

INTRODUCTION

Since 1993, Canada has seen the most volatile politics in its history. In that year's election, two of the long-established parties, the Progressive Conservative Party (Canada's oldest party) and the New Democratic Party found themselves greatly reduced, to two and nine seats, respectively. While both rebounded to official party status (the threshold for which is 12 seats) in the 1997 election, both declined again in the 2000 election, each barely making official party status. The decline of the two parties is largely due to the success of two new parties, the Canadian Reform Conservative Alliance Party (referred to in the text as the Canadian Alliance or simply the Alliance), formerly the Reform Party; and the Bloc Québécois. Both have undergone much turmoil and several leadership changes since they burst into the Commons as official parties in 1993. By default, the Liberal Party, relatively stable both in leadership and membership in this period, has been able to govern without much competition.

The Liberal Party of Canada has governed for most of its history. All of its leaders in the 20th century served as Prime Minister. Its leadership contests have been generational events; they came in 1919, 1948, 1957, 1968, 1984, and 1990. During the 20th century, the Liberals alternated between Francophone and Anglophone leaders, partly by design and partly by coincidence.

The Progressive Conservative Party has been the only party other than the Liberals to govern. In fact, until 1993, no party other than the two main parties even served as official opposition, although the Progressive Party had the opportunity from 1921 to 1925 but refused. Less than 20 years ago, the Progressive Conservatives captured 211 of 282 seats in the House of Commons, leading some to speculate that they would be Canada's main party henceforward. This was proved wrong when the 1993 election reduced the party to two seats. Since that time, the struggle for the party has been one of viability. They are expected to have a new leader for the next general election, as they have had for five of the past seven elections.

The two elections of 1984 and 1993 demonstrate amply that Canadians do not vote governments in as much as they vote them out. After two minority governments under Lester Pearson, the Liberals formed a broad national

majority government under Pierre Elliott Trudeau in 1968. In the 1972 election, the Liberals were reduced to the slimmest of minority governments — 109 seats to 107 for the Tories under Robert Stanfield — and their caucus became much less national in scope. Trudeau brought the Liberals back to majority status in the 1974 election. Policies pursued by his government in that mandate — particularly official bilingualism and the national energy program — proved alienating especially to Western Canadians. In 1979, when Trudeau could wait no longer before calling an election, the Progressive Conservatives, led by a young Westerner, Joe Clark, captured control of the House of Commons in an electoral inversion (i.e., the Liberals got more votes but the Tories got more seats, which are what count). The Liberals took a chance that they could win another election, and seven weeks into the parliamentary session, they brought Clark's government down. In the 1980 election that followed, the Liberals won a majority, but there was a distinct regionalism in the results: The Liberals held not a single seat west of Winnipeg, while they captured all but one seat in Quebec. This paradigm set the stage for events that were to come.

In 1983 and 1984, both parties got new leaders. Clark survived not one but two reviews of his leadership after the 1980 election loss. Nevertheless, he decided the narrow ratification in 1983 reflected weakness — although no less a figure than Prince Charles was moved to ask why 66 percent wasn't enough — so he stepped aside and ran in the leadership race to replace himself. The Tories chose Brian Mulroney, in part because they recognized the foolishness of holding a leadership contest only to re-elect Clark. Mulroney was fluent in both official languages. The issue of bilingualism had dogged Conservatives, including Stanfield and Clark (whose French came with such an accent as to be barely passable), and the other contender for the Tory leadership, John Crosbie; bilingualism would therefore not be an issue the Liberals could use in the next election campaign. Trudeau, apparently aware of his party's low standing with the public, announced his resignation as Liberal leader on leap year day in 1984. The Liberal Party chose John Turner as its new leader. Turner had served in Parliament from both Montreal and Ottawa and was one of those who ran in the previous leadership race in 1968. Coming in second in 1984 was Jean Chrétien, who

had held nearly every major cabinet post under Trudeau.

The Liberals were in a weak position going into the 1984 election. Turner could have waited until the spring of 1985, by which time he would have appeared in Canada with both Queen Elizabeth II and Pope John Paul II (events which would have been good for his image) but he opted for an early election call, supposedly so the election would coincide more closely with the U.S. presidential election. (It's frequently believed that U.S. presidents manipulate their country's economy to their electoral advantage, and the Canadian economy benefits from this too.) By doing this, Turner couldn't run on his record — he had only been Prime Minister for two months — and had to spend a lot of time defending controversial Trudeau decisions, not the least of which was a string of last-minute patronage appointments. The election was the second biggest landslide in Canadian history for the Conservatives and a major disaster for the Liberals. Turner won a seat in Vancouver although only 39 other Liberal candidates won their seats, 31 of them from central Canada (Quebec and Ontario).

