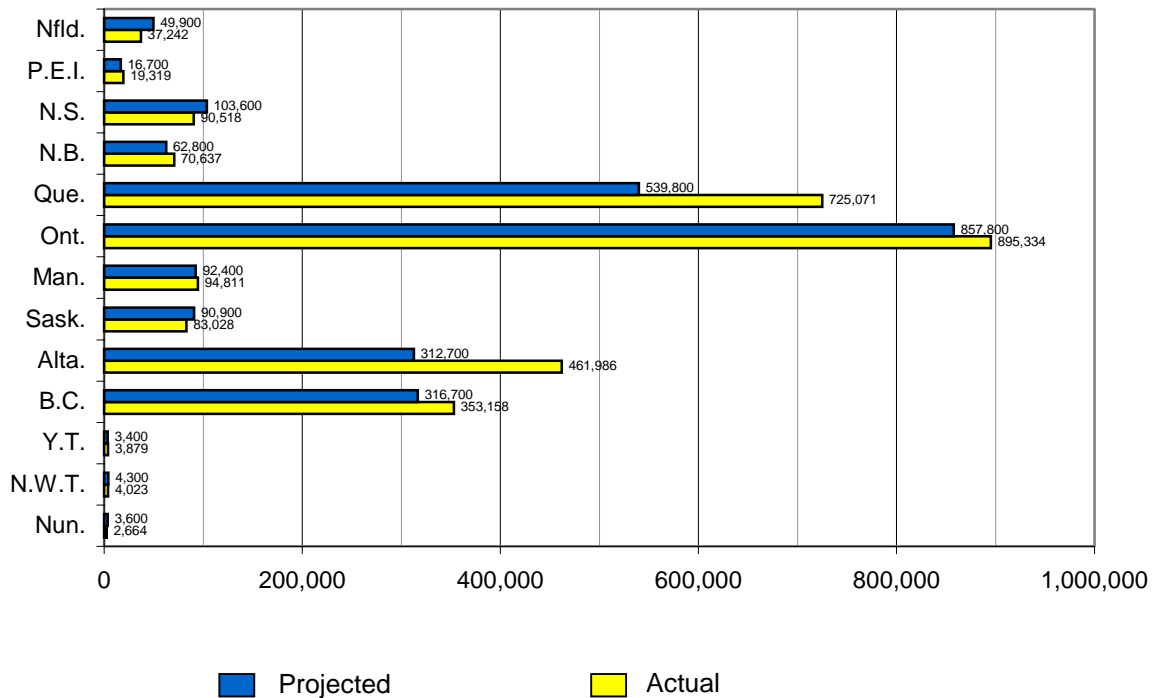
The Chief Electoral Officer contacted all returning officers a week before election day, asking them to be prepared for extra registrations. Seventy ridings were identified as likely to have especially high volumes of registrants on election day, and preparations for election day were tracked closely in those ridings. The Chief Electoral Officer authorized every returning officer to increase the number of registration officers and their working hours as required. Returning officers were authorized to keep teams of registration officers on call, ready to help out wherever and whenever necessary. In all cases, returning officers were asked to consult the candidates about registration plans for election day, and to take their comments into account.

Table 5 summarizes our projected revision figures and the actual number of changes in the lists. For the entire election period, we had projected a little more than 3 million changes, including changes issuing from targeted revision, special initiatives, registrations at advance polls and on election day, and all other revision activity. The actual number of changes was about 650 000 higher than we estimated. Some of the difference resulted from an increase in corrections (primarily to addresses), most of which did not affect the delivery of the voter information card. While the number of removals from the lists was slightly lower than expected, the number of registrations (including those resulting from moves) was 16 percent higher than we estimated. As Figure 5 shows, most of the difference between projected and actual registrations came from Alberta and Quebec, despite the last-minute update information sent to returning officers.

Table 5 Projected and actual revisions

Nature of change	Projected	Actual	Difference (Actual – Projected)
Additions and address changes	2 454 600	2 841 670	387 070
Removals	442 300	416 393	-25 907
Corrections	124 100	413 428	289 328
Totals	3 021 000	3 671 491	650 491

**Figure 5
2000 election revisions –
Additions and address changes**



The effectiveness of the National Register of Electors, combined with the revision process, in producing viable voters lists had previously been tested only in by-elections. This first nationwide use of the Register met our expectations in terms of overall performance, and showed that the Register is, generally, an effective source of data for establishing the preliminary lists.

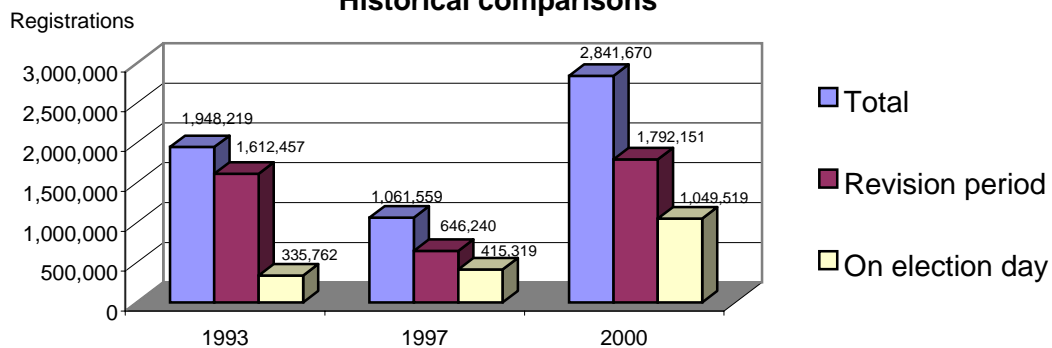
Our post-election evaluation includes an assessment of the complete elector registration process, and how we can refine our tools and planning techniques. The difference of 650 491 between projected and actual revisions to the lists amounts to three percent of all electors on the final lists – it poses questions to be answered, and a challenge in preparing for the next election.

We are constantly working to improve the quality of the Register data, as well as our methods of estimating the Register’s data quality, based on information from this election.

We must also assess the impact on revision figures of various events during the election campaign itself. For instance, the last-minute data that we sent to returning officers in Alberta and Quebec resulted in changes to the lists recorded by the returning officers as revisions. However, some individuals whose information was revised based on this data might have had to make additional changes to their elector information during the election.

Although the interests of efficient electoral administration suggest that as many list revisions as possible be completed before election day, the option of election day registration is now widely known through Elections Canada’s advertising and voter information programs. It is entirely possible that a large proportion of voters will continue to choose to register on election day. In this context, Elections Canada’s special preparations for election day registration were prudent, since more voters registered at the polls in 2000 than at either of the two previous general elections, as Figure 6 shows.

Figure 6
Distribution of additions and address changes
Historical comparisons



It is important to note that more than 3.6 million changes were successfully recorded during this election. This is not only a tribute to the staff in the local offices and at Elections Canada, but also underscores the importance of effective information programs and the significance of revision as a central part of a permanent voters list system.

Registered political parties

A political party that wishes to participate in a federal general election or by-election may apply to register with the Chief Electoral Officer. Registration confers several advantages, such as inclusion of the party name on the ballot with the candidates it endorses, the right to issue tax receipts for political contributions, an allotment of guaranteed paid and free broadcasting time, and partial reimbursement of the party's election expenses if it qualifies.

The registration process starts when Elections Canada receives the party's application for registration, which must be submitted at least 60 days before a general election is called. The application must include information about the party, the leader of the party, its officers, chief agent and auditor, and be signed by 100 electors who are party members. The Chief Electoral Officer ensures that the party's name and logo are not likely to be confused with other party names and logos; he also mails a questionnaire to each of the 100 electors, who must confirm that they are party members. The party is registered when all the application requirements are met, and the Chief Electoral Officer verifies that the party has nominated confirmed candidates in at least 50 ridings in a general election. If a party fails to nominate 50 candidates, it will lose its registered or eligible status, will be subject to third party election advertising limits, and will not be eligible for a variety of other benefits under the *Canada Elections Act*. It will not, for instance, be able to issue tax receipts to contributors or qualify for reimbursement of a portion of its election expenses. The party can reapply for registration for the next election.

When the election was called, there were 10 registered political parties and two eligible parties (the Marijuana Party and the Communist Party of Canada). An eligible party is a

How many candidates?

The question of determining the point when a political party becomes registered has been before the courts recently in the case of *Figueroa v. Canada* (Miguel Figueroa is the current leader of the Communist Party of Canada). The present status of the case is that the Ontario Court of Appeal upheld the requirement to confirm 50 candidates to become a registered party, except that it declared it is unconstitutional to require a political party to nominate 50 candidates to put the party's name on the ballot. The effect of this declaration was suspended for six months, and the Communist Party of Canada has applied to the Supreme Court of Canada for leave to appeal the decision.

party that has completed its application process, including confirmation by 100 electors that they are members of the party. After the election, there were 11 registered political parties. The two eligible parties each nominated 50 or more confirmed candidates and became registered, and the registration of one party (the Christian Heritage Party of Canada) was suspended because it nominated fewer than 50 candidates.

For returning officers, the issue of which parties were registered was important because it affected the final wording on the ballots. It was also important to those electors who marked their ballots by recognizing the candidates of particular parties. A candidate who wanted his or her name to be associated with a party had to submit a letter of endorsement signed by the party leader or an authorized representative at the time the candidate submitted the nomination papers.

Election advertising

Several provisions in the new *Canada Elections Act* affected advertising by political parties and third parties during this general election. The aim of these changes was to foster the level playing field that underlies the financial provisions of the Act. All Canadians have the right to know who is intervening in the political debate, and who is doing so through financial support.

Third party advertising

The Act regulates election advertising by third parties: groups or persons other than candidates, registered political parties or their riding associations. After spending \$500 on advertising that promoted or opposed a party or candidate during the election campaign, third parties had to register with the Chief Electoral Officer. They were allowed to spend up to \$150 000 overall, but not more than \$3 000 in any single riding, with inflation adjustments; the adjusted limits for this general election were \$152 550 and \$3 051. If the third party was a group with a governing body (such as a trade union, corporation or other entity), the application for registration had to include a copy of the resolution passed by its governing body authorizing it to incur election advertising expenses.

