

# List of Prime Ministers of Canada

The Prime Minister of Canada is an official who serves as the primary minister of the Crown, chair of the Cabinet, and thus head of government of Canada. Officially, the prime minister is appointed by the Governor General of Canada, but by constitutional convention, the prime minister must have the confidence of the elected House of Commons. Normally, this is the leader of the party caucus with the greatest number of seats in the house. But, if that leader lacks the support of the majority, the governor general can appoint another leader who has that support or may dissolve parliament and call a new election. By constitutional convention, a prime minister holds a seat in parliament and, since the early 20th century, this has more specifically meant the House of Commons.<sup>[1]</sup>

The office is not outlined in any of the documents that constitute the written portion of the Constitution of Canada; executive authority is formally vested in the sovereign and exercised on his or her behalf by the governor general. The prime ministership is part of Canada's constitutional convention tradition. The office was modelled after that which existed in Britain at the time. Sir John A. Macdonald was commissioned by the Viscount Monck on 24 May 1867, to form the first government of the Canadian Confederation. On 1 July 1867, the first ministry assumed office.<sup>[2]</sup>

The date for which a prime minister begins his or her term has been determined by the date that he or she is sworn into his or her portfolio, as an oath of office as prime minister is not required.<sup>[3]</sup> However, since 1957, the incoming prime minister has sworn an oath as prime minister.<sup>[3]</sup> Before 1920, prime ministers' resignations were accepted immediately by the governor general and the last day of the ministries were the date he died or the date of resignation.<sup>[3]</sup> Since 1920, the outgoing prime minister has only formally resigned when the new government is ready to be formed.<sup>[3]</sup> The Interpretation Act of 1967 states that "where an appointment is made effective or terminates on a specified day, that appointment is considered to be effective or to terminate after the end of the previous day".<sup>[3]</sup> Thus, although the outgoing prime minister formally resigns only hours before the incoming ministry swears their oaths, both during the day, the ministries are effectively changed at midnight the night before. Some sources, including the Parliament of Canada, apply this convention as far back as 1917.<sup>[4]</sup> Two prime ministers have died in office: John A. Macdonald (1867–1873, 1878–1891), and John Thompson (1892–1894). All others have resigned, either after losing an election or upon retirement.



Canada's Prime Ministers during its first century

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## Prime ministers






<b>Abbreviation key:</b>	No.: Incumbent number, Min.: Ministry, Refs: References
<b>Colour key:</b>	<div>  <u>Liberal Party of Canada</u> </div> <div>  Historical Conservative parties (including <u>Liberal-Conservative</u>, <u>Conservative (Historical)</u>, <u>Unionist</u>, <u>National Liberal and Conservative</u>, <u>Progressive Conservative</u>) </div> <div>  <u>Conservative Party of Canada</u> </div>
<b>Provinces key:</b>	AB: <u>Alberta</u> , BC: <u>British Columbia</u> , MB: <u>Manitoba</u> , NS: <u>Nova Scotia</u> , ON: <u>Ontario</u> , QC: <u>Quebec</u> , SK: <u>Saskatchewan</u>