Mulroney had put together an uneasy coalition of traditional Tories, Western populists, and Quebec nationalists. These groups got along fine as long as the agenda consisted of undoing what the Tories perceived as economic damage by the Liberals under Trudeau, but distinct rifts in the assemblage were apparent as the agenda shifted to things like national unity and free trade with the United States. Mulroney also suffered from a lack of public experience. He had never held office before becoming Tory leader, and he was frequently unable to rein in the excesses of his caucus. As a result, an alarmingly large number of Tory MPs went down in various corruption scandals ranging from merely absurd to felonious. The same leaders squared off again in 1988. The Tory victory in that year's election reflected not so much Mulroney's strength as Turner's inability to rally the traditional Liberal vote. While the Liberal caucus more than doubled to 83 seats, this was still a fraction of what the caucus had been even under Pearson, and it was clear that Turner would soon resign. The Tory caucus reduced to a still-healthy 169 seats, Mulroney governed in his second mandate as if he had a much larger electorate behind him. He went forth more boldly

on free trade with the U.S. than any Canadian leader had ever dared. He pushed two unpopular constitutional accords, designed to "bring Quebec into the constitution," Canada's second largest province having eschewed the historic 1982 accord that gave Canada final independence from the United Kingdom. (Although the country has been fully sovereign since 1931, until the patriation in 1982, amendments to Canada's constitution had to be approved by the British Parliament.) Mulroney's Tories also passed a grievously unpopular national sales tax, the goods and services tax, or GST. These three acts were body blows to the Tories' three disparate constituencies. Free trade was not well received by traditional Tory voters in Eastern Canada, most of whom were descended from Loyalists, people who fled revolutionary America for Canada. The constitutional deals seemed to offend everyone in Quebec. Those vigorously opposed to Canadian federalism were opposed to the deals in principle, and those in favour of them were outraged by the Mulroney government's inability to get them passed. This led some Quebec MPs to bolt from the Progressive Conservative Party (and two from the Liberal Party) and start their own party, the Bloc Québécois. Finally, the imposition of the GST severely alienated people in the West (particularly Alberta, which has no sales tax of its own) who had been loyal Tory voters back to the days of John Diefenbaker. A new party, the Reform Party, was ready to feed this alienation. Reform had not done better than some impressive second-place finishes in the 1988 election, and by 1993, it only had one MP, elected in a 1989 by-election.

The failure of the Meech Lake Accord, as the first constitutional deal was known, had profound political consequences. All of the provincial premiers who had signed it and pushed for it were swept out of office by the voters, one by one.

Following the overwhelming defeat of the second constitutional package (known as the Charlottetown Accord) in a 1992 referendum, the writing had to be on the wall for Brian Mulroney; he found himself in much the same position Trudeau had been in at the end of his tenure. Almost nine years to the day after Trudeau announced his resignation as Liberal leader, Mulroney announced his resignation as Tory leader. The field for the leadership race was not

as crowded as had been expected; it is believed that most of the would-be contenders recognized the low potential for the party in the coming election. The party chose the first woman to lead a governing party, Kim Campbell, who was in her first term as an MP from Vancouver. Meanwhile, the Liberals had replaced Turner with Chrétien, and the contrast between the two new party leaders could not have been clearer. Chrétien ran like an old pro (which he was), and Campbell ran like a novice (which she was, at least as far as national campaigns were concerned). Chrétien was able to benefit from some of the new Prime Minister's gaffes, but in the end, it was the politics and policies of the party's former leader, and not the performance of the new leader that sealed the Tories' fate.

The 1993 election was like a bomb blast. The Progressive Conservatives were nearly obliterated, losing 100 incumbents that night, 57 of whom wound up in third place, and four of whom took fourth place in their own ridings. The Prime Minister lost her own seat. The only Tory incumbent still standing was the loser to Campbell in the leadership race, Sherbrooke MP Jean Charest. (Campbell soon resigned as leader and was replaced by Charest.) The New Democratic Party, which attained a peak of 43 seats in the 1988 election, lost 30 incumbents, 13 of whom took third place finishes, and two of whom ended up in fourth place. Indeed, were it not for the more spectacular simultaneous destruction of the Tories, the descent of the NDP would be remembered as one of the biggest disasters in Canadian political history. Their party also had a woman leader for the first time, Audrey McLaughlin of the Yukon, the first woman ever to lead a major Canadian national party. She would also resign before the next election.