The term “election advertising” applies both to direct promotion of or opposition to candidates or registered parties, and to advertising that takes a position on an issue with which a registered party or candidate is associated. Third parties must identify themselves in their election advertising, and the Act prohibits collusion to try to avoid the spending limits.

After an election, third parties must produce a financial report on their election advertising expenses and the sources of the funds financing the advertising. But they are not entitled to reimbursements, do not have access to the voters lists, and are not entitled, as third parties, to issue tax receipts for contributions.

Forty-eight third parties registered with Elections Canada: 23 groups with authorizing resolutions passed by their governing bodies, 10 without resolutions and 15 individuals. Their financial reports are due by March 27, 2001.

The *Harper* case

On June 7, 2000, after the *Canada Elections Act* received royal assent but before it came into effect on September 1, Stephen Harper filed a constitutional challenge to the Act's third party provisions in the Alberta Court of Queen's Bench.

The trial began on October 2, 2000, and continued until October 13, with nine days of evidence. The Chief Electoral Officer was granted leave to intervene in the case as a voice independent of both the federal Attorney General and Mr. Harper. He intervened to explain why he had recommended regulation of third parties in his reports to Parliament and appearances before parliamentary committees.

The Chief Electoral Officer has not recommended a precise spending limit for third parties nor commented on the appropriateness of the limits chosen by Parliament, but instead has limited his comments to the underlying principles of disclosure and spending limits, the importance of a level playing field for all who intervene in the electoral process, and providing information about the amounts spent by political parties and candidates on election advertising in past elections.

The election was called on October 22, before Mr. Justice Cairns had time to receive arguments based on the trial evidence, review the evidence or write his judgment.

On October 23, Mr. Harper asked the court to suspend the application of the third party provisions until the judge could render his decision on the merits of the evidence in the trial case. On the same day, Mr. Justice Cairns granted the injunction in part. He suspended the enforcement of the spending limit provisions until he could render his trial decision, but did not suspend enforcement of any of the other third party provisions, which are focused on disclosure requirements, such as the requirement to register as a third party, to identify oneself as a third party, and to identify the sources of funding for third party advertising. The federal government appealed this decision to the Alberta Court of Appeal, which upheld Mr. Justice Cairns' injunction ruling on October 25.

The Chief Electoral Officer issued a news release on October 26, announcing that the spending limits would not be enforced anywhere in Canada. He did so to ensure that the same federal election rules applied across the country.

The federal government then appealed the Alberta Court of Appeal's decision to the Supreme Court of Canada. On November 10, the Supreme Court granted leave to the Attorney General of Canada to appeal the injunction decision of the Alberta courts, and suspended the application of the injunction decision until the injunction application could be heard by the Supreme Court. The effect of the Supreme Court's ruling was that the spending limits were reinstated for the duration of the general election. The Chief Electoral Officer issued a further news release on November 10, announcing that the spending limits were again in force, but that Elections Canada would not apply the spending limits on third party election advertising between October 22 and November 10 because of the earlier injunction.

On November 24, 2000, Mr. Justice Cairns heard oral arguments in the trial. At the time this report was written, Mr. Justice Cairns had not yet released his trial decision.

Election advertising and the Web

We posted on our Web site a series of questions and answers concerning the Act's third party provisions. One of the answers dealt with the question of whether political messages on a third party's Web site were, in fact, election advertising, and included the following analysis.

To decide whether a message being sent by a third party can be defined as election advertising, four questions have to be asked: Is an election underway? Is the message transmitted to the public? Is the message an advertising message? And is the message one that a reasonable person would understand as promoting or opposing the election of a candidate or political party, or as taking a position on an issue with which a candidate or party is associated? If the answer to all four questions is *Yes*, the message would be considered election advertising.

The question of whether an election is underway is straightforward. In our view, posting a message on a Web page that is available to the public is a transmission to the public. This brings us to a more difficult part of the test: when is a message on the Internet an advertising message and when is it not an advertising message?

An advertising message is an advertisement purchased, for example, on television, on radio, in a newspaper or magazine, or on a billboard; included in flyers or direct mail sent to households that did not request them, or in telephone calls to phone numbers at which no one requested the calls; or placed as a banner ad on someone else's Web site.

By this reasoning, letters to the editor, editorials, interviews, columns, commentaries, news items, speeches, debates, or meetings are not advertisements as such, unless they are included in an advertisement that meets the criteria of the four questions. A book that was intended to be made available to the public regardless of whether an election were called, and is sold for no less than its commercial value (including production and distribution costs), is not an advertising message.

A statement of an individual's personal political views on the Internet, whether on the person's own Web page or in a discussion group, is not an advertising message. Nor, in the interpretation of the Chief Electoral Officer, is a third party's expression of its political views on its own Web page an advertising message. However, a newspaper advertisement promoting the Web page of a third party would be considered election advertising, if the advertisement meets the criteria of the four questions. Similarly, examples of advertising messages include unsolicited e-mail sent out by a third party, or banner ads placed on other Web sites by the third party.

Advertising blackouts

The new Act addresses the 1996 decision of the Alberta Court of Appeal in *Somerville v. Canada (A.G.)*. Before the *Somerville* decision, no one was allowed to use broadcast election advertising or advertising in a periodical publication at the beginning (roughly the first 18 days of what was then a 47-day campaign) or at the end of the election period (the day before election day and election day). The Alberta Court of Appeal found that these provisions were unconstitutional. The new Act has now imposed a blackout on election advertising on election day only. The blackout applies to most media, but not to pamphlets, billboards, signs or Internet advertisements that are published before election day and not changed on election day.

Election surveys

The Act also places a blackout on transmission to the public of new public opinion survey results on election day. Previously, the Act prohibited dissemination of new survey results in the last three days of the election campaign. This provision was found to be unconstitutional by the Supreme Court of Canada in 1988 in its decision in *Thomson Newspapers v. Canada (A.G.)*. In addition to the ban on disseminating survey results on election day, the new Act requires that certain information about the methodology of public opinion surveys be reported. The first media outlet to release the results of an election opinion survey, and any other outlet broadcasting or publishing them during the next 24 hours, must report details about the survey: its sponsor, who conducted it, when it was held, the population from which the survey sample was drawn, the number of people contacted to participate, and the margin of error. The Commissioner of Canada Elections has received two complaints relating to a failure to publish the necessary information on methodology.

We were asked how we interpret the methodology provisions of the Act if the media receives election survey results without any knowledge of the methodology. The answer we posted on our Web site states that the objective of sections 326 and 327 is to ensure that the Canadian public has accurate information about the reliability of election surveys. However, the Act does not specifically address the situation where the media do not have information about the methodology. In such a case, it would be in keeping with the objectives of the statute that the media indicate that the methodology of the survey is not known.

Political broadcasting time

The Broadcasting Arbitrator is responsible for managing the annual allocation of political broadcasting time in accordance with the *Canada Elections Act*, and for resolving disputes among broadcasters, political parties, and candidates. Mr. Peter S. Grant was first appointed as Arbitrator by the Chief Electoral Officer in 1992, following unanimous agreement by representatives of the political parties then represented in the House of Commons. He was reappointed in 1994 and again in 1997. His current appointment automatically ends six months after the 2000 federal general election.

Paid broadcasting time is allocated as a result of either unanimous agreement among registered parties or a decision by the Broadcasting Arbitrator, based on the criteria in the Act and consultations among those parties. The political parties have never agreed unanimously on the amount of time to be allocated to each party. For the 2000 general election, the Broadcasting Arbitrator again made the allocation.

A party is free to purchase more or less than its full allotted time. Purchases above the allocations are not subject to the allocation provisions in the *Canada Elections Act*; they are, however, subject to the overall election expenses limits for political parties and candidates. The Act also requires certain broadcasters to provide free broadcasting time to political parties that receive an allocation of paid broadcasting time.

As the Act requires, the Broadcasting Arbitrator and the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission issued guidelines to political parties and broadcasters. Both sets of guidelines and the Broadcasting Arbitrator's allocation of paid broadcasting time were available on our Web site, under Media. Details of the broadcasting time allotted to various parties during the election are included in the Broadcasting Arbitrator's Report in the Appendix of this report.

Nominations

This election saw the second-highest number of candidates ever – 1 808, second only to the 2 155 who ran in 1993 – and continued the general trend of increasing numbers of candidates in general elections. It was also the first general election since political party names were put on the ballots in 1972 in which only one party nominated a candidate in every riding.

Who can be nominated?

The right to be a candidate in a federal election is protected by the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. Anyone qualified to vote on the date he or she files nomination papers may run for election, except for a small number of people listed in section 65 of the *Canada Elections Act* (election officers, prisoners and certain judges, among others). A candidate may run in only one riding at a time, but does not have to be a registered elector or even live in that riding.

Nominations opened when returning officers issued their Notices of Election, and closed at 2:00 p.m. local time on November 6. Candidates had until 5:00 p.m. local time the same day to withdraw or make limited changes to their nomination papers. Of the 1 808 persons confirmed as candidates, 373 (20.6 percent) were women, who totalled 24.4 percent of candidates in 1997. Twenty-nine candidates ran as independents and 57 candidates had no affiliation; among the 10 political parties already registered and the two eligible parties, 11 parties endorsed a confirmed candidate in at least 50 ridings.

Liberal Party of Canada	301
Canadian Reform Conservative Alliance	298
New Democratic Party	298
Progressive Conservative Party of Canada	291
The Green Party of Canada	111
Marxist-Leninist Party of Canada	84
Bloc Québécois	75
Marijuana Party	73
Canadian Action Party	70
Natural Law Party of Canada	69
Communist Party of Canada	52

Of the confirmed candidates, 58 women and 221 men held seats in the previous House of Commons – that is, nearly 93 percent of the previously sitting MPs were running for re-election.

Appointing agents and auditors

The official agent had to be appointed before the candidate received any contribution or incurred any expense for goods or services related to the election. The agent maintains all the candidate's books and records of contributions and expenses.