No.	Portrait	Name (Birth–Death) District	Term of office	Electoral mandates (Parliaments)	Political party	Min.	Refs
1		Sir John A. Macdonald (1815–1891) MP for <u>Kingston, ON</u>	1 July 1867 – 5 November 1873	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Title created (no parl't)</li> <li>1867 election (1st Parl't)</li> <li>1872 election (2nd Parl't)</li> </ul>	<u>Liberal-Conservative Party</u>	<u>1st</u>	[2][5]
			Minister of Justice; Integration of Rupert's Land and the North-Western Territory into Canada; <u>Manitoba Act</u> ; <u>Red River Rebellion</u> ; <u>British Columbia and Prince Edward Island</u> join confederation; Creation of the <u>North-West Mounted Police</u> ; Resigned over <u>Pacific Scandal</u>				
2		<u>Alexander Mackenzie</u> (1822–1892) MP for <u>Lambton, ON</u>	7 November 1873 – 8 October 1878	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appointment (2nd Parl't) [Min.]</li> <li>1874 election (3rd Parl't)</li> </ul>	<u>Liberal Party</u> Named leader in 1873	<u>2nd</u>	[6][7]
			<u>Pacific Scandal</u> ; Creation of the <u>Supreme Court</u> ; Establishment of the <u>Royal Military College</u> ; Created the office of the <u>Auditor General</u>				
(1)		Sir John A. Macdonald (1815–1891) MP for <u>Victoria, BC</u> until 1882 MP for <u>Carleton, ON</u> until 1887 MP for <u>Kingston, ON</u>	17 October 1878 – 6 June 1891	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1878 election (4th Parl't)</li> <li>1882 election (5th Parl't)</li> <li>1887 election (6th Parl't)</li> <li>1891 election (7th Parl't)</li> </ul>	<u>Liberal-Conservative Party</u>	<u>3rd</u>	[8][9]
			<u>National Policy</u> ; <u>Railway to the Pacific</u> ; <u>North-West Rebellion</u> ; Hanging of <u>Louis Riel</u> . Died in office (stroke).				
3		Sir John Abbott (1821–1893) Senator for <u>Quebec</u>	16 June 1891 – 24 November 1892	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appointment (7th Parl't)</li> </ul>	<u>Liberal-Conservative Party</u>	<u>4th</u>	[10] [11]
			Minister without Portfolio; Succeeded on Macdonald's death due to objections to the Catholic John Thompson. In ill health; retired. First prime minister born in what would become Canada, and first of only two prime ministers to serve while in the Senate.				
4		Sir John Thompson (1845–1894) MP for <u>Antigonish, NS</u>	5 December 1892 – 12 December 1894	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appointment (7th Parl't)</li> </ul>	<u>Liberal-Conservative Party</u>	<u>5th</u>	[12] [13]
			Minister of Justice; First Catholic Prime Minister. <u>Manitoba Schools Question</u> . Died in office (heart attack).				
5		Sir Mackenzie Bowell (1823–1917) Senator for <u>Ontario</u>	21 December 1894 – 27 April 1896	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appointment (7th Parl't)</li> </ul>	<u>Conservative Party</u> (historical)	<u>6th</u>	[14] [15]
			Minister of Customs; Minister of Militia and Defence; <u>Manitoba Schools Question</u> . Last prime minister to serve while in the Senate.				

