

# THE CONSERVATIVES AND THE COALITION

## Introduction

### Focus

In this *News in Review* story we'll look at the political crisis that gripped Canada through the winter of 2008-09. Shortly after the Conservative Party was re-elected in the October 2008 federal election, the opposition parties formed a coalition to oust the minority government of Stephen Harper. To avoid being defeated, the Prime Minister asked the Governor General to shut down Parliament until late January. Canadians shook their heads at this fight among their political leaders while the country was in the middle of a global economic crisis.

### Definition

*Coalition government* is a government that is formed by the temporary alliance of separate political parties. While Canada does not have a long tradition of coalition governments, it is widespread in other nations.

In the midst of the economic crisis that began in earnest in the late fall of 2008, Canada was also plunged into a political crisis. In some ways, the political crisis was a surprise. After all, the federal election that had re-elected Stephen Harper's Conservative Party of Canada had just occurred, on October 14, 2008. Although the Conservatives had been able to win only enough seats to form a minority government—as was the case in the previous election—most Canadians considered the matter closed. Canadians had become used to minority governments, and they had become used to Prime Minister Harper.

On the other hand, Harper's previous term had been a contentious one within the House of Commons itself. The Prime Minister had a reputation for doing what he wanted without consulting other members of government. He did not even allow the members of his own party to disagree with him or his policies in public. And, as Judith Maxwell, former head of the Economic Council of Canada, said, when it came to the relationship between the federal and provincial governments, "No attempt was made at problem solving" (*The Globe and Mail*, November 3, 2008).

So there was a history of mistrust, and a lack of respect, among the political leaders and their party members when they returned to the House of Commons following the election. Within six weeks there was a full-blown crisis at hand. The Conservatives introduced an economic update in November that did not offer a stimulus program to jumpstart the weakening Canadian economy. In fact, the Conservatives said they would wait and see what the U.S. government did in response to the economic crisis, and then they would address the Canadian

situation in the government's next budget, scheduled for February or March 2009.

The opposition parties felt the Conservatives were not doing enough to govern the country through the economic crisis and said that Prime Minister Harper had lost the confidence of the House. They signed an agreement to form a coalition government to replace the Conservative Party. In response, the Prime Minister asked Governor General Michaëlle Jean to prorogue—or temporarily discontinue—Parliament so that the coalition could not force the government out of office. She agreed, and Harper had six weeks to catch his breath and try to appease angry Canadians and opposition leaders.

MPs returned to the House of Commons on Monday, January 26, 2009, and the government presented its budget on Tuesday, January 27. To avoid a defeat in the House, the Harper government presented a budget that tried to make everyone happy. New money was promised for infrastructure (roads and sewers), for social housing and home renovations, for skills training for laid-off workers, and for the auto industry. The budget also outlined income tax cuts and business tax cuts. When all the projected spending and cuts were added up, the government predicted that by the spring of 2013, the country would have an \$85-billion deficit.

The NDP and Bloc quickly criticized the budget and announced that they would vote against it. NDP leader Jack Layton said that the budget reflected the Conservatives' concern for big business over Canadians, stating that \$60-billion was allocated for corporate tax cuts, while only \$1.5-billion was directed at the unemployed. The Liberals did not

**Quote**

"The federal government may have a Conservative engine driving it. Yesterday, at least, (Michael) Ignatieff had his hands on the steering wheel." — Editorial, *The Record*, Thursday, January 29, 2009

immediately state whether they would support the budget or vote against it and bring the government down. But new Liberal leader Michael Ignatieff did say that he believed the threat of a coalition government had been effective because the Conservatives had responded to many of the concerns of the opposition parties in the new budget.

In the end, the Liberals decided to support the budget, with one amendment: the Conservatives would have to report to the House in

March, June, and December 2009 to demonstrate where money had been spent. Liberal leader Michael Ignatieff said that his government was putting the Conservatives "on probation" and that they could withdraw their support of the budget at any point if they determined that the Conservatives were not doing as they had promised. Prime Minister Harper accepted the Liberal amendment, and at least for the time being, his party was able to stay in power.