The auditor examines the candidate's books, records, invoices, bank statements and negotiated cheques, and performs the tests and verification necessary to prepare an audit report for the official agent.

Filing nomination papers

A candidate obtains the nomination papers from the returning officer of the riding in which the candidate intends to run. The nomination papers must be signed by the candidate and a witness, the candidate's official agent, and at least 100 electors from the riding in which the candidate is running (or 50 electors in the large and sparsely populated ridings listed in Schedule 3 of the Act). The candidate's witness then submits

the papers to the returning officer, along with a \$1 000 deposit, a signed statement by the candidate's auditor and, if the candidate is supported by a registered or eligible political party, a written endorsement signed by the leader of the party or an authorized representative. If the candidate is not endorsed by a party, he or she indicates on the nomination papers whether the term "independent" should appear under the candidate's name on the ballot, or no designation at all.

A new provision in the Act extended to all ridings the opportunity for candidates to submit nomination papers and the required statements and written endorsements by fax. Previously, only candidates in Schedule 3 ridings could fax in their documents. Whether the candidate submitted original or faxed nomination papers, they had to arrive by the 2:00 p.m. deadline on November 6, as did the deposit. The original documents had to arrive within 48 hours after that. The change also allowed the returning officer to maintain a nomination even if the original documents did not arrive on time, so long as the prospective candidate satisfied the returning officer that he or she took all reasonable measures to meet the deadline.

A second change in the Act required the returning officer – within 48 hours of receiving the nomination papers – to confirm that the 100 (or 50) persons who signed the nomination papers were electors entitled to vote in that riding. The most straightforward way to verify this was to confirm that each signatory was on the voters lists. Since some electors did not appear on the lists, because they recently moved, or turned 18 or had not yet registered to vote, the next step was to verify that the signatory's address shown on the nomination form was in the riding. If so, this satisfied the verification requirement. If the signatory's address was outside the riding, the signature could not be accepted. Following the verification, some candidates who may have thought that they had sufficient signatures were told by the returning officer that they did not have 100 signatures of electors from that riding. If the nomination was rejected, the candidate could present new or corrected nomination papers up to the time that nominations closed.

Many candidates faced considerable time pressure to complete their nomination forms by the deadline. The deadline is set in law to allow time to print the ballots. The name of a political party appears on the ballot only if it nominates 50 confirmed candidates.

Rejected candidates

Four prospective candidates were rejected by returning officers, in the ridings of Regina–Lumsden–Lake Centre, Saskatchewan, Winnipeg North Centre, Manitoba, and Scarborough Centre and Ottawa Centre, both in Ontario. In all cases, the prospective candidates thought that they had 100 valid signatures, but verification showed that too many were from outside the riding and the nominations were filed too late to make the necessary corrections. The new confirmation requirements underlined how important it is for candidates to check their documents and file early. By the time nominations closed on November 6, two thirds of all candidates (1 212) had already received confirmation from their returning officers because they had filed early.

The authority to confirm or reject a candidate's nomination papers rests solely with each of the 301 returning officers. To reduce the possibility of variations in how the returning officers interpreted or applied certain provisions of the Act – such as what constitutes a “reasonable effort” to send in the original papers within the 48-hour period – Elections Canada encouraged returning officers, if in doubt, to err on the side of favouring the constitutional right to be a candidate. In all cases, they were instructed to consult with the Chief Electoral Officer, to ensure all steps were followed before rejecting candidates.

Election expenses and limits

The *Canada Elections Act* sets limits on the election expenses of candidates and registered political parties – essential in our electoral system, because the limits foster participation. Election expenses are expenses incurred directly to promote or oppose a registered political party or to elect a particular candidate during an election, regardless of when the goods and services were acquired or paid for. Expenses include money paid, liabilities incurred, and the commercial value of goods and services donated or acquired at less than commercial value.

Expenses limits

The limit on election expenses for political parties is determined on the basis of the number of electors on the preliminary voters lists in the ridings where the party endorses a confirmed candidate. For a candidate, the limit is based on the number of electors on the preliminary voters lists for the candidate's riding, adjusted for sparsely populated and geographically large districts. The limit is revised if the number of electors on the revised lists is larger than the number on the preliminary lists. On October 27, the Chief Electoral Officer announced that each of the registered political parties would be limited to a maximum of \$12 710 074.11 in election expenses if they had a confirmed candidate in each of the 301 ridings. The individual limit for candidates varied from riding to riding, although all candidates in any given riding were subject to the same limit. The average limit for a candidate in the election was \$68 019.37; details of the limits for each riding were published on our Web site.

Seminars for candidates

To brief candidates on election expenses, reporting requirements and other election-related financial matters, Elections Canada held 25 seminars across the country on November 4, 5 and 6, attended by 451 participants (fewer than in the 1997 general election, when 619 took part). We also provided 75 printed copies of the seminar content to one political party, which requested the material for a party meeting. Generally, the sessions were well received.

Contributions

After a candidate's nomination was confirmed, the official agent could get pre-numbered official receipts for tax purposes from the returning officer. The agent could then issue a receipt for each monetary contribution received, starting with the day on which the candidate was confirmed by the returning officer and continuing for the rest of the election period. The official agent was entirely responsible for proper use of the official receipts for income tax credits under the *Income Tax Act*, and had to keep a record of all contributions received and all expenses incurred, so they could be reported, as the law requires.

Candidates may not accept contributions from persons who are neither Canadian citizens nor permanent residents of Canada; from corporations or associations not carrying on business in Canada; from unions not entitled to bargain collectively in Canada; nor from foreign political parties, foreign states or their representatives; neither may they accept contributions if the class of donor is unknown.

Tax credits

Only a monetary contribution qualifies for an income tax credit. The *Canada Elections Act* sets no limits on the amount that can be contributed to a candidate or registered political party, but the *Income Tax Act* establishes a \$500 maximum tax credit for monetary contributions of \$1 075 or more to candidates and registered political parties in any one calendar year. Only the official agent of a confirmed candidate or a registered agent of a registered political party may issue an official receipt.

Reimbursements

The new *Canada Elections Act* entitles all candidates to a full refund of their \$1 000 nomination deposits, provided they comply with the reporting requirements of the Act and return any unused official receipts.

In addition, a candidate who is elected or receives at least 15 percent of the valid votes cast in his or her riding is entitled to a reimbursement of 50 percent of actual election and personal expenses paid, to a maximum of 50 percent of the expenses limit in that riding. The reimbursements are paid in two instalments.

Registered political parties that obtain at least two percent of the total valid votes cast in the election, or five percent of the valid votes cast in the ridings where they endorse confirmed candidates, have the right to a reimbursement of 22.5 percent of their actual election expenses.

Public disclosure

Public disclosure of candidates' and political parties' election expenses and contributions is an important factor in keeping the Canadian electoral system fair and transparent.

Candidates' returns

Candidates, through their official agents, have to submit audited returns to the Chief Electoral Officer within four months of election day. The candidate's return must show all electoral campaign expenses incurred, the amounts and sources of all contributions, and the names and addresses of all those whose contributions exceeded \$200. It is an offence under the Act not to submit a return.

Candidates and agents had the option of producing the candidates' returns electronically, using the redesigned electronic version of the Candidate's Electoral Campaign Return.

Following the deadline for submitting the returns (March 27, 2001), the Chief Electoral Officer will publish a summary of each return in appropriate media, including Elections Canada's Web site. Returning officers keep copies of the candidates' returns for six months, so that anyone who wishes to consult them or to obtain extracts may do so. After that initial period, the returns may be examined at Elections Canada in Ottawa. Our Web site also has a searchable database of contributions and expenses reported by candidates. This electronic publication details the contributions received and the election expenses incurred by candidates in the 1997 general election, and will incorporate the amounts for this general election as well.

Registered parties' returns

Following each general election, every registered political party must submit an audited return of its election expenses to the Chief Electoral Officer within six months of election day – in this case, by May 28, 2001. Registered parties must also submit an annual fiscal period return disclosing any by-election expenses, the expenditures of the party during the fiscal period, the amount and source of all contributions, and the names and addresses of those whose contributions exceed \$200. This return must be submitted to the Chief Electoral Officer within six months after the end of the fiscal period to which the return relates. If a registered political party has established a trust fund for electoral purposes, its chief agent or one of its registered agents must prepare a report on the trust fund's financial transactions and submit it with the annual fiscal return.

The Chief Electoral Officer publishes the financial returns of registered political parties in the most appropriate form. A searchable database on our Web site will show the election expenses incurred by registered political parties at this election; it currently shows their expenses from the last general election and contributions and expenses by fiscal period from 1994 to 1999.

List of candidates

In the 48 hours after nominations closed on November 6, returning officers confirmed the last of the candidates in their ridings and sent copies of their nomination papers to Elections Canada, where staff prepared a list of all candidates by riding. This list was used by electors who had registered to vote by special ballot, and who had to know the names of their riding's candidates to write in the name of the one they chose.

Copies of the list were immediately sent to all returning officers, to Special Voting Rules liaison officers in hospitals and prisons, to commanding officers of Canadian Forces units, and to the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade for overseas distribution. It was also posted on our Web site.

Ballots

Before the closing date for nominations, Elections Canada sent every returning officer an appropriate quantity of special paper on which the ballots would be printed. Each returning officer had already lined up a printer, who would have to sign an affidavit after the job was done, describing the ballots, noting the number delivered to the local office, and certifying that all ballots were printed and all scrap and unused paper returned to the local office.

What's in a name?

If two candidates had the same name, and both chose to be identified as an independent or to have no political affiliation under their names, they had another way to differentiate themselves on the ballot. Each candidate could choose to include under his or her name either an address or an occupation, to distinguish one from the other.

The newly appointed returning officer for St. Albert, Alberta, faced an unusual problem when two of his four confirmed candidates insisted on using only two of their names – the same two names – on the ballot paper. While they both had middle names, they both declined to use them on the ballot. Consequently, the ballot paper would carry their names (John Williams) and party affiliations (Canadian Alliance and N.D.P.) – but in what order?