6		<p><u>Sir Charles Tupper</u> (1821–1915)</p> <p>Did not serve in Parliament while Prime Minister</p>	<p>1 May 1896 – 8 July 1896</p>	<p>■ Appointment (no parl't)</p>	<p><u>Conservative Party</u> (historical)</p>	<p><u>7th</u></p>	<p>[16] [17]</p>
			<p>Minister of Customs, Minister of Railways and Canals; Oldest Canadian PM. Aimed to defeat <u>Patrons of Industry</u>, but dominated by <u>Manitoba Schools Question</u>. Never sat in parliament as Prime Minister.</p>				
7		<p><u>Sir Wilfrid Laurier</u> (1841–1919)</p> <p>MP for <u>Quebec East, QC</u></p>	<p>11 July 1896 – 6 October 1911</p>	<p>■ 1896 election (8th Parl't) ■ 1900 election (9th Parl't) ■ 1904 election (10th Parl't) ■ 1908 election (11th Parl't)</p>	<p><u>Liberal Party</u> Named leader in 1887</p>	<p><u>8th</u></p>	<p>[18] [19]</p>
			<p>Manitoba Schools Question; Boer War; Alberta and Saskatchewan created; Creation of the Royal Canadian Navy; Reciprocity with the US; Department of External Affairs established; First French Canadian Prime Minister, removed the right of status Indians to vote.</p>				
8		<p><u>Sir Robert Borden</u> (1854–1937)</p> <p>MP for <u>Halifax, NS</u> until 1917 MP for <u>Kings, NS</u></p>	<p>10 October 1911 – 11 October 1917</p>	<p>■ 1911 election (12th Parl't)</p>	<p><u>Conservative Party</u> (historical) Named leader in 1901</p>	<p><u>9th</u></p>	<p>[19] [20] [21]</p>
			<p>12 October 1917 – 10 July 1920</p>	<p>■ 1917 election (13th Parl't)</p>	<p><u>Unionist Party</u></p>	<p><u>10th</u></p>	
			<p>First World War; Military Service Act; Conscription Crisis of 1917; Union government; National Research Council; Introduction of income tax; Nickle Resolution; Women's suffrage; Suppression of Winnipeg General Strike; Canada sits at the <u>Paris Peace Conference</u>, signs the <u>Treaty of Versailles</u> and joins <u>League of Nations</u>.</p>				
9		<p><u>Arthur Meighen</u> (1874–1960)</p> <p>MP for <u>Portage la Prairie, MB</u></p>	<p>10 July 1920 – 29 December 1921</p>	<p>■ Appointment (13th Parl't)</p>	<p><u>National Liberal and Conservative Party</u> Named leader in 1920</p>	<p><u>11th</u></p>	<p>[22] [23]</p>
			<p>Solicitor General of Canada, Minister of Mines, Secretary of State for Canada, Minister of the Interior, Superintendent Indian Affairs; <u>Grand Trunk Railway</u> placed under control of <u>Canadian National Railways</u>.</p>				
10		<p><u>William Lyon Mackenzie King</u> (1874–1950)</p> <p>MP for <u>York North, ON</u> until 1925 MP for <u>Prince Albert, SK</u></p>	<p>29 December 1921 – 28 June 1926</p>	<p>■ 1921 election (14th Parl't) ■ 1925 election (15th Parl't)<sup>[LS]</sup> [Min.]</p>	<p><u>Liberal Party</u> Named leader in 1919</p>	<p><u>12th</u></p>	<p>[24] [25]</p>
			<p>Minister of Labour; Chanak Crisis; lower tariffs; reinstated Crowsnest Pass Agreement; 1923 Imperial Conference; Halibut Treaty; Continued after 1925 with third party Progressive support until resigning after his request for an election was refused by Governor General Lord Byng.</p>				
(9)		<p><u>Arthur Meighen</u> (1874–1960)</p> <p>MP for <u>Portage la Prairie, MB</u></p>	<p>29 June 1926 – 25 September 1926</p>	<p>■ Appointment (15th Parl't) [Min.]</p>	<p><u>Conservative Party</u> (historical)</p>	<p><u>13th</u></p>	<p>[22] [26]</p>
			<p>Appointed as a result of the King–Byng Affair.</p>				

