

The 40th Federal Election, 2008

Abstract

This map shows the official results of the 40th Federal Election, held on October 14, 2008. The map colour-codes the winner in each of the 308 electoral districts (ridings) by party affiliation. The distribution of ridings by province and territory is follows:

British Columbia - 36, Alberta - 28, Saskatchewan - 14, Manitoba - 14, Ontario - 106, Quebec - 75, New Brunswick - 10, Nova Scotia - 11, Prince Edward Island - 4, Newfoundland and Labrador - 7, Yukon - 1, Northwest Territories - 1 and Nunavut - 1.

Parliament and Elections

Strictly speaking, "Parliament" (when referring to Canada) is a body made up of three parts: the Sovereign, the Upper House (Senate) and the Lower House (House of Commons). In common usage, however, Parliament has come to mean the House of Commons. Following each federal election, a new House of Commons is elected, and, thus, a new Parliament is created. Therefore, the 40th Parliament will be formed following the 40th federal election.

Federal elections must be held no longer than five years following the immediately preceding election. The timing between elections depends mainly on whether or not one party has a majority:

If one party wins more than half of the seats in an election (meaning it has a majority in the House of Commons), this party forms a Government. Normally, it will not call the next general election until about four years after the previous election took place.

If no party wins a majority, a minority government will be formed. This consists of one party governing with the support of other parties. When there is a minority Government, a Parliament will tend to be ended (dissolved) for a new election about one to two years after the Parliament was first elected.

For additional details on the relationship of Parliament and elections, and how to interpret this map, refer to the section "Data and Mapping Notes" below.

Data and Mapping Notes

The following are notes to assist the user in understanding how the Atlas of Canada mapped the Elections module.

Creating Electoral Districts

Because of shifts in Canada's population over time, it is necessary to change the boundaries of electoral districts from time to time. The sequence to change the districts begins following the holding of the decennial census (a census held in a year ending in "1" such as 2001). The end result of the changes is a new Representation Order (RO).

Once the Census results are known, the Chief Electoral Officer for Canada determines the number of seats for each province and territory for the new RO. The numbers by province or territory is based not only on population but also on legislation that ensures provinces retain a certain number of seats. The total number of seats has gradually grown from one RO to the next: there were 301 seats in the 1996 RO, and 308 for the 2003 RO.

The procedure for finalizing a new RO is a lengthy one as independent commissions for each province must be created to determine the new riding boundaries. These commissions consult with the public and also with a parliamentary committee before they submit final reports. (As there is only one seat in each of the three territories, no commissions are needed for any of the territories). Once a new RO comes into place, several months of preparation time is needed by Elections Canada before the new RO can be used in an election. Thus, the 2003 RO was proclaimed on August 28, 2003, but only came into force for the dissolution of Parliament after April 1, 2004.

Understanding the Election Results Maps

Maps showing election results for Canada must be interpreted with care because a small number of districts occupy most of the area of Canada. Most districts are found in cities, (and, therefore, have small areas) with the result that they can only be seen when one zooms in on the map.

Consequently, users should rely on the "Zoom to Region" tool for reading this map. Note that even when a city (such as Calgary) is selected, it is possible to zoom in at least one more time.

Map Sources

The 40th Federal Election, Official Results

Elections Canada. Official results of the 40th General Election on October 14, 2008.

Related Web sites (1999 – 2009)

Federal Government

The Parliamentary Internet

<http://www.parl.gc.ca/common/index.asp?Language=E>

This site contains current and past data about membership in the House of Commons and the Senate of Canada.

Elections Canada

<http://www.elections.ca/home.asp>

Elections Canada is the non-partisan agency responsible for the conduct of federal elections and referendums. This agency is also the official source for names of electoral districts, registered political parties and voting data for federal elections and by-elections.