The winners were the Liberals, who won seats in every part of Canada except the Yukon (which has only one seat), putting not only the two losses under Turner behind them, but also repudiating the last two elections under Trudeau which had given the Liberals a regional, rather than a national, focus. The Liberals took all but one seat in Atlantic Canada (they swept Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Labrador, and Prince Edward Island) and carried all but one of Ontario's 99 seats. They took all but two seats in Manitoba and took five seats in Saskatchewan, a level thought impossible in the Trudeau and

Mulroney years. The Bloc Québécois, running in its first general election, became the official opposition by taking 54 of Quebec's 75 seats. The Reform Party was not far behind them with 52 seats, all but one from the Western provinces.

Governing was more of a challenge for the Liberals under Jean Chrétien than the campaign had been. The first order of business was deficit reduction, and the task turned Liberals — many of whom had aspired to government so they could spend money — into budget cutters. The Liberals cut deep — they claimed the Tories had already made those spending cuts which were least painful — and their deficit reduction effort, like that in the U.S. under President Bill Clinton, can be called a success. The substantive piece of policy that caused them the most electoral trouble was gun control. Looking back, it is not clear why the Liberals passed gun control legislation. There was not much of a groundswell of support for them to do so, and what little there was had no other electoral alternative to the Liberals. The party also came under fire for the razor-thin defeat of the October 1995 referendum in Quebec, which if passed, might have led to a unilateral declaration of independence by the province's premier, Jacques Parizeau.

The 1997 election saw a retrenchment of support for the Liberals, although they still formed a majority in the House of Commons. The Atlantic Provinces had been hardest hit by Liberal spending cuts, since they were quite dependent on seasonal employment, which is bolstered by employment insurance payments. The Liberals, who had taken 31 of the 32 seats in the region in 1993, were down to 11 seats. The party had swept Nova Scotia in 1993 but was now completely shut out of the province's 11 ridings. Most significant was that the voters in the region chose to revert to the two other traditional parties. There was no breakthrough by the Reform Party (or any other newer party) in Atlantic Canada in 1997. Indeed, the Atlantic base that emerged in 1997 (although reduced in the 2000 election) now forms the core of the Progressive Conservative Party and is necessary for the official party status of the New Democratic Party, whose leader, Alexa McDonough, comes from Halifax. (Her resignation is pending, with a leadership race called for January 2003.) The Bloc was down to 44 seats, in part because the popularity in Quebec of Tory Leader Jean Charest reduced the Bloc to

the point in enough ridings that either the Liberals or Conservatives won. (In 1997, every seat in Quebec went to a party with a leader from Quebec.) The Bloc also suffered from two leadership races in as many years. They wound up with Gilles Duceppe as leader, who was not as much a force in the province as founding Bloc Leader Lucien Bouchard (who left national politics to become premier) had been. The Liberals took all but two seats in Ontario, precluding any breakthrough in that province by the Reform Party. The Reform Party had much greater success in the Prairie Provinces. The Liberals lost all but one of their rural seats in Manitoba and Saskatchewan. This was mostly due to anger over gun control. The Reform Party had much success consolidating the West, giving them enough seats to form the official opposition; the NDP only bounced back a little, and the Tories only took one seat in the West.

The Liberals had less controversy in their second mandate. One of the most vexing moments of the 1997 campaign was when Chrétien declared he would not accept a simple majority vote in a Quebec referendum to secede from Canada. Some believed this was an offensive move designed to impel Quebec nationalists to vote for the Bloc instead of the Tories under Charest. (The Tories and not the Bloc, after all, are a potential threat to governance by the Liberals.) Rather than a short-term political volley, the substance of the matter became a landmark of Chrétien's second term. The Clarity Act, passed in 2000, declares that the Canadian Parliament, not the Quebec government, will decide what constitutes a clear majority on such a vote, and also that Parliament will determine what question is suitably clear to sustain a vote. The 1997 Liberal mandate was more often marred by occasional bursts of scandal than by controversy over policy (although the scandals did not involve ministerial corruption as many of the Mulrone-era scandals had). Indeed, one of the touchstones of Chrétien's prime ministry has been his assiduous avoidance of controversial policies, a lesson he apparently learned by negative example from Trudeau and Mulroney.

The 2000 election was thus not fought over the incumbent government's policies but on the leadership styles of its challengers. The Reform Party, smarting from its repeated failure to achieve electoral success in Eastern Canada,

attempted in various guises to merge with the Progressive Conservative Party. When these efforts were roundly rejected by the Tories, Reform voted to create a "new" party, the Canadian Reform Conservative Alliance Party and then to "merge" with that party. Other parties were also urged to consider merging with the new party. None did. So as a practical matter, the Canadian Alliance is a renaming of the Reform Party rather than a new party. (Inexplicably, the Chief Electoral Officer of Canada did not object to the new party's use of the word "Conservative.") Reform Leader Preston Manning probably could have been acclaimed as the leader of the Canadian Alliance, but like Clark 17 years earlier, he foolishly stepped aside and called a leadership race which he then ran in to succeed himself. He lost to Alberta Treasurer Stockwell Day, who proclaimed himself to be a more telegenic candidate and one more in touch with the younger generation. One of Day's first efforts as leader of the official opposition was to challenge the Prime Minister to call an election. Chrétien obliged, and the Alliance had to fight a general election campaign for which it clearly wasn't prepared and which was focused, to its irritation, not on the track record and scandals of the Liberal government but on the Alliance leader's style and presumed right-wing policy stances.