(10)		<u>William Lyon Mackenzie King</u> (1874–1950) MP for <u>Prince Albert, SK</u>	25 September 1926 – 7 August 1930	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <u>1926 election</u> (16th Parl't) [Min.]</li> </ul>	<u>Liberal Party</u>	<u>14th</u>	[24] [27]
			<u>Balfour Declaration</u> ; Introduction of <u>old age pensions</u> ; first Canadian envoys with full diplomatic status sent to foreign countries (USA, France, Japan); <u>Great Depression</u> .				
11		<u>R. B. Bennett</u> (1870–1947) MP for <u>Calgary West, AB</u>	7 August 1930 – 23 October 1935	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <u>1930 election</u> (17th Parl't)</li> </ul>	<u>Conservative Party</u> (historical) Named leader in 1927	<u>15th</u>	[28] [29]
			Minister of Justice, Minister of Finance; <u>Great Depression</u> ; <u>Imperial Preference</u> ; <u>Canadian Radio Broadcasting Commission</u> ; <u>Canadian Wheat Board</u> ; Creation of the <u>Bank of Canada</u> .				
(10)		<u>William Lyon Mackenzie King</u> (1874–1950) MP for <u>Prince Albert, SK</u> until 1945 MP for <u>Glengarry, ON</u>	23 October 1935 – 15 November 1948	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <u>1935 election</u> (18th Parl't)</li> <li>■ <u>1940 election</u> (19th Parl't)</li> <li>■ <u>1945 election</u> (20th Parl't)<sup>[LS]</sup></li> </ul>	<u>Liberal Party</u>	<u>16th</u>	[24] [30]
			Creation of the <u>Canadian Broadcasting Corporation</u> ; <u>National Film Board of Canada</u> ; <u>Unemployment Insurance Act of 1940</u> ; <u>Nationalization of the Bank of Canada</u> ; <u>Second World War</u> ; <u>Japanese Canadian internment</u> ; <u>Conscription Crisis of 1944</u> ; Canada's entry into the <u>United Nations</u> ; <u>Trans-Canada Airlines</u> ; <u>Gouzenko Affair</u> .				
12		<u>Louis St. Laurent</u> (1882–1973) MP for <u>Quebec East, QC</u>	15 November 1948 – 21 June 1957	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <u>Appointment</u> (20th Parl't)</li> <li>■ <u>1949 election</u> (21st Parl't)</li> <li>■ <u>1953 election</u> (22nd Parl't)</li> </ul>	<u>Liberal Party</u> Named leader in 1948	<u>17th</u>	[31] [32]
			Minister of Justice, Secretary of State for External Affairs; <u>Dominion of Newfoundland</u> joins confederation; right of appeal to <u>Judicial Committee of the Privy Council</u> ended; Canada's entrance into <u>NATO</u> ; <u>Suez Crisis</u> ; Creation of the <u>United Nations Emergency Force</u> ; <u>London Declaration</u> ; <u>Newfoundland Act</u> ; <u>Equalization</u> ; <u>Trans-Canada Highway</u> ; <u>St. Lawrence Seaway</u> ; <u>Trans-Canada Pipeline</u> ; <u>Pipeline Debate</u> .				
13		<u>John Diefenbaker</u> (1895–1979) MP for <u>Prince Albert, SK</u>	21 June 1957 – 22 April 1963	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <u>1957 election</u> (23rd Parl't) [Min.]</li> <li>■ <u>1958 election</u> (24th Parl't)</li> <li>■ <u>1962 election</u> (25th Parl't) [Min.]</li> </ul>	<u>Progressive Conservative Party</u> Named leader in 1956	<u>18th</u>	[33] [34]
			<u>Avro Arrow</u> cancellation; <u>Coyne Affair</u> ; <u>Cuban Missile Crisis</u> ; <u>NORAD</u> ; Establishment of <u>Board of Broadcast Governors</u> ; <u>Canadian Bill of Rights</u> ; Allowed status <u>aboriginals</u> to vote in federal elections 1960; <u>Alouette 1</u> satellite programme.				