They could have been printed in the alphabetical order of their political parties, but because it was a precedent-setting situation, that might have caused difficulties in future elections. Parties' names appear in a different alphabetical order in English and French; in Quebec, the French version always comes first, while elsewhere the English version does.

The Chief Electoral Officer instructed the returning officer to conduct a draw, and so he drew a name from a baseball cap offered by one of the candidates' agents. As a result, the name of John Williams (N.D.P.), the winner of the draw, appeared above that of John Williams (Canadian Alliance), the winner on election day.

As soon as the riding's candidates were confirmed, the returning officer sent the printer the candidate information that was to appear on the ballot. Each ballot showed the printer's name, and had a numbered counterfoil and a stub, separated by perforations. The candidates' names and other required information were printed in the new format specified in Schedule 1 of the revised Act, and the ballots were bound in books, ready for anyone wanting to vote under the Special Voting Rules in the office of a returning officer, for the advance polls, and for election day. At this election, the names of the candidates were centred on the ballot for the first time, so that the candidates' names would be more legible.

Advance polls

Ten days before election day, on Friday, November 17, 3 023 advance polling stations opened across Canada. The advance polls continued on Saturday and Monday, November 18 and 20. Designed for electors who planned to travel on election day, or anyone who wished to vote early, they remained open from noon to 8:00 p.m. local time each day. The revised voters lists were printed by returning officers on Thursday night for the opening of the advance polls the next morning; anyone whose name was not on the revised lists of 20 155 152 electors could register with the deputy returning officer at the advance polling station, and 63 441 electors did so.

On November 17, we ran a special blitz of radio ads. Our concentrated advertising in newspapers and on television and radio, coupled with the householder pamphlet and the advance poll notice on the voter information card (which was planned to arrive by November 13), seemed to have had a positive effect. The 775 157 people who cast a valid vote at the advance polls amounted to some nine percent more than the 704 000 who did so in the 1997 general election. The names of voters at the advance polls were struck out on the voters lists to show that they had already voted, and could not vote again on election day.

Objections

An elector whose name was on a preliminary voters list could formally object to the returning officer about the inclusion of another person on that list, so long as the affidavit of objection was made no later than November 13. The deadline was set before the advance polls to give the returning officer time to examine the objection. The returning officer had to make a decision in time for it to take effect on the revised voters list.

During the election, 519 objections were filed in the riding of Sherbrooke, Quebec. The returning officer sent a notice to the 519 electors on the preliminary lists, advising each to appear personally or by representative in the local office, or to submit proof of qualification to vote either by mail or by fax. As a result of the objections process, the returning officer removed the names of 119 people from the voters lists, all of whom had moved from the riding.

Candidates' representatives

When the advance polling stations opened, the only people, other than voters and election officers, who were allowed to be present were candidates or their representatives there to

Stolen ballots recovered

In the riding of Victoria, British Columbia, after the second day of the advance polls, a deputy returning officer's car, containing a ballot box with 140 marked ballots inside, was stolen. Police issued a Vancouver Island-wide alert. In the meantime, the returning officer's staff telephoned all 140 people who had voted, to offer them the chance to vote again – this time by special ballot. The idea was that if the box was recovered with the ballots intact before election night, these special ballots could be set aside during the verification of the outer envelopes.

Some of the voters had taken the opportunity to vote a second time by special ballot, when the stolen car was spotted some 24 hours after the theft by a diligent security guard at a Victoria shopping mall. Victoria police recovered the car, with the missing ballot box. The seals on the box had not been tampered with, and the candidates agreed to allow the ballots inside to stand. Consequently, the special ballots already cast were, in fact, set aside and not counted after the polls closed on election night.

observe the voting. Only two representatives for each candidate could be present at any given time, and they could not impede the voting or use a communication device of any kind. Candidates and their representatives could observe the sealing of the empty ballot box at the start of each day's voting, the voting process, the unsealing of the box at the close of polls each day (when the day's completed ballots, the rejected ballots, and the unused ballots and record of votes cast were sealed in three separate envelopes and put back in the box), and the resealing of the ballot box. The advance poll votes were counted on election night, also in the presence of candidates and their representatives.

Voting on election day

At 8:30 a.m. on November 27, the election day polls opened in most of Newfoundland – while it was still 4:00 a.m. in British Columbia. Managing a national election across six time zones made it a long day at Elections Canada, where help desk specialists, managers and enquiries officers were on high alert for the 15 hours that polls were open somewhere in Canada. Returning officers and their staff in the ridings faced an even longer day, because the polls were open for 12 hours non-stop, and they still had to count the ballots afterward.

Voting hours staggered by time zone across the country were instituted at the 1997 general election, so that the polls would close, and the results be known, at approximately the same time nationally. The returning officers of 11 ridings in four provinces and Nunavut had to choose which voting hours they would observe, because their ridings cover more than one time zone.

Homeless voters

A new feature of election day was the special effort to make registration easier for homeless electors. Normally on election day, unregistered voters have to show proof of identity and residence to register. When someone has no permanent residence, the Act provides that the person's temporary quarters at registration time – a shelter, a hostel or other place that provides food, lodging or social services – may be considered the place where the person is ordinarily resident. But for a homeless person, providing proof of identity that also shows the address of the temporary quarters could be an insurmountable difficulty.

We wanted to eliminate this barrier for electors who had no homes, and we were able to do so by creative administrative measures. Our arrangements followed consultations with national and local organizations providing services to the homeless, and with the Advisory Committee of Political Parties, chaired by the Chief Electoral Officer.

A week before election day, returning officers or the 22 liaison officers for homeless electors contacted the administrators of shelters providing accommodation in their ridings. They asked them to inform homeless persons using the facilities that if they wanted to vote on election day, they could put their names on a list, which the polling station staff would use on election day. The list would then be their proof of address. They gave administrators a bright yellow poster that told the occupants where they could go to vote on election day, and reminded them to bring identification with their names and signatures (such as health cards). The day before election day, local office staff picked up the lists and gave them to the appropriate registration officer or deputy returning officer.

On election day, so long as the homeless elector had a valid identification document with his or her name and signature, and his or her name appeared on the list from a shelter, he or she could register and vote. Staff and candidates were aware of the special measures, and the lists of names from the shelters were protected as election documents.

Monday morning, November 27

At the start of election day, 20 370 921 electors were on the official voters lists.

These lists were established after the end of the revision period six days earlier, on

Visitors program

At Elections Canada, our first Visitors Program – held from November 23 to 27 – proved to be a success. The new *Canada Elections Act* allowed the Chief Electoral Officer to authorize observers to be present in a polling station on election day, and we arranged a program that would offer election officials from Canada and abroad the opportunity to participate in Canada’s election process. Sixteen observers took part, including provincial and territorial Chief Electoral Officers, election officials from Australia, Mexico, Hungary and the United States, representatives from the United Nations Development Programme and the Organization of American States, and Canadian academics.

The program consisted primarily of information sessions on the role of Elections Canada during an election period, demonstrations of our Event Management System, visits to offices of returning officers, observing polling stations at work, round-table discussions with academics and representatives of the political parties, and meetings with senior officials from Elections Canada. The participants stated they had benefited from the experience and expressed a high level of satisfaction with the program, which will likely become a permanent feature of future elections.

November 21. By comparison, there were 19 248 159 electors on the official lists for the 1997 general election, and 19 663 478 on the final lists, after the 415 319 voters who registered at the polls on election day were added. For this election, we expected an increase of 50 percent in election day registrations, and returning officers had extra resources in place, ready for 1 million registrations, if necessary.

The official lists were the ones used on election day in the 56 822 polling stations, 883 mobile polls and 17 340 polling places across the country. Every riding had an average of 188 polling stations, each serving a polling division with an average of 358 electors. Polling stations for neighbouring polling divisions were usually grouped together into a central polling place.

People who registered to vote by special ballot had until election day to deliver their completed ballots to Elections

Canada. In this election, 191 833 voters cast valid special ballots, compared to 138 618 in 1997. These totals include all categories of special ballots.

Our Web site was ready to publish all the voting results as they were received from the ridings, starting at 10:00 p.m. Eastern time – that is, after the last polling stations in the country closed on the West Coast and in the Yukon Territory, at 7:00 p.m. Pacific time.

Late opening of some polling stations

On election day, out of the 56 822 polling stations, some 120 stations in 14 ridings opened late. Most of these opened within an hour of the appointed time. In the riding of St. Paul’s, Ontario, however, several remained closed longer, although still allowing seven or more hours of voting time. The Chief Electoral Officer immediately asked the 14 returning officers for reports on why some poll workers did not arrive, and on other factors that contributed to the delays.

In 10 of the 14 ridings, the returning officers provided full, detailed reports on the events, including the names of election officers who did not present themselves for duty: three ridings in Quebec (Ahuntsic, Mercier and Saint-Bruno–Saint-Hubert), five in Ontario (Brampton West–Mississauga, Haliburton–Victoria–Brock, Ottawa–Vanier, Trinity–Spadina and Vaughan–King–Aurora) and two in British Columbia (Surrey North and Vancouver Quadra). In a further three ridings, the reports provided by the returning officers did not allow us to determine with precision the extent of the problems and the individuals involved: Saint-Laurent–Cartierville and Westmount–Ville-Marie, both in Quebec, and Ottawa Centre in Ontario.

In the riding of St. Paul's, Ontario, 71 out of 211 polling stations opened late. We have determined after investigation that this situation arose as the result of multiple factors.

Elections Canada was advised, seven days before the election, that the returning officer had not received the names of sufficient people to act as deputy returning officers and poll clerks. These names were to be provided by the candidates representing the parties that came in first and second in the riding in the 1997 general election. There was an urgent need to hire and train more people before election day. Elections Canada provided assistance as required. We placed advertisements and announcements to recruit some 300 additional election officers. On November 23, we arranged paid advertisements in four daily newspapers covering the Toronto area, seeking election workers for five ridings, including St. Paul's: *The Globe and Mail*, the *National Post*, *The Toronto Star* and *The Toronto Sun*. Several radio stations serving the Toronto area ran public service announcements on November 23 and 24. Recruiting, training and assigning such a large number of people in just a few days proved unmanageable.