The Liberals all but made up for their losses from 1997. The Alliance consolidated their support in the West, taking what few seats within their grasp they didn't already have. (They now control every agrarian seat in the West but one.) Still, for the third consecutive election, they failed to make a breakthrough in Ontario or points east, winning only two seats east of the Manitoba border, both from Liberal incumbents in the Ottawa Valley whose declines are more traceable to their own foibles than to either dissatisfaction with Liberals in general or attraction to the Alliance. The Liberals took all but three seats in Ontario. The Bloc stumbled badly, owing to the Tories replacing Charest (who had gone into provincial politics) with Joe Clark, back as Tory leader after a 15-year gap. With the Tories crashing in Quebec — in fact, several of their Quebec MPs defected to the Liberals before the election — the federalist vote went overwhelmingly to the Liberals, who were able to practically tie the Bloc in Quebec seats. Not only

did the predicted revival of the Tories in the West under Clark not happen, but the party also lost a few seats in Atlantic Canada to the Liberals. The NDP lost half its Nova Scotia delegation to the Liberals, and the party now only sends two members from British Columbia, down from 19 in the 1988 election. Both the Tories and the NDP were left barely clinging to official party status.

The 37th Parliament has been tumultuous, fed by the notion that all five parties would have new leaders before it was over. The Canadian Alliance broke into a serious factional rift in April 2001. After Day lost the election he dared the Prime Minister to call and then had a disastrous first months as leader of the official opposition, many of the party's MPs, particular those from British Columbia, saw their re-election prospects dimming as the Progressive Conservatives under Clark took advantage of Day's weaknesses. (It was Clark's bad luck that this did not happen before the election.) A group of dissidents, numbering 13 at their peak, left the party, and Day was weak in his response to them, pleasing neither the hard-liners who wanted the dissidents ousted nor those who wanted to see the dissidents accommodated in some way. In August, the nine remaining dissidents — calling themselves the Democratic Representatives Caucus (DRC) — formed a coalition with the Tories, although the Speaker of the House of Commons (elected as a Liberal), while recognizing the coalition, did not count the DRC as members of the Tory caucus, negating any benefit from the coalition to the Progressive Conservatives. (Had the Speaker counted the dissidents as members of the Tory caucus, the coalition would have been eligible for more parliamentary prerogatives, including more time during Question Period.) The turmoil led Day to resign the leadership, and in what has become a common pattern, he ran in the leadership race to succeed himself. Did Day deserve to be forced to resign? The party improved greatly in the popular vote under his leadership, taking 25 percent in 2000, compared with the 19 percent the party received in both 1993 and 1997 under Preston Manning. The Tories lost votes, a contrast to 1997 when the Tories increased their popular vote and the Reform Party dropped a little from 1993. Day lost the 2002 leadership race to former Calgary MP Stephen Harper. The coalition broke up after

Harper's election, and all but two of the dissidents have returned to the Alliance fold.

This was but a prelude to the turmoil in the governing Liberal Party that erupted in June 2002. Chrétien had won the leadership in June 1990 by defeating Montreal MP Paul Martin and Hamilton MP Sheila Copps. He never prohibited them from continuing their leadership campaigns after he came to power; in fact, he openly encouraged Liberals to organize for a future leadership race, believing it to be a way to strengthen the party and encourage the presence of the ambitious in government. He evidently didn't consider the possibility that his rivals might seek not merely to win the next leadership contest, but to try to oust him from the leadership. It became apparent that the latter scenario was in play in mid-2002, and Chrétien responded first by elevating Ottawa MP John Manley above Martin within cabinet and then by turfing Martin from cabinet altogether. These actions, rather than quell Martin's leadership organizing, only fueled it. Chrétien then faced the real possibility that he would be voted down in the Liberal leadership review in February 2003, in which case a leadership race would have followed. (Chrétien said during this time that he would not be a candidate to succeed himself.) These machinations stemmed not so much from a distaste within Liberal circles for anything Chrétien had done — he has, of course, brought the party three consecutive majorities, something even Trudeau never did — but from overarching ambition on the part of Martin and his followers.