14		<u>Lester B. Pearson</u> (1897–1972) MP for <u>Algoma East, ON</u>	22 April 1963 – 20 April 1968	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <u>1963 election</u> (26th Parl't) [Min.]</li> <li>■ <u>1965 election</u> (27th Parl't) [Min.]</li> </ul>	<u>Liberal Party</u> Named leader in <u>1958</u>	<u>19th</u>	[35] [36]
			Secretary of State for External Affairs; Bomarc missile program; Federal involvement in <u>universal healthcare</u> ; <u>Canada Pension Plan</u> ; <u>Canada Student Loans</u> ; Creation of a new Canadian flag; Auto Pact; Rejection of troop deployment to Vietnam; Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism; <u>Unification of the Armed Forces</u> ; <u>Canadian Centennial Celebrations</u> .				
15		<u>Pierre Trudeau</u> (1919–2000) MP for <u>Mount Royal, QC</u>	20 April 1968 – 3/4 June[*] 1979	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <u>Appointment</u> (27th Parl't)</li> <li>■ <u>1968 election</u> (28th Parl't)</li> <li>■ <u>1972 election</u> (29th Parl't) [Min.]</li> <li>■ <u>1974 election</u> (30th Parl't)</li> </ul>	<u>Liberal Party</u> Named leader in <u>1968</u>	<u>20th</u>	[37]
			Minister of Justice; " <u>Trudeaumania</u> "; " <u>Just Society</u> "; <u>October Crisis</u> and Use of the War Measures Act; <u>Official Languages Act</u> ; Establishment of relations with Communist China; <u>Victoria Charter</u> ; Creation of <u>Petro-Canada</u> ; Membership in the <u>G7</u> ; <u>Metric Commission</u> , <u>Metrication of Canada</u> , Creation of <u>Via Rail</u> .				
16		<u>Joe Clark</u> (b. 1939) MP for <u>Yellowhead, AB</u>	4 June 1979 – 2/3 March[*] 1980	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <u>1979 election</u> (31st Parl't) [Min.]</li> </ul>	<u>Progressive Conservative Party</u> Named leader in <u>1976</u>	<u>21st</u>	[38]
			Youngest Canadian PM. Defeated in a <u>motion of no confidence</u> on first budget.				
(15)		<u>Pierre Trudeau</u> (1919–2000) MP for <u>Mount Royal, QC</u>	3 March 1980 – 29/30 June[*] 1984	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <u>1980 election</u> (32nd Parl't)</li> </ul>	<u>Liberal Party</u>	<u>22nd</u>	[37]
			Quebec referendum, 1980; Access to Information Act; <u>Patriation of the Canadian Constitution</u> ; <u>Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms</u> ; <u>National Energy Program</u> ; <u>Canada Health Act</u> ; <u>Western alienation</u> .				
17		<u>John Turner</u> (b. 1929) Did not serve in Parliament while Prime Minister	30 June 1984 – 16/17 September[*] 1984	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <u>Appointment</u> (32nd Parl't)</li> </ul>	<u>Liberal Party</u> Named leader in <u>1984</u>	<u>23rd</u>	[39]
			Minister of Justice, Minister of Finance; <u>Trudeau Patronage Appointments</u> . Never sat in parliament as Prime Minister.				
18		<u>Brian Mulroney</u> (b. 1939) MP for <u>Manicouagan, QC</u> until 1988 MP for <u>Charlevoix, QC</u>	17 September 1984 – 24/25 June[*] 1993	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <u>1984 election</u> (33rd Parl't)</li> <li>■ <u>1988 election</u> (34th Parl't)</li> </ul>	<u>Progressive Conservative Party</u> Named leader in <u>1983</u>	<u>24th</u>	[40]
			Cancellation of the <u>National Energy Program</u> ; <u>Meech Lake Accord</u> ; <u>Petro-Canada privatization</u> ; <u>Canada-US Free Trade Agreement</u> ; Introduction of the Goods and Services Tax; <u>Charlottetown Accord</u> ; <u>Gulf War</u> ; <u>Oka Crisis</u> ; <u>Environmental Protection Act</u> ; Privatization of <u>Air Canada</u> , <u>North American Free Trade Agreement</u> ; <u>Airbus affair</u> .				