Consequently, 71 polling stations opened late on November 27, most of them within an hour or so of the scheduled time. Thanks to the assistance provided by the staff of a neighbouring riding and Elections Ontario, the last seven polls were open by 2:00 p.m. that day. Electors did have more than seven hours to cast their votes, but this remains an unacceptable situation that we are addressing through a detailed review of relevant hiring, training and operating procedures.

Counting the ballots

At Elections Canada, staff conducted the last counts of the special ballots that had arrived during the day. A module of the Event Results System was used to tabulate and distribute the results of the special ballots received from national, international, Canadian Forces, and incarcerated voters. After the polls closed in each of the time zones, the results were sent to the returning officers, who incorporated them into their Event Results System databases to be added to the other results for each riding.

Once the deputy returning officers had counted the votes at each polling station, they (or the central poll supervisor if one was appointed for a central poll location) called the results in to the returning officer. Data-entry staff then input the results into the Event Results System, which transmitted the full results to journalists at the media consortium and to Elections Canada and our Web site.

Rejected ballots

The deputy returning officer could reject a ballot if he or she did not supply it, the ballot was not marked or was marked for more than one candidate, the ballot was marked or written on in such a way that the voter could be identified, or it was marked in an area other than the circle. Although candidates' representatives could object to a particular ballot, the deputy returning officer alone decided whether a ballot was to be rejected. That decision was final, subject to change only by a judge at a judicial recount.

Nationally, 139 412 ballots were rejected, or barely over one percent of the 12 997 185 cast – fewer than in the 1997 general election, when 188 824 ballots were rejected, or slightly over 1.4 percent of the 13.1 million cast. In the 2000 general election, more ballots were rejected in the riding of Repentigny, Quebec (2 525), than in any other riding, and fewest in the riding of Yukon (53). Of votes cast, the riding of Joliette, Quebec, had the highest proportion rejected (4.9 percent), and Calgary West, Alberta, the lowest (0.2 percent).

Whether or not a rejected ballot represented a deliberate act of electoral protest is difficult to determine, but one group left no doubt of its intentions. The Edible Ballot Society, which originated in Alberta with the slogan “Don’t vote, it just encourages them,” urged electors to eat their ballots as an anti-election protest. Under paragraph 167(2)(a) of the Act, it is an offence to destroy a ballot.

The floating ballot box

About mid-afternoon on election day, an elector in the Nova Scotia riding of Pictou–Antigonish–Guysborough left a note in the polling station at Pictou Landing, grabbed the ballot box and fled. An off-duty police constable waiting to vote pursued the man, who threw the box containing 125 marked ballots into a waste-treatment lagoon. The constable apprehended him, and later the RCMP and the chief of the local First Nations band launched a rescue mission by boat to retrieve the box, improbably still floating in the lagoon. By that time, the returning officer (thinking that the box was lost forever) had contacted the 125 voters and asked them to vote again; 76 did so. The coated cardboard of the ballot box, we learned from this episode, is much more weatherproof than we realized. The perpetrator was charged with theft of goods with a value of less than \$5 000 under the *Criminal Code*, appeared in court the next day, and was convicted on February 14. Sentencing is expected to take place on March 28.

Premature transmission of election results

Late on election night (but while polls were still open in some areas), partial election results were disclosed prematurely on Internet sites, through e-mail lists available to the public by subscription, and by satellite television where local programming was available in other communities. Following a complaint, the Commissioner of Canada Elections is reviewing the matter.

Section 329 of the Act states that “No person shall transmit the result or purported result of the vote in an electoral district to the public in another electoral district before the close of all of the polling stations in that other electoral district.” The Act does not draw any distinction among different ways of transmitting election results to the public. Some courts have found that Web sites are a type of transmission to the public.

Section 329 is a continuation of a provision first adopted in 1938 that prohibits premature transmission of results “in any manner.” The underlying aim of the prohibition was to ensure that no electors would be influenced by results from elsewhere in Canada when they cast their ballots, and that all electors had access to the same information when they voted.

Results on election day

Based on preliminary results, by late Monday evening, Canadians knew that they had returned the previous government with a large majority, although with the lowest national voter turnout in recent Canadian history – 61.2 percent, compared to the 1997 turnout of approximately 67 percent (itself the lowest proportion since the general election of 1925). The riding of Cardigan, Prince Edward Island, had the highest participation rate (79.2 percent), and Brampton West–Mississauga in Ontario, the lowest (47.6 percent).

The final results would not be known until the validation of the results, which had to take place not later than seven days after election day. Some results were also subject to change because of judicial recounts, undertaken either automatically when the margin between the top two candidates was less than one one-thousandth of the votes cast, or at the request of a candidate when the margin of winning was very slight.

More to do after election day

For most voters, hearing the results late on election night or early the next day probably marked the end of the event – a right exercised, a duty done. But for thousands of election officers, candidates and their official agents and auditors, the work was far from over.

Validation of the results

In each riding, the returning officer had to validate the results of the election as soon as possible after he or she received all the ballot boxes.

In the past, this process was known as the official addition of the votes, and took approximately eight hours. After the polls closed, the deputy returning officer for each polling station would count the ballots, write down the totals on a *Statement of the Vote* form, seal the form with the ballots in the ballot box, and return the ballot box to the returning officer. The returning officer then had to open each ballot box, retrieve the original *Statement of the Vote* form completed by the deputy returning officer, verify each polling station's results (mainly looking for mistakes in addition), and add up all the numbers from all of the polling stations.

Under the provisions of the new Act, the returning officer only has to check the *Statement of the Vote*, which is now returned separately with the ballot boxes. The boxes need only be opened if there is a problem with the *Statement of the Vote* or it is missing. The new process was much less time-consuming for the returning officer, the assistant returning officer and any candidates or representatives present.

Recounts

Judicial recounts of the ballots were completed in five ridings after election day. In all cases, the candidates initially declared elected were confirmed.

In two ridings, recounts were automatically called for under the *Canada Elections Act*, because the margin between the first- and second-place candidates was less than one one-thousandth of the votes cast. In the riding of Champlain, Quebec, after validation of the results, the Bloc Québécois candidate, Marcel Gagnon, had a majority of seven votes over the Liberal Party of Canada candidate, Julie Boulet. The recount was completed on December 7, and increased the majority won by Marcel Gagnon to 15 votes. In Laval Centre, Quebec, after validation of the results, the Bloc Québécois candidate, Madeleine Dalphond-Guiral, had a majority of 32 votes over the Liberal Party of Canada candidate, Pierre Lafleur. As a result of the recount completed on December 6, Madeleine Dalphond-Guiral's majority increased to 42 votes.

In three ridings where the margin between the first two candidates exceeded one one-thousandth of the votes cast, one or more candidates requested a judicial recount. In Saskatoon–Rosetown–Biggar, Saskatchewan, after validation of the results, the Canadian Reform Conservative Alliance candidate, Carol Skelton, had a majority of 73 votes over the New Democratic Party candidate, Dennis Gruending. The results of the recount, completed on December 9, reduced the majority won by Carol Skelton to 68 votes. In Leeds–Grenville, Ontario, after validation of the results, the Liberal Party of Canada candidate, Joe Jordan, had a majority of 63 votes over the Canadian Reform Conservative Alliance candidate, Gord Brown. The recount, which was completed on December 6, reduced the majority won by Joe Jordan to 55 votes. And in Matapédia–Matane, Quebec, after validation of the results, the Bloc Québécois candidate, Jean-Yves Roy, had a majority of 282 votes over the Liberal Party of Canada candidate, Marc Bélanger. The recount was completed on December 7, and reduced the majority won by Jean-Yves Roy to 276 votes.

Recounts were requested in three other ridings, but the requests were rescinded either before the recount began (Regina–Qu’Appelle, Saskatchewan) or before it was completed (Palliser and Regina–Lumsden–Lake Centre, both in Saskatchewan). In Regina–Qu’Appelle and Palliser, the results of the validation were the final results, and in Regina–Lumsden–Lake Centre, the winning candidate’s margin increased from 160 votes to 161 before the recount was discontinued.

Return of the writs

Winning candidates might have thought that they were elected on election day but, strictly speaking, they were not elected until the returning officer declared a winner. Six days after each returning officer validated the results, he or she declared the winning candidate elected by completing what is called the *return of the writ*, a form on the back of the writ sent to the returning officer by the Chief Electoral Officer at the start of the election period. If there was a recount in the riding, before declaring a candidate elected, the returning officer had to wait for a certificate from the judge, setting out the number of votes cast for each candidate.

Then the returning officer sent a copy of the return of the writ to each candidate, and returned the writ itself – and all other election documents – to the Chief Electoral Officer. In the order that he received each writ, the Chief Electoral Officer recorded it, and published in the *Canada Gazette* the names of the candidates that the returning officers declared elected. The candidates’ names appeared in the *Canada Gazette* for December 6, 7, 8, 11, 12, 13, 15, 18 and 19, 2000 (volume 134, numbers 12–20).

Of the elected candidates, 45 were new members and 256 were re-elected members of the House of Commons, three of whom were not sitting members at the dissolution of the 36th Parliament. The final number of seats won by each party after election day, and held by the parties and an independent MP 36 days earlier at the dissolution of Parliament, are shown in Table 6.

Table 6 Number of seats in the House of Commons, by political affiliation

Political affiliation	After election day, November 27, 2000	At the dissolution of Parliament, October 22, 2000
Liberal Party of Canada	172	161
Canadian Reform Conservative Alliance	66	58
Bloc Québécois	38	44
New Democratic Party	13	19
Progressive Conservative Party of Canada	12	15
Independent	–	4

As a final task, returning officers packed up their materials and equipment and had them delivered to Elections Canada's Distribution Centre or to their suppliers, ready for the next electoral event. But even then, their work was not quite finished, because they still had to undertake their post-election analysis and review. They would be attending meetings with their senior staff (and, in some cases, in Ottawa) to share their experiences, and making written suggestions for improvements and changes.

