The Federal Government of Canada

The federal government of Canada is a democracy, and a constitutional monarchy. It is a democracy because our government is elected. It is a constitutional monarchy because we have a constitution made by the people, for the people and also have a monarchy.

The federal government of Canada consists of various components. These include a representative of the British monarchy, the Senate, and Parliament.

The Queen is the head of state and the prime minister of Canada is the head of government. The prime minister is elected by the people of the nation to be their leader and to make decisions and initiate bills which can become laws.

Canada is a dominion, a free nation with a historical link to Britain and its King or Queen. Since the British Monarch lives in England, a representative for the head of state is appointed to over see the sessions where elected officials discuss issues and make laws that affect the nation. This representative is the Governor-General.

To become a prime minister, a person has to become the leader of a political party such as the Liberals, the Canadian Alliance, the Bloc Quebecois, the New Democratic Party, or the Progressive Conservatives. In an election, people in an area or riding vote for the person of a party they want to represent them in Parliament. The party with the most votes in a riding wins a seat in Parliament’s House of Commons in Ottawa. The party member who wins the seat becomes a Member of Parliament or an MP. The party with the most seats becomes the federal government of Canada for usually four or five years, and the leader of the party becomes the prime minister.

The prime minister must then choose several MPs from his/her party to be cabinet ministers. Cabinet ministers are each responsible for a federal portfolio such as fisheries, defense, foreign affairs, finance, etc. The cabinet ministers offer rules or bills to the House of Commons for the MPs of all the different elected parties to debate. The Speaker in the House of Commons makes sure that order is kept during the sometimes heated discussions. Once most of the MPs vote in favour of the wording of the bill, it goes to the Senate. Then the senators, who are appointed not elected, usually agree to pass the bill. The bill then goes to the Governor General who makes the bill a law.

All the components of the Canadian government, elected or appointed, work to deal with issues that affect all the people of the nation.