19		<u>Kim Campbell</u> (b. 1947) MP for <u>Vancouver Centre, BC</u>	25 June 1993 – 3/4 November[*] 1993	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Appointment (34th Parl't)</li> </ul>	<u>Progressive Conservative Party</u> Named leader in 1993	<u>25th</u>	[41]	Minister of Justice, Minister of Veterans Affairs, Minister of National Defence, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs; Only female Prime Minister of Canada. Defeated and lost her seat in 1993 election.
20		<u>Jean Chrétien</u> (b. 1934) MP for <u>Saint-Maurice, QC</u>	4 November 1993 – 11/12 December[*] 2003	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 1993 election (35th Parl't)</li> <li>■ 1997 election (36th Parl't)</li> <li>■ 2000 election (37th Parl't)</li> </ul>	<u>Liberal Party</u> Named leader in 1990	<u>26th</u>	[42]	Minister of Finance, Minister of Indian Affairs, Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, Minister of Justice and Energy Minister, President of the Treasury Board, Minister of National Revenue, Deputy Prime Minister of Canada; Privatization of <u>Canadian National Railway</u> , Red Book; Harmonized Sales Tax; Quebec referendum, 1995; Clarity Act; Assassination attempt; Kosovo War; 1997 Red River Flood; Social Union Framework Agreement; Creation of <u>Nunavut Territory</u> ; <u>Youth Criminal Justice Act</u> ; <u>Operation Yellow Ribbon</u> ; Invasion of Afghanistan; Opposition to the Invasion of Iraq; Sponsorship scandal; Kyoto Protocol; Gomery Inquiry.
21		<u>Paul Martin</u> (b. 1938) MP for <u>LaSalle—Émard, QC</u>	12 December 2003 – 5/6 February[*] 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Appointment (37th Parl't)</li> <li>■ 2004 election (38th Parl't) [Min.]</li> </ul>	<u>Liberal Party</u> Named leader in 2003	<u>27th</u>	[40]	Minister of Finance; Minority government. Civil Marriage Act; Kelowna Accord; Rejection of US Anti-Missile Treaty; Sponsorship scandal; Gomery inquiry; G20; Atlantic Accord; Martin and his father Paul Martin Sr have the honorific title of Right Honourable.
22		<u>Stephen Harper</u> (b. 1959) MP for <u>Calgary Southwest, AB</u>	6 February 2006 – 3/4 November[*] 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 2006 election (39th Parl't) [Min.]</li> <li>■ 2008 election (40th Parl't) [Min.]</li> <li>■ 2011 election (41st Parl't)</li> </ul>	<u>Conservative Party</u> Named leader in 2004	<u>28th</u>	[43]	Accountability Act; Softwood Lumber Agreement; Afghanistan Mission; 2006 Ontario terrorism plot; Québécois nation motion; Apologies for Residential Schools and Head Tax; 2008 Financial crisis; Coalition crisis; Economic Action Plan; Afghan detainee issue; Parliamentary contempt; Withdrawal from the Kyoto Protocol; Repeal of the Long-Gun Registry; Senate expenses scandal; Anti-terrorism Act, 2015.
23		<u>Justin Trudeau</u> (b. 1971) MP for <u>Papineau, QC</u>	4 November 2015 – Incumbent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 2015 election (42nd Parl't)</li> </ul>	<u>Liberal Party</u> Named leader in 2013	<u>29th</u>	[44]	Son of 15th Prime Minister <u>Pierre Trudeau</u> ; Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Youth; Senate Liberal Caucus; Paris Agreement; 150th anniversary celebrations; Apologies for Komagata Maru incident and Fruit machine (homosexuality test); Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement; Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership; Cannabis Act; United States–Mexico–Canada Agreement.