This set of circumstances had the potential to remove not only Chrétien, but also the Liberals, from the power they have enjoyed. The Liberals had two runs in power of more than 20 years in the 20th century — 1935 to 1957 and 1963 to 1984. The Liberals might be in the middle of a run that long right now. (One recent partisan book, *Gritlock*, suggests that the Liberals might be in “forever.”) Indeed, the opposition is quite divided right now; two of the established parties face possible extinction and the two new parties seem unable to expand beyond their regional boundaries. The only serious wild card in all this is the possibility that the governing Liberals self-destruct through an internecine leadership review battle. The case of John Diefenbaker, Tory leader from 1956 to 1967, comes to mind. Diefenbaker surprisingly won a minority

government in 1957, forcing the sudden retirement of Liberal Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent. He then led the party to a landslide victory in a snap election the next year that presaged Mulroney's 1984 landslide (and in fact assembled much of the same coalition). But it was downhill from there for Diefenbaker. He won only a minority government in 1962, and after his government was defeated in the House of Commons the next year, the Liberals under Lester Pearson put together a minority government in the election that followed, and they did likewise in 1965. Even after two election losses, Diefenbaker showed no sign of letting go as Tory leader. This did not sit well with Tory MPs, the party establishment, or the grassroots. The party constitution was changed to provide for a leadership review, and Diefenbaker lost the review. (He subsequently lost the leadership race to succeed himself.) The Tories elected a new leader, Nova Scotia Premier Robert Stanfield, but the wounds from the ouster of Diefenbaker were slow to heal. Diefenbaker remained in Parliament and reportedly did much to interfere with Stanfield. Although his sway was greatly diminished by 1976, he made sure the contenders in that year's Tory leadership race (among them Clark and Mulroney) knew he would make them pay for their roles ten years earlier. The Tories did not put the divisions behind them until Mulroney was elected Prime Minister in 1984, years after Diefenbaker's death in 1979.

In 2002 the Liberals were pondering a similar move. The repercussions would have been much greater, because the Liberals are the governing party, and because there was no obvious reason Chrétien should go. (While Diefenbaker took a minority government and then lost two elections, Chrétien has won three straight majorities, a feat not equalled since Sir Wilfrid Laurier did it nearly a hundred years ago.) The likelihood was real that if Chrétien had been forced out, the divisions within the party would have been so great that the Liberals might not have been able to form a government for more than a decade.

Chrétien did not have much to gain by fighting the leadership review. He had acknowledged (tentatively) during the 2000 campaign that it would be his last. Few expected him to stay much longer even if he won the 2003 review. So when he announced his retirement in

August 2002, effective February 2004, the immediate effect was more in ending the drama that was hanging over the country than in ending Chrétien's leadership. Indeed, the Prime Minister launched several major new initiatives in a Throne Speech the very next month. The MPs who were rebelling against Chrétien have no choice but to support his policies now, lest the government fall and Chrétien stay as leader to fight another election.

Some speculation as to what the electoral outcome would have been had Chrétien been ousted is in order. The scenarios for the next election in such circumstances offer much intrigue. The seats the Liberals won in 2000 with less than 40 percent of the vote would assuredly fall to another party in case of a rupture in the party. Experience shows that the Tories are the second choice of most Liberal voters. (This is how the Tories had a bounce in the 1997 election.) This suggests that in such circumstances the Tories would capture many (if not most) seats in rural Ontario and Atlantic Canada. The Liberals could be wiped out of suburban Toronto. The Liberals' hold on their seats in the cities of the West (Winnipeg, Regina, Edmonton, Vancouver, and Victoria) is in most cases not firm, and it is easy to envisage those seats falling to any of the other three parties. Many Liberal seats in Toronto, Ottawa, and the other cities of Ontario would see serious competition from Tories and the NDP. The only place the Liberals are apt to survive a major division is Quebec, where the NDP and Alliance have never been factors and the Tories are unlikely to take much Liberal vote as long as they have a leader from outside Quebec, especially if Albertan Clark (whose resignation is also pending) leads the Tories in the next election. It also helps Liberals that support for Quebec nationalism is believed to be low at the present time and the prospects for Bloc gains are therefore small. While this analysis may overstate the potential Liberal losses, no reasonable account would hold that the Liberals could fracture and still return with a majority government. This is the party Paul Martin would take over.

While the disaster scenario for the Liberals described above could play out eventually anyway, it would take several election cycles to do so, unless a fracture in the Liberal Party accelerates the process. One of the reasons

Trudeau won a broad national majority in 1968 (the first majority for any party in ten years) was the failure of the divided Tories to mobilize their vote effectively. The nightmare scenario for the Liberals would have been exactly the reverse, with Chrétien having most recently won his broadest national majority yet, carrying seats in all provinces and territories. While it's incredible that Chrétien was in this situation, the other parties must have been secretly cheering for Martin to upset the Liberal applecart.