**To Consider**

1. Do you feel the opposition parties were correct to be upset by the Conservatives' economic update of November 2008? Do you believe they responded correctly to the update? Explain your answer.

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2. What are the advantages and disadvantages of a parliamentary system that allows for the possibility of a coalition government? Does it put pressure on the governing party to listen to others? Does it make the country more unstable?

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3. What advice would you give Prime Minister Harper as he gets ready to govern the country in 2009?

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# THE CONSERVATIVES AND THE COALITION

## Video Review

### Further Research

To stay informed about the fortunes and policies of Canada's major political parties, consider a visit to their official Web sites: Conservative – [www.conservative.ca](http://www.conservative.ca), Green – [www.greenparty.ca](http://www.greenparty.ca), Liberal – [www.liberal.ca](http://www.liberal.ca), NDP – [www.ndp.ca](http://www.ndp.ca), Bloc Québécois – [www.blocquebecois.org](http://www.blocquebecois.org).

### Preparing for the Video

This *News in Review* story contains information about politics and the operation of government. It also contains the names of many politicians and government officials. Before watching the video, take a moment to become familiar with these terms and names.

Term	Definition
<b>Minority government</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The party that wins the most seats in a general election forms the government.</li> <li>• A minority government occurs when the elected government does not have enough seats in the House of Commons to pass legislation without the support of one of the other parties.</li> </ul>
<b>Coalition government</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A coalition government is formed when several political parties agree to work together to pass legislation.</li> <li>• The usual reason for a coalition is that the elected minority government has lost the confidence of the House.</li> <li>• A coalition government can only occur when the elected government wins only a minority of seats in the House.</li> </ul>
<b>Non-confidence motion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the elected government tries to pass a tax or spending bill in the House of Commons, and that bill is defeated, then the elected government has “lost the confidence” of the House.</li> <li>• When a non-confidence motion occurs, the government must either resign or ask the governor general to dissolve Parliament and call an election.</li> </ul>
<b>Prorogue</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To discontinue Parliament for a period of time</li> <li>• Had only been done once before in Canadian history</li> </ul>

Person	Position/Role
<b>Stephen Harper</b>	Prime Minister of Canada Leader of the Conservative Party
<b>Jim Flaherty</b>	Minister of Finance (Conservative Party)
<b>Stéphane Dion</b>	Former leader of the Liberal Party
<b>Jack Layton</b>	Leader of the New Democratic Party
<b>Gilles Duceppe</b>	Leader of the Bloc Québécois
<b>Michaëlle Jean</b>	Canada's Governor General
<b>Ed Broadbent</b>	Former leader of the New Democratic Party
<b>Bob Rae</b>	Former leader of the Ontario New Democratic Party Currently a Member of Parliament for the Liberal Party
<b>Michael Ignatieff</b>	Current Leader of the Liberal Party

**Did you know . . .**

A January poll showed that in Quebec, 62 per cent wanted the coalition government to have a chance to govern. In Western Canada, 65 per cent of Canadians wanted an election to be held, and only 29 per cent favoured an opposition coalition.

**The Video**

Respond to the following questions as you watch the video.

1. What were Canadians expecting from the economic update that was delivered shortly after the federal election?

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2. What did they receive in the economic update?

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3. Why were many Canadians, and the opposition parties, angered by the economic update?

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4. What changes did the Conservative government make to the economic update in response to the anger of the opposition parties?

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5. How did the Conservative government fight back against the news that the opposition parties were forming a coalition?

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6. How did Canadian citizens react to the news of a possible coalition government?

(a) In Western Canada \_\_\_\_\_

(b) In Quebec \_\_\_\_\_

(c) In Eastern Canada \_\_\_\_\_

7. Why did Prime Minister Harper ask the Governor General to prorogue Parliament?

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8. What is your personal view of the idea of a coalition government for Canada? Explain fully.

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### Analysis

With a partner, discuss and respond to the following questions.

1. Prime Minister Harper is from Alberta. How might this affect the way that Westerners took the news of the possible coalition government?

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2. (a) Why did Prime Minister Harper spend so much time talking about the fact that "separatists" would be running the country if a coalition government was formed?

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(b) Do you believe this was a good strategy for the Prime Minister to use or do you think it was not necessary for him to cause division within the country? Explain.