Final voters lists

Immediately after the election, the returning officers sent back to Elections Canada their REVISE databases with the voters lists for each riding. In addition to the preliminary lists supplied by Elections Canada at the beginning of the election, these databases now recorded all the elector registration information gathered during revision and at the polls – address changes, corrections of various kinds, new registrations, and deletions. Elections Canada staff integrate the elector information of incarcerated electors, Canadian Forces electors and Canadian citizens temporarily residing outside Canada who registered to vote under the Special Voting Rules with the information in the 301 databases, and generate the final voters lists. The total number of registered electors was 21 243 473; the comprehensive final lists will be completed by the end of March 2001, when registered political parties and members of Parliament will receive electronic copies.

National Register of Electors

The 301 REVISE databases have another important use: to update the National Register of Electors with data provided by electors during the election. Before the new elector information can be integrated into the Register database, a complex and time-consuming process of data standardization and analysis must be carried out. Register staff will be working on this task before adding information from the customary update cycle, and then producing the new voters lists that the Act requires them to send to members of Parliament and registered political parties each year on October 15.

With the help of specialized software, Register staff will review the more than 3.6 million changes made to the voters lists during the election, to ensure that only correct and verified data is added to the Register, and that we have an accurate understanding of what these changes were, and when and why they were made. This includes verifying codes assigned by returning officers against the type of changes actually made; reviewing the deletions of deceased electors to identify cases that were not correctly matched with vital statistics data, to improve matching rules; checking for other irregularities and standardizing addresses; and finding and dealing with duplications of elector information.

There were very few duplicate records on the preliminary voters lists, since the Register maintenance system is designed to avoid introducing them. Some duplicates were introduced during revision, when new electors were registered at more than one address (for example, some students were registered at a school address as well as a home address). Duplicates on the final lists most commonly stem from moves between ridings. Electors on the preliminary lists who asked to be registered at a new address in a different riding were removed from the lists at their old addresses only if the new occupants requested the removal.

Duplicates will be identified and removed in three phases. First, we will deal with duplicates that can be readily identified using currently available information because the name, address and date of birth are the same. The second phase will involve comparisons against updates from our data suppliers, like the 2001 file that the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency will release to Elections Canada later this year. These sources will help link some pairs of elector records with the same name and date of birth and different addresses. In the third phase, letters will be sent to electors who are listed at two addresses, and who cannot be precisely matched during the update cycle. The *Canada Elections Act* requires Elections Canada to write to these electors, requesting confirmation of their registration information, before removing them from the Register. Electors have 60 days to respond. A similar three-phase process after the 1997 general election resulted in the removal of some 229 000 duplicate records, despite the fact that an enumeration was conducted immediately before the election. Of the 229 000 duplicates, 195 000 were removed in response to the phase three mail-out.

Using post-mortem information, combined with analyses of the changes made to the lists in the ridings and their quality, the Register staff will develop recommendations for improvements in elector registration and Register maintenance and update procedures. They will also assess the coverage of the final lists by age group (with particular attention to youth), estimate the number of electors not currently registered, and determine the post-election quality level of the Register so that measurement of quality can continue after the normal maintenance cycle has resumed.

Preliminary information about some of these issues is available now. Table 7 shows figures for the past five federal general elections, comparing factors in the quality of voters lists with voter turnout. Register staff estimate that some 4.8 percent of citizens of voting age are not currently registered, consistent with figures for the four preceding elections. The numbers of Canadian citizens shown in the table are estimated, based on

Statistics Canada census data. The numbers of duplicates on the final voters lists for 1993 and 2000 have been estimated, while the 1997 figure represents the number of duplicates removed from the National Register of Electors after the final list data for the 1997 election were added to the Register.

**Table 7 General elections 1984–2000
Comparison of number of Canadian citizens of voting age and
number of electors on final lists**

Event	Canadian citizens of voting age	Final lists	Total ballots cast	Voter turnout	Duplicates	Deceased	Number of registered voters	Citizens of voting age not registered	Type of registration system
1984	17 573 000	16 775 011	12 638 424	75.3%	unknown	unknown	16 775 011	4.5%	enumeration
1988	18 527 000	17 639 001	13 281 191	75.3%	unknown	unknown	17 639 001	4.8%	enumeration
1993	19 893 000	19 906 796	13 863 135	69.6%	703 000	133 000	19 070 796	4.1%	reused list
1997	20 428 000	19 663 478	13 174 698	67.0%	229 000	9 000	19 425 478	4.9%	enumeration
2000	21 481 000	21 243 473	12 997 185	61.2%	614 000	177 000	20 452 473	4.8%	Register

Enforcement

Before the new *Canada Elections Act* came into effect on September 1, 2000, the Act could only be enforced through the criminal courts. Although prosecution remains the ultimate enforcement tool, the changes give the Commissioner of Canada Elections two new tools: the ability to seek an injunction during an electoral event, and the power to enter into compliance agreements. These new provisions can act as effectively to prevent breaches of the Act as to stop those breaches after the fact.

The injunction power allows the Commissioner to apply to a court for an order requiring a person to do something that person is required to do under the Act, or prohibiting a person from doing something that is prohibited by the Act. The power can be used only during an election period, and under circumstances warranting its use. The Commissioner must take into account the nature and seriousness of the act or omission, the need to ensure the fairness of the electoral process, and the public interest, and he must have reasonable grounds to believe a person is likely to commit, is about to commit, or has committed, an act or omission contrary to the Act.

Although the Commissioner did not use his new authority to seek an injunction during the election, he was prepared to do so. A law firm had been selected to secure an injunction, if appropriate, and all the likely courts before which an application for an injunction might have been brought were advised of the new authority and its potential use during the election.

As an alternative to prosecution, the Commissioner can now enter into a compliance agreement, if he believes on reasonable grounds that a person has committed, is likely to commit, or is about to commit, an offence under the Act. These agreements are based on the voluntary agreement of the offender or potential offender to comply with the Act, and require the consent of that person to the publication of the agreement. The authority can be used both during and between elections. The Commissioner is currently reviewing all incidents of non-compliance brought to his attention as a result of the election, in light of this new power.

By March 5, 2001, 382 complaints related to the 37th general election had been brought to the attention of the Commissioner; 251 cases have been resolved, 131 remain open, and investigations are underway. Generally, the offences relate to failure to indicate the authority for election advertising, removal of election advertising, television and radio advertising, voting rules, third party advertising, and complaints regarding administrative matters. The new third party advertising and registration provisions of the Act have been the source of 14 complaints so far. The Commissioner has given his consent to four prosecutions relating to voting and obstruction of the electoral process.

Although some offences occurred during the election period, many may occur months after the election. Additional complaints may be filed following the deadline for submitting candidates' and third parties' financial returns, four months after election day. Complaints may be filed up to six months after the commission of the offence. As the cases progress, updated statistics on complaints, investigations and prosecutions appear in the Chief Electoral Officer's periodic reports and publications.

The Commissioner's office will continue to evaluate the full impact of the Act's new and amended provisions.

Reimbursements and election expenses

Within three weeks of election day, we issued the initial reimbursement cheques for election expenses to the 685 candidates (about 38 percent of all candidates) who were elected or who received 15 percent or more of the valid votes cast. The average reimbursement was approximately \$10 180.00.

All candidates must file their election expenses returns by March 27, 2001. Registered parties have until May 28 to file their election expenses reports. Based on these returns, further reimbursements will be made to those parties and candidates who qualify. The 48 registered third parties must file their reports by March 27, and we will finish their audits by the end of April.

III. The Context for the Future

This report began with an affirmation of Elections Canada's commitment to helping Canadians exercise their democratic right to vote. Conducting fair and efficient elections is our main *raison d'être*, but for us, and all Canadians, it is also something more. It is a public demonstration of the current state of our ability to make voting as accessible as possible, by reaching out to all electors and by putting technology at the service of democracy.

Now that immediate post-election tasks are largely finished, and while we continue to make sure that we are ready for any kind of electoral event, we are engaged in a thorough and wide-ranging examination of all our systems and services, our approaches and procedures, our policies and guiding principles. We want to identify what we did right during the election, and analyze everything that did not meet the high expectations of electors. This brief conclusion to our report presents an overview of some of the steps we are taking now, and will take in the near future, to measure and improve our performance.

Measuring our performance

External evaluations

We are collecting qualitative and quantitative information from a comprehensive array of stakeholders. This includes feedback from the Advisory Committee of Political Parties, which meets three or four times a year (most recently on February 9, 2001), and information from the academic community and other participants in the electoral process.

In-house evaluations

An essential source of performance information is a set of in-house evaluations by the staff of each of Elections Canada's directorates. They are examining every service that they provided during the election, looking for weaknesses, as well as demonstrated strengths. These evaluations will be completed by the end of April 2001.

Field evaluations

A further vital source of data for evaluating our performance is the experience of returning officers, assistant returning officers and their office staff. After each election or referendum, we conduct a post-mortem to identify any difficulties that they may have faced during the event, and to develop possible solutions to those problems, including recommendations for amendments to the *Canada Elections Act*. From March 8 to 16, 2001, we held three-day workshops and focus group sessions with a representative sample of 32 returning officers and eight assistant returning officers; two-day meetings with 15 automation coordinators; and one-day sessions with 10 special ballot coordinators, 12 liaison officers and 10 revision supervisors. Their suggestions and

recommendations will help Elections Canada's managers to develop programs and projects focused on both the needs of electors and operational requirements in the field.

Improving our performance

Until we analyze performance information, it is too soon to describe in detail what we will do to improve our performance as the national electoral agency. We are, however, considering the following for the National Register of Electors:

- improving the Register's coverage, especially of youth, by adding electors from administrative data sources, such as the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency
- improving the currency of the preliminary lists produced from the Register by refining the update cycle
- further improving the quality of voters lists and addresses by using other sources, including Canada Post
- introducing regular reviews of the Register by returning officers, particularly of geographic information and addresses
- enhancing the REVISE system used in the field during elections to incorporate the ability to record elector moves between ridings
- simplifying and improving revision and targeted revision
- studying the feasibility of secure on-line registration and verification
- continuing to work with provincial electoral agencies to share Register data

We will discuss these and other issues with our major stakeholders and partners over the next few months, prior to making the improvements.