So what of the real scenario, the potential for the next election with a new Liberal leader? The Liberals are favoured to win, because there is no viable national alternative, and the other parties will have different motivations with there being no serious rift in the Liberal Party. The other parties will be focussing more on their positions relative to each other than on the Liberal vote: The Tories and Alliance over dominance in rural Ontario, the NDP and Alliance over the Western protest vote. If Martin is Prime Minister in 2004 and the Tories elect an unknown and untested leader, the results are apt to be similar to the last three elections. Martin could arguably do as well in Ontario as Chrétien has, and he could hold off a complete meltdown in Quebec. (He assuredly wouldn't be as potent as Chrétien in holding even the small number of seats in French Quebec the Liberals now hold, but he might take more than zero.) Martin might have a chance at solidifying Liberal support in the cities of the West and perhaps taking a few rural seats (although the Alliance will be ready to play some variation of the "not-another-Quebec-leader" card). If the Liberals pick someone other than Martin, the Bloc might be buoyed back to official opposition status and the Tories might wish Clark had not resigned. The opposition parties must also be secretly cheering for the Liberals to pick someone less famous than Martin. Indeed, when Martin was finance minister, the opposition parties made a conscious effort to *not* ask him questions during Question Period in order to minimize his exposure. While some see the elevation of Martin as a foregone conclusion, it should be remembered that when Lester Pearson announced his retirement at the end of 1967, the pundits of the day did not include the name Pierre Trudeau in their lists of his possible successors.

So in the first years of the 21st century, Canada is governed by a party that has recently

been quite stable and effective in elections, and that has staved off (for now) a destabilization that could make the 1993 election look tame by comparison.

WHAT IS POLITICS?

In a general sense, politics is the making of decisions on the basis of the people involved rather than on the merits of the issue. This can take many forms. When Parliament passes a landmark piece of legislation, no one denounces the act as *politics*. Rather, the term is invoked when policy is scuttled due to the interference of personalities, which can mean anything from factions to lobbyists to campaign donors to other moneyed interests. Money decisions are frequently charged with politics. It may happen that a project to be funded in British Columbia is more meritorious (by whatever standard) than a competing one in Toronto, but since greater Toronto has more Members of the House of Commons than does B.C., and all of them are members of the governing Liberal Party, the Toronto project is more likely to be funded. This is the triumph of politics. When a decision-maker doesn't want to act in some situation, so as not to disaffect another decision-maker, that's *politics* too. The concept can be applied to *office politics*, as when someone who doesn't deserve a promotion gets it in order that someone else's axe can be ground. Then there's *industry politics*, where a health insurer favours a particular drug for its patients not for medical reasons but because of the way the manufacturer greased the wheels. Examples abound. So the heart of politics and political analysis, rather than policy, is people. This book is concerned especially with the ways masses of people express their preferences formally: through elections; and with who the people who constitute the individual ridings.

Canadian politics is made especially interesting because of *duality*. Duality means a person has a different protocol for politics on one level (national, provincial or state, local) than another. The United States has a two-party system, and this two-party system is replicated in almost all of the 50 states. People who are Democrats on the national level are also Democrats on the state level. People outside the South who are Republicans on the national level are also Republicans on the state level. This is not always true for Southern Republicans, since some of the southern states are one-party Democratic states. So, many people in those states are Republicans in national politics and Democrats in state politics. They practice duality. Not many

people in the rest of the U.S. do. It is unheard of for a political activist in a Democratic national election campaign to vote Republican in state elections.

Duality is much more common in Canada, since the national five-party system is not replicated in the provinces. Each province has an individual provincial party system, which does not necessarily resemble the national party system, even within that province. Atlantic Canada has less duality than other parts of Canada. The Atlantic provinces have traditional two-party systems, with the Liberals and Progressive Conservatives taking turns in government. Other parties are not very important in Atlantic provincial politics. Quebec also has a two-party system, although the two parties are the Parti Québécois and the Quebec Liberal Party. (A third party, Action Démocratique, is currently on the rise, so Quebec might soon be regarded as a three-party province.) The Quebec Liberal Party is largely unconnected to the Liberal Party of Canada, although most who vote Liberal in Quebec elections also vote Liberal in national elections. Almost all of the rest vote Conservative in national elections. The leader of the Quebec Liberal Party, Jean Charest, was formerly national leader of the Progressive Conservative Party. An equivalent situation in American politics, such as former Democratic Vice President Al Gore being elected governor of Tennessee as a Republican, would be practically inconceivable. (American politicians, like Canadian ones, sometimes change parties, but that means severing ties with the former party, not being involved in the upper echelons of one on the national level and another on the state or provincial level.) Ontario, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan have three-party systems, the three parties being the Progressive Conservative Party (called the Saskatchewan Party in that province), the Liberal Party, and the New Democratic Party. The Conservatives and the New Democrats are the main parties in Manitoba and Saskatchewan; the Liberals are not very prominent. Alberta has the same parties as those three but it is a one-party province. The Progressive Conservative Party has governed without interruption since 1971, and elections are frequently an anticlimax. Duality is most pronounced there, since Alberta elects only one Tory to Parliament. So most Alberta voters practice duality: They are Tories in provincial