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3. What are the advantages and disadvantages of having a coalition government run the country?

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# THE CONSERVATIVES AND THE COALITION

## *Seeds of the Crisis*

### Quote

"I do think it's fair to say that in the past few months, and particularly over the summer, we have seen increasing signs that this Parliament is really not working very well anymore, it's becoming increasingly dysfunctional. We have important legislation that is stalled in the Senate by the Liberal Party, we have other legislation that is obstructed in the House of Commons, principally by Dion. We have a committee system that is increasingly in chaos and we have Mr. Dion regularly threatening to force an election."

— Prime Minister Harper, August 14, 2008

### Further Research

You can find detailed election results, including the results for your own riding by visiting the Elections Canada Web site at <http://enr.elections.ca>.

The political crisis that gripped Canadians over the winter months of late 2008 and early 2009 had been brewing for some time. Prime Minister Harper and the Conservative Party were first elected in 2006. At that time, they won only enough seats to form a minority government. This meant they needed the support of the opposition parties to pass legislation.

For two years, the Conservative government of Stephen Harper governed the country with the often-reluctant support of the opposition parties. If the opposition failed to support the government, they risked a non-confidence vote and the defeat of the government. No one really wanted to have to face the expense and disruption of another federal election. As well, if the opposition did plunge the country into another election, there was no way of knowing how Canadians would vote.

### A Period of Discord

During the first two years that Harper governed, there was much discord within the House of Commons. Harper rarely consulted the opposition parties on policy decisions, which is generally required when a minority government is in place. Harper has a reputation of being rude and abrupt to those who try to give him advice or to influence his policies, and as a result, there was much bickering in the House. The opposition leaders often threatened to withhold their support of the PM's legislation and bring the government down.

However, they never did decide to vote against the government. It was Harper himself who brought the 39<sup>th</sup> session of Parliament to a halt. On September 7, 2008, the Prime Minister declared that Parliament had become dysfunctional—that it had become very difficult for the government to conduct its business in an

effective or successful manner. An election date was set for October 14, 2008.

### Another Minority Government

Harper was hoping that his Conservative government would be able to win enough seats in the October election that they would be able to form a majority government. This would mean that he would not have to rely on the opposition parties to pass legislation. But that was not the case. Although they won the election, once again the Conservatives secured only enough seats to form a minority government. The election results were as follows: Conservatives: 143 seats; Liberals: 77 seats; NDP: 37 seats; Bloc Québécois: 49 seats; Independents: 2 seats

### Chronology of a Political Crisis Thursday, November 27, 2008

- Six weeks after the Conservative Party was re-elected, Finance Minister Jim Flaherty introduced an economic update in the House. The country was in the middle of an economic slowdown and a global economic crisis. Canadians were expecting to hear how the government would help to stimulate the economy and protect jobs and assets. In particular, thousands of people were waiting to hear whether or not the government was going to bail out the ailing automotive industry.
- Canadians were surprised, and angered, when the government did not introduce any stimulus measures. Furthermore, Prime Minister Harper had chosen that time to introduce a proposal to end public subsidies for political parties and to ban strikes by public-sector workers. This proposal would hurt the opposition parties, quite possibly bankrupting the Liberal Party, which had gone into considerable debt during the last federal election. Events moved quickly after that.

### Quote

"The opposition has been working on a backroom deal to overturn the results of the last election without seeking the consent of voters. They want to steal power, not earn it."  
— Stephen Harper  
(*Toronto Star*, November 30, 2008)

### Did you know . . .

When the Liberals agreed to support the budget, Jack Layton declared that there was a "new coalition" in Canada—a Liberal-Conservative coalition. Of course, in a minority government, every piece of legislation depends on a temporary coalition of parties in order to be passed.

### Friday, November 28

- Secret meetings were held to discuss the possibility of a Liberal-NDP coalition.
- The Liberals announced that the Conservative government had lost the confidence of the House.
- Prime Minister Harper delayed the chance of his government being defeated by postponing the scheduled vote on the economic update from December 1 to December 8.