Future recommendations

Section 535 of the Act calls for the Chief Electoral Officer to make a report to the Speaker of the House of Commons, setting out any amendments that, in his opinion, are desirable for the better administration of the Act.

This general election of November 27, 2000 – the first to be held under the new *Canada Elections Act* – has raised enough matters of substance to warrant a separate report itemizing the Chief Electoral Officer’s recommendations, including legislative changes.

So that the recommendations can fully reflect all elements of our comprehensive evaluation currently underway, this report will be published later this year. Recommendations already made by the Chief Electoral Officer in 1996 and 1997 and not yet implemented will be put forward again in this document, building on the experience of the 2000 general election.

IV. Election Statistics

Table IV.1

Number of ballots cast and percentage of valid votes, by province/territory and political affiliation, preliminary figures – 37th general election, 2000

Province or territory	Bloc Québécois		Canadian Reform Conservative Alliance		Liberal Party of Canada		New Democratic Party	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Newfoundland	0	0.0	8 837	3.9	103 103	44.9	29 993	13.1
Prince Edward Island	0	0.0	3 719	5.0	35 021	47.0	6 714	9.0
Nova Scotia	0	0.0	41 752	9.6	158 870	36.5	104 277	24.0
New Brunswick	0	0.0	60 277	15.7	159 803	41.7	44 778	11.7
Quebec	1 377 727	39.9	212 874	6.2	1 529 642	44.2	63 611	1.8
Ontario	0	0.0	1 051 209	23.6	2 292 075	51.5	368 709	8.3
Manitoba	0	0.0	148 293	30.4	158 713	32.5	101 741	20.9
Saskatchewan	0	0.0	207 004	47.7	89 697	20.7	113 626	26.2
Alberta	0	0.0	739 514	58.9	263 008	20.9	68 363	5.4
British Columbia	0	0.0	797 518	49.4	446 624	27.7	182 993	11.3
Yukon Territory	0	0.0	3 659	27.7	4 293	32.5	4 223	31.9
Northwest Territories	0	0.0	2 273	17.7	5 855	45.6	3 430	26.7
Nunavut	0	0.0	0	0.0	5 327	69.0	1 410	18.3
Total	1 377 727	10.7	3 276 929	25.5	5 252 031	40.8	1 093 868	8.5

Table IV.1 (continued)

Number of ballots cast and percentage of valid votes, by province/territory and political affiliation, preliminary figures – 37th general election, 2000

Province or territory	Progressive Conservative Party of Canada		Others		Valid ballots		Rejected ballots		Total ballots
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	
Newfoundland	79 157	34.5	8 408	3.7	229 498	99.3	1 680	0.7	231 178
Prince Edward Island	28 610	38.4	400	0.5	74 464	99.4	424	0.6	74 888
Nova Scotia	126 557	29.1	3 813	0.9	435 269	99.5	2 106	0.5	437 375
New Brunswick	116 980	30.5	1 174	0.3	383 012	98.9	4 166	1.1	387 178
Quebec	192 153	5.6	80 891	2.3	3 456 898	97.3	95 653	2.7	3 552 551
Ontario	642 438	14.4	98 174	2.2	4 452 605	99.5	21 396	0.5	4 474 001
Manitoba	70 635	14.5	8 450	1.7	487 832	99.5	2 251	0.5	490 083
Saskatchewan	20 855	4.8	2 515	0.6	433 697	99.7	1 382	0.3	435 079
Alberta	169 093	13.5	16 021	1.3	1 255 999	99.7	3 795	0.3	1 259 794
British Columbia	117 614	7.3	69 972	4.3	1 614 721	99.6	6 380	0.4	1 621 101
Yukon Territory	991	7.5	53	0.4	13 219	99.6	53	0.4	13 272
Northwest Territories	1 282	10.0	0	0.0	12 840	99.4	72	0.6	12 912
Nunavut	633	8.2	349	4.5	7 719	99.3	54	0.7	7 773
Total	1 566 998	12.2	290 220	2.3	12 857 773	98.9	139 412	1.1	12 997 185

Table IV.2

**Distribution of confirmed candidates by political party and by province/territory –
37th general election, 2000**

Province or territory	Bloc Québécois	Canadian Action Party	Canadian Reform Conservative Alliance	Communist Party of Canada	Liberal Party of Canada	Marijuana Party	Marxist-Leninist Party of Canada
Newfoundland	0	0	7	0	7	0	0
Prince Edward Island	0	0	4	0	4	0	0
Nova Scotia	0	0	11	1	11	3	3
New Brunswick	0	0	10	0	10	1	0
Quebec	75	2	74	12	75	31	26
Ontario	0	39	103	18	103	22	40
Manitoba	0	3	13	7	14	1	0
Saskatchewan	0	3	14	0	14	0	0
Alberta	0	5	26	3	26	3	3
British Columbia	0	18	34	11	34	12	12
Yukon Territory	0	0	1	0	1	0	0
Northwest Territories	0	0	1	0	1	0	0
Nunavut	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Total	75	70	298	52	301	73	84

Table IV.2 (continued)

**Distribution of confirmed candidates by political party and by province/territory –
37th general election, 2000**

Province or territory	Natural Law Party of Canada	New Democratic Party	Progressive Conservative Party of Canada	The Green Party of Canada	Independent	No Affiliation	Total
Newfoundland	2	7	7	0	1	1	32
Prince Edward Island	1	4	4	1	0	1	19
Nova Scotia	1	11	11	1	2	0	55
New Brunswick	3	10	10	1	0	0	45
Quebec	19	72	71	17	6	7	487
Ontario	26	103	100	52	9	25	640
Manitoba	0	14	14	3	3	5	77
Saskatchewan	0	14	11	4	0	0	60
Alberta	3	26	26	7	2	3	133
British Columbia	14	34	34	24	6	14	247
Yukon Territory	0	1	1	0	0	1	5
Northwest Territories	0	1	1	0	0	0	4
Nunavut	0	1	1	1	0	0	4
Total	69	298	291	111	29	57	1 808

Table IV.3
Status of political parties – 37th general election, 2000

Parties retaining their status as registered parties (nine parties)
Bloc Québécois
Canadian Action Party
Canadian Reform Conservative Alliance
Liberal Party of Canada
Marxist-Leninist Party of Canada
Natural Law Party of Canada
New Democratic Party
Progressive Conservative Party of Canada
The Green Party of Canada
Parties acquiring registered party status (two parties)
Communist Party of Canada
Marijuana Party
Party that lost its status as a registered party pursuant to section 385 of the <i>Canada Elections Act</i> because it did not nominate a candidate in at least 50 electoral districts or for some other reason (one party)
Christian Heritage Party of Canada
Number of parties registered on November 27, 2000: 11

Table IV.4
Number of candidates eligible for reimbursement* ,
preliminary figures – 37th general election, 2000

Province or territory	Number of candidates eligible for reimbursement
Newfoundland	16
Prince Edward Island	9
Nova Scotia	29
New Brunswick	26
Quebec	149
Ontario	250
Manitoba	37
Saskatchewan	38
Alberta	50
British Columbia	73
Yukon Territory	3
Northwest Territories	3
Nunavut	2
Total	685
National total of candidates	1 808
Percent eligible	37.9%

*Under subsection 464(1) of the *Canada Elections Act*, candidates who are elected and candidates who obtain at least 15 percent of the valid votes in a riding are eligible for partial reimbursement of their election expenses.

Table IV.5
Number of electors on the voters lists, preliminary figures –
37th general election, 2000

Province or territory	Number of electors					
	On preliminary lists	Net revision results ¹	On official lists ²	Net revision results (%)	Added at election day registration	On final lists
Newfoundland	381 437	8 934	390 371	2.3	14 839	405 210
Prince Edward Island	89 868	7 300	97 168	8.1	5 866	103 034
Nova Scotia	635 877	29 047	664 924	4.6	30 060	694 984
New Brunswick	531 090	15 760	546 850	3.0	24 719	571 569
Quebec	5 136 085	275 999	5 412 084	5.4	130 085	5 542 169
Ontario	7 093 606	295 454	7 389 060	4.2	324 684	7 713 744
Manitoba	734 938	17 750	752 688	2.4	33 621	786 309
Saskatchewan	650 319	19 148	669 467	2.9	28 678	698 145
Alberta	1 760 521	208 439	1 968 960	11.8	125 041	2 094 001
British Columbia	2 328 690	94 738	2 423 428	4.1	150 894	2 574 322
Yukon Territory	18 880	793	19 673	4.2	1 228	20 901
Northwest Territories	22 117	1 073	23 190	4.9	1 526	24 716
Nunavut	12 061	997	13 058	8.3	1 311	14 369
Total	19 395 489	975 432	20 370 921	5.0	872 552	21 243 473

¹ Includes group 1 electors registered under the Special Voting Rules (Canadian electors temporarily residing outside Canada, Canadian Forces electors, and incarcerated electors serving sentences of less than two years).

² The official lists, used on election day, incorporate additions and deletions made during the revision period.

Table IV.6
Voter registration statistics – 37th general election, 2000

Province or territory	Electors on the preliminary lists	Electors added*	Moves	Other corrections	Removed from lists	SVR group 1 update	Current number of registered electors
Newfoundland	381 437	27 733	9 509	4 911	4 158	198	405 210
Prince Edward Island	89 868	15 954	3 365	2 838	2 873	85	103 034
Nova Scotia	635 877	70 386	20 132	14 594	11 700	421	694 984
New Brunswick	531 090	47 510	23 127	16 103	7 316	285	571 569
Quebec	5 136 085	523 064	202 007	116 045	120 051	3 071	5 542 169
Ontario	7 093 606	744 788	150 546	109 422	131 023	6 373	7 713 744
Manitoba	734 938	74 058	20 753	11 629	23 469	782	786 309
Saskatchewan	650 319	61 696	21 332	19 656	14 481	611	698 145
Alberta	1 760 521	383 042	78 944	41 642	51 221	1 659	2 094 001
British Columbia	2 328 690	292 645	60 513	74 275	49 071	2 058	2 574 322
Yukon Territory	18 880	2 454	1 425	1 344	451	18	20 901
Northwest Territories	22 117	2 952	1 071	549	428	75	24 716
Nunavut	12 061	2 437	227	420	151	22	14 369
National total	19 395 489	2 248 719	592 951	413 428	416 393	15 658	21 243 473

*Added electors include the electors who have moved from one electoral district to another one.

