

The choice of the Canadian electorate not only determines who shall govern Canada but, by deciding which party receives the second largest number of seats in the House of Commons, it designates which of the major parties becomes the Official Opposition. The function of the Leader of the Opposition is to offer intelligent and constructive criticism of the Government of the day.

When criticism by the Opposition becomes sufficiently effective it can overthrow the existing Government and the Leader of the Opposition might then, as a result of the ensuing election, become Prime Minister.

Although the position of Leader of the Opposition is not recognized in the British North America Act, it received statutory acknowledgment in Canada in 1927. The Senate and House of Commons Act of that year provided for an annual salary to be paid to the Leader of the Opposition in addition to his indemnity as a Member of the House.

Indemnities and Allowances.—Members of the Senate receive a sessional allowance at the rate of \$8,000 per annum. In addition, they receive, at the end of each calendar year, an annual expense allowance of \$2,000 which is subject to income tax. Members of the House of Commons are paid a sessional allowance at the rate of \$8,000 per annum. In addition, they receive \$2,000 as an expense allowance paid at the end of each calendar year. This allowance, except in the case of Ministers of the Crown and the Leaders of the Opposition in the House and in the Senate, is not subject to income tax. The remuneration of the Prime Minister is \$25,000 a year and of a Cabinet Minister and the Leader of the Opposition \$15,000 a year, in addition to the sessional allowance and expense allowance each receives as a Member of Parliament. A Cabinet Minister is also entitled to a motor-car allowance of \$2,000. The Speakers of the Senate and of the House of Commons receive, besides their sessional allowance and expense allowance, a salary of \$9,000 and a motor-car allowance of \$1,000 and are also entitled to \$3,000 in lieu of a residence. The Deputy Speaker of the House of Commons receives a salary of \$6,000 and an allowance of \$1,500 in lieu of a residence. The Deputy Chairman of Committees receives an annual allowance of \$2,000. Parliamentary Assistants to the Ministers of the Crown receive \$8,000 sessional allowance as Members of Parliament, \$4,000 a year as Parliamentary Assistants and the \$2,000 expense allowance paid to all Members of Parliament.

The Federal Government Franchise.—The present franchise laws are contained in the Canada Elections Act (R.S.C. 1952, c. 23). The franchise is conferred upon all Canadian citizens or British subjects, men and women, who have attained the age of 21 years and who have been ordinarily resident in Canada for 12 months prior to polling day at a federal election, and ordinarily resident in the electoral district on the date of the issue of the writ ordering such election. Persons denied the right to vote are:—

- (1) Judges appointed by the Governor General in Council;
- (2) The returning officer for each electoral district;
- (3) Persons undergoing punishment as inmates of any penal institution for the commission of any offence;
- (4) Indians ordinarily resident on an Indian reserve who were not members of His Majesty's Forces in World Wars I or II, or who did not execute a waiver of exemption under the Indian Act from taxation on and in respect of personal property;
- (5) Persons restrained of their liberty or deprived of the management of their property by reason of mental disease;
- (6) Persons disqualified, under any law relating to the disqualification of electors, for corrupt and illegal practices.