### Saturday, November 29

- The government realized they had made a mistake and withdrew the plan to cancel political subsidies.
- One Conservative secretly recorded an NDP strategy session.

### Sunday, November 30

- Finance Minister Flaherty announced a new budget date of January 27, 2009, a month earlier than scheduled.
- The Conservative government withdrew their plan to ban strikes by public-sector workers.
- The Conservatives released the audio recording of the NDP strategy session. The session contained information that NDP Leader Jack Layton and Gilles Duceppe, Leader of the Bloc Québécois, had planned to bring down the government weeks earlier.

### Monday, December 1

- The Liberals, the NDP, and the Bloc agreed to form a coalition.
- The coalition leaders sent a letter to the Governor General asking her to allow the coalition to form a new government.

### Thursday, December 4

- Prime Minister Harper met with Governor General Michaëlle Jean and asked her to prorogue Parliament.
- She agreed, and Parliament was prorogued until January 26, 2009—possibly delaying the defeat of the government.

### Tuesday, December 9

- The unpopular Stéphane Dion resigned as Liberal Leader to make way for either Bob Rae or Michael Ignatieff.

### Wednesday, December 10

- Michael Ignatieff was declared the new Leader of the Liberal Party.

### Tuesday, January 27, 2009

- The government presented its new budget in the House. New money was handed out in many areas in an attempt to appease the outrage generated by the economic update.
- The NDP and the Bloc immediately rejected the budget, saying it did not do enough to help Canadians without jobs. Neither party trusted Harper to actually follow through on these proposals.
- The Liberals decided to reflect on the budget, and possibly suggest amendments to it, but did not state whether they would vote in favour of or against the budget.

### Wednesday, January 28

- The Liberals announced that they would support the budget if the Conservatives provided progress reports to the House in March, June, and December 2009.
- The Conservative government accepted this amendment; the threat of defeat was averted.

### Follow-up

Review the information in this section and write a short summary statement, titled "Lessons learned from the political crisis." Include at least three lessons you believe politicians should consider as a result of the crisis. How do you personally feel about the resolution of this crisis?

# THE CONSERVATIVES AND THE COALITION

## *The Coalition Document*

### **Did you know . . .**

The proposed coalition would have given the full powers of the prime minister to the Leader of the Liberal Party. The minister of finance would have been a Liberal. The cabinet would have had 24 ministers, and six of those would have been appointed from the NDP caucus. The accord was to expire on June 30, 2011.

### **Did you know . . .**

During the First World War, Canada had a coalition government—called the Union Government—that governed from 1917-1920.

On December 1, the leaders of the Liberal, New Democratic, and Bloc Québécois parties announced to the Canadian people that they intended to

form a coalition government. Read the following letter and the responses to the letter carefully, and then complete the questions and activities that follow.

To our fellow citizens,

Canada is facing a global economic crisis. Since the recent federal election, it has become clear that the government headed by Stephen Harper has no plan, no competence, and no will to effectively address this crisis. Therefore, the majority of Parliament has lost confidence in Mr. Harper's government, and believes that the formation of a new government that will effectively, prudently, promptly, and competently address these critical economic times is necessary.

The contrast between the inaction of Mr. Harper's government and the common action taken by all other Western democracies is striking. We cannot accept this.

A majority of Canadians and Quebecers voted for our parties on October 14, 2008. Our Members of Parliament make up 55 per cent of the House of Commons.

In light of the critical situation facing our citizens, and the Harper government's unwillingness and inability to address the crisis, we are resolved to support a new government that will address the interests of the people.

Today we respectfully inform the Governor General that, as soon as the appropriate opportunity arises, she should call on the Leader of the Official Opposition to form a new government, supported as set out in the accompanying accords by all three of our parties.

Respectfully,

Hon. Stéphane Dion, Leader, the Liberal Party of Canada  
Hon. Jack Layton, Leader, the New Democratic Party of Canada  
Hon. Gilles Duceppe, Leader, the Bloc Québécois

### **Some Responses to the Proposed Coalition**

There were a wide variety of responses to the proposed coalition across the country. Not surprisingly, Prime Minister Harper and the Conservative Party were quick to attack the proposed coalition and went to great lengths to try to turn public opinion in their favour.