Table IV.7
Number of ballots cast and voter turnout, preliminary figures –
37th general election, 2000

Province or territory	Ordinary polls	Advance polls	Special Voting Rules	Total valid votes	Rejected ballots	Total ballots cast	Percentage of electors who voted*
Newfoundland	219 113	6 167	4 218	229 498	1 680	231 178	57.1
Prince Edward Island	67 771	4 588	2 105	74 464	424	74 888	72.7
Nova Scotia	400 273	26 348	8 648	435 269	2 106	437 375	62.9
New Brunswick	347 707	27 693	7 612	383 012	4 166	387 178	67.7
Quebec	3 182 703	219 300	54 895	3 456 898	95 653	3 552 551	64.1
Ontario	4 117 531	274 661	60 413	4 452 605	21 396	4 474 001	58.0
Manitoba	459 665	20 670	7 497	487 832	2 251	490 083	62.3
Saskatchewan	405 917	21 454	6 326	433 697	1 382	435 079	62.3
Alberta	1 171 833	68 081	16 085	1 255 999	3 795	1 259 794	60.2
British Columbia	1 487 284	104 610	22 827	1 614 721	6 380	1 621 101	63.0
Yukon Territory	11 790	814	615	13 219	53	13 272	63.5
Northwest Territories	11 697	611	532	12 840	72	12 912	52.2
Nunavut	7 499	160	60	7 719	54	7 773	54.1
Total	11 890 783	775 157	191 833	12 857 773	139 412	12 997 185	61.2

*The percentage of electors who voted is calculated from the number of electors on the final lists (prepared after election day) and the total number of ballots cast.

Appendix: The Broadcasting Arbitrator's Report

Introduction

Advertisements developed by political parties and carried on television have become the most important publicity vehicle of election campaigns. They are also thought to be the most effective means of attracting the attention of electors and of getting messages across to them. These features give broadcasting its singular importance in the *Canada Elections Act* and in electoral practice.

The role of the Broadcasting Arbitrator is set out in sections 332–348 of the *Canada Elections Act*, S.C. 2000, c. 9, which came into force on September 1, 2000. The new Act carried forward almost all of the provisions on the allocation of broadcasting time that were in the previous legislation.

Under section 335 of the Act, every broadcaster in Canada is required to make available for purchase by registered political parties six and one-half hours (390 minutes) of airtime during each federal election. The allocation of time among the parties is to be made by agreement among them, or failing such agreement, by the decision of the Broadcasting Arbitrator.

Allocation decisions in 1998 and 1999

In accordance with what was then section 308 of the *Canada Elections Act* (now section 336 of the new Act), the Broadcasting Arbitrator, Mr. Peter S. Grant, convened a meeting of all registered parties on October 9, 1998, and issued a binding allocation of paid time to those parties on November 12, 1998.

Section 343 of the Act requires the Arbitrator to convene and chair a meeting of the parties in each calendar year to review the previous allocation and entitlement orders. The 1999 meeting was held on September 10, 1999, and reconvened on December 3, 1999. The Arbitrator rendered his decision on December 22, 1999.

No allocation meeting was held in 2000, and the 1999 allocation decision, therefore, governed the 37th general election held on November 27, 2000. The allocation of paid time used for the 2000 general election is set out in Table 1.

Table 1 Allocation of paid time, 37th general election

<i>Political party</i>	<i>Number of minutes:seconds</i>
Liberal Party of Canada	113:00
Canadian Reform Conservative Alliance	59:30
Progressive Conservative Party of Canada	48:00
Bloc Québécois	40:30
New Democratic Party	40:30
Natural Law Party of Canada	17:00
The Green Party of Canada	15:30
Canadian Action Party	14:30
Christian Heritage Party of Canada	14:30
Marxist-Leninist Party of Canada	14:30
Communist Party of Canada	6:00
Marijuana Party	6:00
Total (rounded)	390:00

The Broadcasting Arbitrator has rendered arbitration decisions on the allocation of paid time for three federal general elections, in 1993, 1997 and 2000. The formula used for the allocation of paid time is based largely on the application of statutory factors set out in section 338 of the Act. Those factors give equal weight to the percentage of seats in the House of Commons and the percentage of the popular vote obtained by each of the registered parties in the previous general election, and half-weight to the number of candidates endorsed by each of the registered parties as a proportion of all candidates so endorsed.

Before 1992, the decisions of broadcasting arbitrators did not vary significantly from the statutory factors. However, in making his first allocation decision of December 31, 1992, Mr. Grant concluded that the pure application of the statutory factors was neither in the public interest, nor was it fair to all the registered parties. In his 1992 decision, he noted that Mr. Justice Moshansky had commented in *Reform Party of Canada v. Attorney General of Canada* that “the allocation formula has a discriminatory effect which tends, in my opinion, to favour the existing parties at the expense of new or emerging parties.” The Arbitrator concluded that the statutory factors as applied to allocation unduly fettered the ability of emerging parties to purchase enough time to make a meaningful case to the Canadian public.

Consequently, two thirds of the time was allocated using the statutory factors. Using the discretion allowed under the Act, the Arbitrator allocated the remaining one third equally among all the registered parties. This hybrid approach significantly increased the time allotted to the smaller parties, but continued to give predominant weight to the statutory factors. While this was by no means a perfect solution, in the absence of other workable approaches, and given the problems with the alternatives considered (discussed at some length in his 1992 decision), the Arbitrator considered it the best approach to take at that time. Since 1992, he has adopted a similar approach for each allocation of paid time, and the allocation for the 2000 federal general election continued this approach.

Of crucial significance in examining the question of allocation is the impact of the decision of the Alberta Court of Appeal in *Reform Party of Canada et al. v. Attorney General of Canada*, which was released on March 10, 1995. That judgment, which was not appealed by either side, dealt with a constitutional challenge brought by the Reform Party of Canada to the election broadcasting provisions of the Act.

The result of this decision was to maintain the allocation system set forth in the legislation, which entitled political parties to purchase time at the lowest equivalent rate, even if such time pre-empted other advertising. However, the decision struck down provisions that effectively transformed the entitlement into a cap, preventing a party from purchasing more than its allocated time on any station.

The 1997 and 2000 general elections were thus the first in which parties were free to purchase more time than allocated to them under the Act, provided stations were willing to sell them such time. Although data on this matter were not collected, the Arbitrator was informed by a number of stations that they were prepared to sell time over and above the allocation.

As noted above, the general approach to allocation has not changed since 1992, and in the view of the Broadcasting Arbitrator, the decision of the Alberta Court of Appeal strengthens the rationale for giving special attention to the smaller parties. One reason for this is that the smaller parties are much more dependent on free time, and this continues to be determined by their paid time allocation under the Act. The second reason is that any reduction to the paid time allocation for the larger parties is not as problematic for them, since their allocation no longer operates as an upper limit on their purchase of time. The only effective limit is now determined by the general limits on election expenses under the Act.

As noted above, one of the considerations in allocating paid time is the fact that this determines the allocation of free time required to be given by certain radio and television networks, applying the principles set out in section 345 of the Act. That section provides that each network that granted free time in the previous election is required to continue to offer the same total amount of time, with that time essentially shared pro rata among the parties on the basis of the allocation of paid time.

The periods of free time that each of the networks were required to allocate to the parties, in the 2000 federal general election, are shown in Table 2.

Table 2 Allocation of free time, 37th general election

<i>Political party</i>	<i>Network</i>		
	CBC-TV SRC-TV CTV	CBC Radio One SRC Première chaîne	TVA TQS Radio-Média
Liberal Party of Canada	62	35	18
Canadian Reform Conservative Alliance	33	18	9
Progressive Conservative Party of Canada	26	15	8
Bloc Québécois	22	12	6
New Democratic Party	22	12	6
Natural Law Party of Canada	9	5	3
The Green Party of Canada	9	5	2
Canadian Action Party	8	4	2
Christian Heritage Party of Canada	8	4	2
Marxist-Leninist Party of Canada	8	4	2
Communist Party of Canada	3	2	1
Marijuana Party	3	2	1
Total number of minutes (rounded)	214	120	62

The 2000 general election

The Broadcasting Arbitrator published his guidelines under section 346 of the Act on October 22, 2000. These, along with guidelines from the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC), were sent immediately to all broadcasters and political parties.

The guidelines took into account the changes to the *Canada Elections Act* made by Bill C-2 and previous amendments, which had shortened the election campaign from 47 days to 36 days and tightened many of the deadlines for placing orders for broadcasting time. The new Act continued these provisions, but eliminated the blackout on party advertising that had previously applied at the beginning of the campaign and the day before election day.

For the 2000 general election, all parties receiving an allocation of paid time had to notify the stations and networks, by November 3, 2000, of the amount of time they wished to purchase within the 390-minute allocation. The networks and stations then had two days to respond. This obligation was subject to a rule that no party could obtain broadcasting time before the fifth day after the notice was received by the broadcaster.

The Broadcasting Arbitrator's guidelines addressed these and other matters, including guidelines for booking advertisements, the requirement to identify the sponsor of political advertising, regulations affecting the content of political messages, the period within which such advertisements could be aired, the requirement that the lowest applicable rates be charged to political parties by broadcasters, the new rules on opinion polls and third party advertising, and the rule prohibiting the release of election results before the local polls had closed.

Throughout the election, the Broadcasting Arbitrator fielded numerous calls from broadcasters and parties seeking guidance on the interpretation of the Act and the application of the guidelines. All complaints and disputes were resolved without the need to issue a binding arbitration order on the placement of time.