Date Of Next Federal Vote Sparks Ottawa Guessing

By FRASER MacDOUGALL

OTTAWA (CP) — When will Canada have its next general election? Before the end of this year? Early in 1963? Or will the minority Conservative government weather the parliamentary storms for as long as a couple of years?

All these questions can bring only hypothetical answers. Yet they form the basis of almost continuous speculation in Ottawa political circles.

They spring from the inconclusive results of the June 18 general election in which the Conservatives won 116 seats, Liberals 99, Social Credit 30 and New Democratic Party 19. Voting for the 265th Commons seat, Stormont was deferred until today due to the death of a candidate.

Allowing for election of a Speaker, who has no vote, the Conservatives will muster 115 votes in the House against 149 for the combined opposition.

The three opposition groups, acting in concert, can overthrow the government and force its resignation, bringing on an election. Yet any one of the three, by supporting the government, can keep it in office and postpone an election.

HAS SOME INITIATIVE

The government has some initiative on its side too. It can recommend dissolution to the governor-general and call an election without waiting for an adverse vote on a question of confidence in the house. This is what Prime Minister Diefenbaker did early in 1958 following the inconclusive election of 1957.

Only once has a federal general election in Canada resulted from defeat of the government in Parliament. That was in 1926 when the Conservative administration of the late Arthur Meighen, who took office June 26, was beaten 96 to 95 in the early morning of July 2.

Governor-General Lord Byng had called on Mr. Meighen to form a government after refusing a request of Liberal Prime Minister Mackenzie King for dissolution and an election. His refusal formed a key constitutional issue in the election that followed Mr. Meighen's defeat.

Hardly anyone around Ottawa expects the next election this year, on the theory that none of the four parties has the financial resources for a second 1962 campaign. There is a substantial body of opinion that circumstances of one kind or another will lead to a vote before mid-1963, maybe as early as March. Only a scattered few think it may be later.

The first parliamentary test of strength for the present government is likely to come early in the new session which may start Sept. 27 although the date has not yet been announced.

Traditionally, the official opposition — the Liberals now — moves a want-of-confidence motion during debate on the speech from the throne, the government's outline of legislative plans.

Commons rules call for a vote on this main amendment on the fourth day of the debate—which would be Oct. 4 with a Sept. 27 opening. Votes on other possible amendments may be held on the second day, Oct. 3, the sixth day, Oct. 8, and on the main motion on the eighth day, Oct. 10.

Since chief electoral officer Nelson Castonguay requires a minimum of 37 days to organize an election, defeat of the government on a conference issue during consideration of the throne speech could bring on an election Dec. 3 or 10.

What is the attitude of the three opposition parties?

Liberal Leader Lester B. Pearson has given every indication that his party is ready for an early test. He told an election rally in Stormont last week that the important thing for Canada now is to restore confidence and strengthen faith. "The best way to do that is to throw out this government."

Social Credit Leader Robert Thompson has said his 30-man group "will not do anything to precipitate an election." But he and Deputy Leader Real Caouette made it clear they will oppose the austerity program the government announced June 24 to strengthen Canada's foreign exchange position.

NDP Leader T. C. Douglas has said the government should get opposition support of it problems.If it didn't the opposition would have no choice "but to join hands to defeat it."

Mr. Castonguay, who has to be ready to set up the election machinery when necessary, has warned his constituency returning officers to be ready to swing into action on 24 hours notice after Sept. 15.

YOUTHS BREAK JAIL

MANDAN, N.D. (AP)—Two Indian youths, one accused of murder, broke out of jail here Monday night. A state-wide search was launched for Virgil Follows The Road, 23, Mandan, and Clifford Chase, 19, a recaptured escapee from the state industrial school here. Follows The Road is charged with second-degree murder in the June 1 knife slaying of his mother, Mrs. Clementine Follows The Road, 51.

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