A December 2, 2008, editorial in the *Toronto Star* described the reaction of the Prime Minister: "His voice dripping with scorn, Prime Minister Stephen Harper yesterday accused Liberal Leader Stéphane Dion of playing 'the biggest political game in Canadian history' and of relying on 'socialists' (New Democrats) and 'separatists'".

**Quote**

"I've given my life for the unity of this country, for my love of Canada. With this agreement, the Bloc accepted to have 18 months of political stability in Canada. That's what Canada got out of this accord." — Prime Minister Stephen Harper (*Toronto Star*, December 3, 2008)

**Did you know . . .**

In 2000, the Canadian Alliance—the political party that morphed into the Conservative Party—contemplated a formal coalition with the Bloc Québécois in an attempt to remove the Liberal Party from office.

(Bloc Québécois) to vault himself into power. Harper's ministers and MPs used language like 'deal with the devil' and 'secret cabal' to describe the arrangement."

But many Canadians supported the idea of a coalition. And they were quick to point out that the Conservative claim that the coalition was illegal was not true. According to the rules of our Parliamentary system, the opposition leaders have the right to form a coalition. It is unusual, but it is not illegal.

Some people also disagreed with the Conservatives attempt to fan the flames of disunity by claiming that the country would be run by separatists. A Conservative radio ad claimed that if the coalition succeeded, the balance of power in the country would be in the hands of the separatist Bloc. And John Baird, the Conservative Transport Minister, said in a radio interview that the Bloc Leader would be calling the tune each and every day (*Toronto Star*, December 3, 2008). This comment was in reference to the fact that the Bloc had

agreed to support the coalition. Canada has a history of conflict between English and French Canada, and although there was no conflict over national unity at this time, Harper was quick to play on this unresolved conflict.

The Conservatives misled Canadians, however, by claiming that the Bloc would be part of the coalition government. Under the agreement, the Bloc would not have any of its members in cabinet, nor would they have a veto over government decisions. The Bloc had only agreed to support the Liberals and NDP when they passed legislation.

Those in the West, where Harper comes from, and where support for the Conservative Party is the highest, were the most upset by the proposal. Although many disagreed with the way Harper handled the economic update, they felt the Prime Minister and his government should be given a chance to fix the problems and address the concerns of the opposition, rather than being thrown from office.

**Analysis**

1. Record the reasons the coalition leaders gave in their letter for wanting to take over the government. Which of these reasons seems the most important and credible to you? Which reason do you feel is the weakest? Why?

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2. The three opposition parties have a total of 163 seats in the House of Commons. The Conservative Party has 143. When you consider these numbers, why do you think some people feel that the opposition coalition does not have the support of the Canadian people?

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3. As part of the coalition agreement, the Bloc Québécois agreed not to defeat the coalition government. Why did Prime Minister Harper claim that separatists would be running the country if the coalition succeeded? Is this a fair claim to make?

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4. How do you feel about the political process after learning about the proposed coalition? Do you agree that it is good that the Canadian system allows for a coalition if the elected government has lost the confidence of the House? Or do you feel that this is not in the best interests of the country? Explain your answer.

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5. Rick Mercer, a Canadian comedian and television star, had this to say about the Canadian coalition: "The drama that played out this week was many things: unimaginable, embarrassing, and yes, it made our parliamentary system look like a laughingstock. However, this situation was not, as Mr. Harper insisted, undemocratic, illegal, or unCanadian. The facts are clear. He has a minority in the Commons—something he has never accepted. So he loves daring the opposition to defeat him, and prides himself on shaming them at every opportunity" (*The Globe and Mail*, December 6, 2008).

(a) How much impact do you think the words of entertainers have during a political dispute like this one?

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(b) Do they reach a wider audience than politicians themselves?

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(c) Some countries do not have laws to protect freedom of speech, and comments like this one by Mercer could land people in jail. Pretend that someone has just told you they think that public comments criticizing the government should be banned and, in your notebook, prepare a short written response that captures your feelings about free speech.