politics and Alliance supporters in national politics. British Columbia also has high levels of duality. Its two parties are the Liberal Party and the New Democratic Party, but it sends few members of those parties to Ottawa. Reasonably few people who vote for the B.C. Liberal Party also vote for the national Liberal Party. From 1993 to 2001, B.C. elected mostly members of the right-wing Alliance (formerly Reform Party) to the House of Commons yet had a socialist government running the province.

Why is this so? What factors make duality such an important part of Canadian politics when it is largely absent in the U.S.? The reason is that the entire U.S. electoral system is designed to foster harmony between the state and national levels while the features that do this are absent in Canada. In all but five U.S. states, state elections are held the same day as national elections and ballots are long. This means that when people vote to elect a President of the United States, they will also be voting for U.S. Representative, and they may also be voting for U.S. Senator, governor of their state, secretary of state, state attorney general, state senator, state representative, state judges for several levels of courts, and frequently much more. Local offices might also be on the same ballot. There might also be ballot questions, including referenda and state constitutional amendments. Meanwhile, Canadians only vote for one office in each election — their local Member of Parliament or member of the provincial legislature. The separate elections for national and provincial office make a difference in how the parties are organized. In the Democratic and Republican parties in the U.S., national and state functions are combined (although campaign funds are usually separate), and at the state conventions of the parties, the same delegates sitting in the same room on the same day will pick the party's candidates for both the U.S. Senator from their state and the governor of their state. In Canada, national and provincial parties are separate, and by joining a provincial party, a person does not automatically become a member of the federal party that has the same name, nor would one be thought unusual for joining a competing federal party instead.

Part of the reason the state and national parties are harmonized in the U.S. is the orderliness mandated by the regular schedule for elections; there is an election for the entire U.S.

House of Representatives and one-third of the U.S. Senate on the Tuesday following the first Monday in November of every even numbered year, whether anyone wants one or not. The election of president and vice president is on the ballot every other time. The lack of harmonization in Canada is mandated by the lack of a schedule for elections; elections are held on call. Since national and provincial elections are not held in concert with one another, the need for a single body to organize for them is less. Even the nuts and bolts of the elections are harmonized in the U.S.; elections for national office like President and U.S. Senator are run by the same state officials who put on state elections. There is no standardization in the details of the election from state to state or even from one town to the next; one polling place may use paper ballots while the next uses mechanical voting machines with levers and the next uses computer punch cards. (Remember the imbroglio in Florida after the 2000 presidential election?) In Canada, a national bureaucracy based in Ottawa conducts every election for every seat in Parliament, and every detail is the same from coast to coast to coast, complete with the cardboard ballot boxes and secrecy screens and even the information signs being mailed out from the national capital to every polling place.

Another cause of upheaval in Canadian politics is the idea that people determine their votes in either provincial or national politics on their feelings toward the corresponding party in the other level of government. This is so in spite of the fact that the national and provincial parties are largely unconnected. This manifests itself in voters in provinces with Tory governments voting Liberal in large numbers in national elections when they're dissatisfied with the provincial government, and vice versa. There is some speculation that the NDP didn't do well in British Columbia in the 2000 national election because voters were mad at the province's NDP government (which was subsequently voted out of office by an overwhelming margin six months later). It also appears to have an effect in provincial politics. At the peak of Pierre Trudeau's leadership, most Canadian provinces had Liberal governments. Not long after Trudeau left office, there were no Liberals in power anywhere in the country. Although this was seen as a triumph for Brian Mulroney and his

Conservatives, by the time Mulroney left office, Tories formed the government only in one-party Alberta and in Manitoba. When Jean Chrétien took over as Prime Minister, Liberals held five provincial governments, but now they only have two, and one of those Liberal parties in government — in British Columbia — assuredly has the weakest ties to the national Liberal Party of all the provincial Liberal parties.