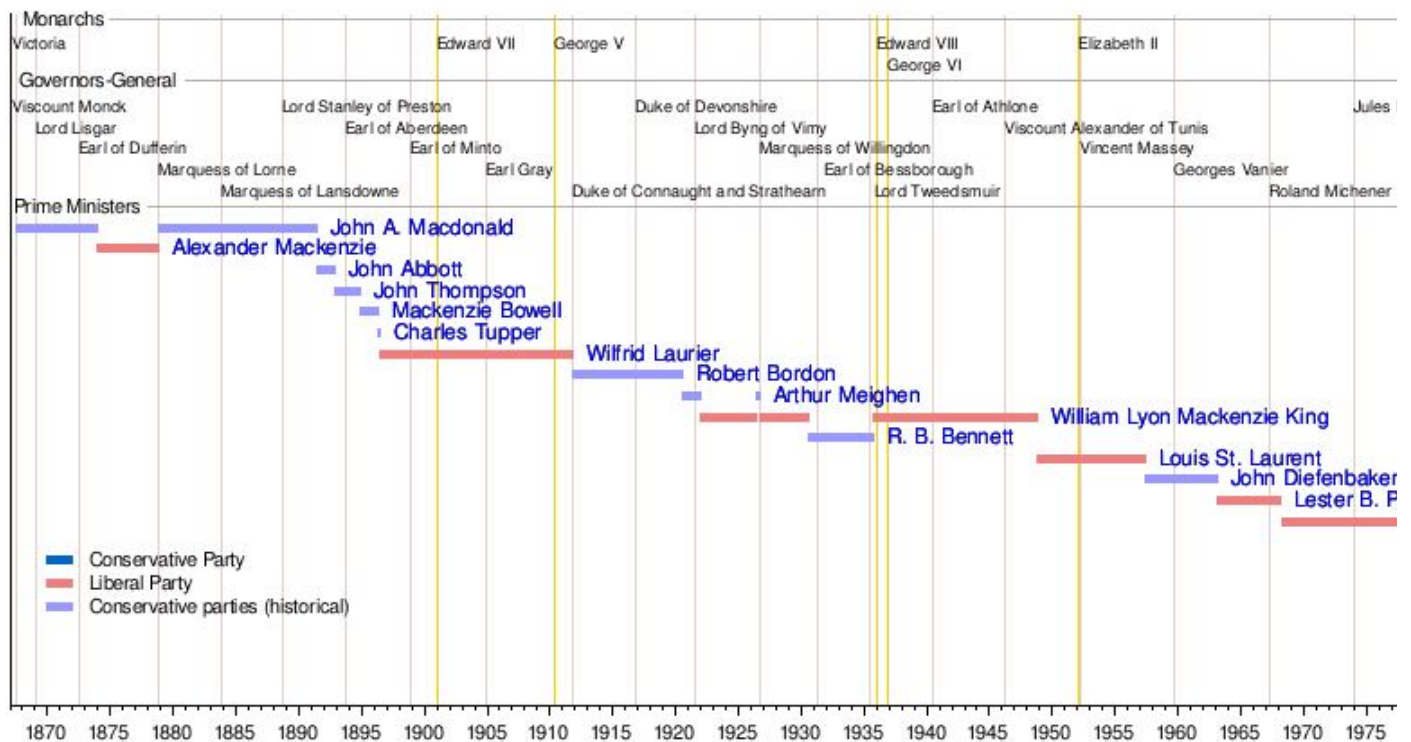


Min. Minority government

LS Party won the election, but prime minister lost own seat

\* The Interpretation Act of 1967 states that "where an appointment is made effective or terminates on a specified day, that appointment is considered to be effective or to terminate after the end of the previous day." Under the Act, Prime Ministers' tenures are therefore credited as having concluded at the end of their last full day in office (the earlier date given), although their resignation was received by the Governor General on the following day. This provision applies to P. Trudeau in 1979<sup>[45]</sup> and 1984,<sup>[46]</sup> Clark,<sup>[47]</sup> Turner,<sup>[48]</sup> Mulroney,<sup>[49]</sup> Campbell,<sup>[50]</sup> Chrétien,<sup>[51]</sup> Martin,<sup>[51]</sup> and Harper.<sup>[51]</sup>

## Timeline



## Living former prime ministers

As of December 2018, there are seven living former prime ministers of Canada, the oldest being John Turner (born 1929). The most recent former Prime Minister to die was Pierre Trudeau (1968–1979, 1980–1984), on 28 September 2000. The living former prime ministers, in order of service, are:



**Joe Clark**  
(1979–1980)  
Age: 79



**John Turner**  
(1984)  
Age: 89



**Brian Mulroney**  
(1984–1993)  
Age: 79



**Kim Campbell**  
(1993)  
Age: 71



**Jean Chrétien**  
(1993–2003)  
Age: 84





**Paul Martin**  
(2003–2006)  
Age: 80



**Stephen Harper**  
(2006–2015)  
Age: 59

## See also

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- Fathers of Confederation
- List of Joint Premiers of the Province of Canada
- List of Canadian Leaders of the Opposition
- List of Canadian federal parliaments
- List of Canadian monarchs

## References

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