The low level of attachment to the Canadian parties keeps things interesting. A party's base can be determined by the lowest level of support it enjoys in a particular period. For the Liberals since 1968, their low ebb was the 28 percent of the vote they took in the 1984 election. (Their base is therefore the 28 percent who voted for them even then.) For the Tories from 1968 to 1988, their low-water mark was the 31 percent of the vote they received in 1968. This means that from 1968 to 1988, only 59 percent of the electorate were attached to one of the only parties that have ever governed Canada. The other 41 percent fluctuated between the two parties, the NDP (whose base was 15 percent in this period, the share it received in 1974), and other parties. With four in ten voters essentially free to follow the swings of the moment, it's no wonder the period produced a landslide for each party and also a minority government for each party in that period. Since 1993, the Liberal base (from 1997) is 38 percent and the Tory base (from 2000) is a mere 12 percent. This means only half the electorate is anchored to one of the traditional parties. The Liberal base being twice as large as that of the number two party (the 19 percent Reform took in both 1993 and 1997) explains why the Liberals have had such an easy time winning lately. No other party is in a relative position to compete with them, in contrast with 1968 to 1988, when the Tory base was within three percentage points of theirs (and the Tories actually had a bigger base).

This measure varies wildly among the provinces. In Prince Edward Island, 87 percent of the electorate was part of the base of either the Liberals or Conservatives in national elections from 1968 to 1988, while in British Columbia, only 36 percent was. This illustrates the two-party nature of the polity in the Atlantic provinces and the fickleness of British Columbia.

Combined bases of the Liberal and Progressive Conservative parties by province, 1968 to 1988 inclusive:

PROV OR TERR	COMB	LIB	PC
Prince Edward Island	86.8	40.5	46.3
Nova Scotia	72.3	33.6	38.7
Newfoundland	66.1	36.4	29.7
New Brunswick	63.4	30.9	32.5
Alberta	63.1	12.7	50.4
Yukon	62.3	21.7	40.6
Ontario	61.8	29.8	32.0
Saskatchewan	54.6	18.2	36.4
Manitoba	53.2	21.8	31.4
Northwest Territories	48.1	24.7	23.4
Quebec	40.8	35.4	5.4
British Columbia	35.8	16.4	19.4

Since most Canadian voters have three viable alternatives, there are many hotly competitive seats where MPs are elected with less than 35 percent of the vote. In Saskatchewan in 1993, where there were not three but four viable parties, no MP won with a majority. Four parties won seats in Manitoba in both 1997 and 2000. Elections in ridings like that are fiercely contested and MPs can be unmade by the slightest movement of votes. In 2000, New Democrat Louise Hardy of the Yukon actually saw her share of the vote rise over 1997, but she lost anyway because the Tory vote collapsed and more of it went to Liberal Larry Bagnell than to her.

Analyzing the parties on a conventional Downsian left-right spectrum is apt to be frustrating. The Canadian Alliance is a hard-right party; comparisons to the U.S. Republican Party are frequent and justified. People who expect it to “unite the right” with the Progressive Conservative Party miss the point. The Progressive Conservative Party is a centrist party, much closer ideologically to the Liberal Party than to the Alliance. The Progressive Conservatives are perhaps to the left of the Liberals on many social issues, and they also support special status for Quebec. These are things that would never be acceptable to the Alliance, which also opposes gay rights and legal abortion. One of the secrets to the longevity of Liberal government is the party's ability — honed by longtime leader (1919-1948) Mackenzie King — to be ideologically amorphous and move to either the right or left as needed to steal the thunder of the prevailing faction of the day. (This is the same thing U.S. Democrats like

Bill Clinton have been accused of doing in trying to outflank upsurging Republican support.) The Liberal Party, then, is also a centrist party. So, the NDP ought to have the left of the spectrum to itself, except they lose pragmatic leftists to the Liberals when those leftists decide they'd rather be in the governing party than maintain ideological purity. The New Democratic Party is a social democratic party, although reasonably few of its members describe themselves as socialists. (The Bloc Québécois is also a socialist party.) Every NDP campaign is full of bright-eyed young people more interested in making a difference in the world than in winning the instant campaign. The NDP's longtime link to organized labour (although weaker now than at any time in the party's history) is actually a conservatizing force within the party, since many union members are to the left on bread-and-butter economic issues but to the right on other issues: social and defence policy. Left and right form a circle in Canada more than a spectrum; there is great competition between the NDP and the Canadian Alliance, primarily over the so-called "redneck socialist" vote in places like B.C. and Saskatchewan where the Alliance in the 1990s (then the Reform Party) absorbed much of the Western populist vote which had previously been the domain of the NDP.

In conclusion, Canadian politics is an extremely complicated subject. Things which appear obvious at first glance turn out to be not true, and the human connections that are the root of politics are much more complicated in Canada than in most modern democracies. This book seeks to inform about those human connections and the political entanglements they foster.