# THE CONSERVATIVES AND THE COALITION

## Profile: Michael Ignatieff

### Quote

"He has the fewest Canadian scars by virtue of having fought the fewest battles in his own country, a fact that, in other countries, would almost automatically disqualify anyone from serious leadership ambitions but that, in this country, at least inside the weakened Liberal Party, has apparently become an advantage." — Jeffrey Simpson, columnist for the *The Globe and Mail*, writing of Ignatieff's initial leadership bid (as quoted on cbc.ca News on December 9, 2008)

### Quote

"I'm prepared to vote non-confidence in this government if (it) does not present a budget that is in the national interest." — Michael Ignatieff (*Toronto Star*, December 11, 2008)

In December 10, 2008, Michael Ignatieff became the new Leader of the Liberal Party of Canada. Many observers believe that Prime Minister Harper has "met his match" in Ignatieff, because both men are intelligent, focused, and very tough.

Ignatieff is a relative newcomer to politics. He lived outside Canada for about 35 years of his adult life, returning to Canada in 2005 to teach at the University of Toronto, and soon after, to run for Parliament.

Ignatieff was first elected to the House of Commons in 2006 in the Toronto riding of Etobicoke-Lakeshore. He ran for the leadership of the Liberal Party in 2006. Although he was the front-runner going into the race, he lost to Stéphane Dion. Ignatieff was re-elected in Etobicoke-Lakeshore in 2008.

In December 2008, he was appointed by the caucus of the Liberal Party to become the new leader. Stéphane Dion had resigned as leader and was to be replaced at a Liberal convention in May 2009. But after the

country was plunged into a political crisis in late 2008, the party decided to replace Dion before the scheduled convention.

Ignatieff is an academic and scholar. He has a PhD from Harvard University and has taught at Oxford University, the London School of Economics, and Harvard University. Before he returned to Canada in 2005 he was Director of the Carr Center for Human Rights Policy at Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government.

Ignatieff is well-known around the world. He won the non-fiction Governor General's Award for *The Russian Album*, a family memoir he wrote in 1987. He was short-listed for the prestigious Booker Prize and the Whitbread Novel Award for his 1993 novel *Scar Tissue*. He has written numerous non-fiction books, exploring themes of nationalism, modern warfare, and human rights.

Ignatieff is fluent in English, French, and Russian. He is married and has two grown children.

### Follow-up

1. Some critics have argued that Ignatieff does not have enough political experience to be either the leader of a party or the prime minister. Do you think political experience is crucial to these roles? Is there other experience that is just as important, or not? Explain.

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2. Ignatieff originally supported U.S. President George W. Bush's invasion of Iraq because Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein was torturing and killing his own citizens. He has been criticized for his support of the U.S. invasion although he has since indicated that he was wrong. This was an invasion that Canada chose not to join. How do you feel about his position on the Iraq invasion? Does his position make him unsuitable to lead his party or the country? Explain your answer.
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# THE CONSERVATIVES AND THE COALITION

## *Activity: To Prorogue or Not?*

### Definition

*To prorogue* is to put a halt to a session of Parliament for a specific period of time. In this instance, Parliament was suspended for about six weeks.

### Definition

*Censure* is a procedure by which the House of Commons or the Senate can rebuke the actions or conduct of an individual. Censure is not equivalent to a vote of non-confidence, and a prime minister can continue in office. However, previous prime ministers have accepted motions of censure as questions of confidence and resigned.

Prime Minister Harper took a relatively unprecedented step when he asked Governor General Michaëlle Jean to prorogue the 39<sup>th</sup> session of Parliament. And Governor General Jean took a somewhat unprecedented step when she granted his request. But there have been other occasions when elected governments have been replaced by unelected ones. And there have been other occasions when leaders have asked for a session of Parliament to be prorogued.

### Unelected Governments in Canada

- In 1876, Sir John A. Macdonald resigned after being censured in the House of Commons in relation to charges of bribery and corruption. Liberal leader Alexander Mackenzie was asked to form a government without an election. He governed for three months before calling an election.
- In 1926, Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King knew that his minority government was about to be defeated on a non-confidence motion and asked the Governor General, Lord Byng, to dissolve Parliament and call a new election. Byng refused the request, and King resigned. Conservative leader

Arthur Meighen was asked to form a government without an election. The Conservatives governed for three months before being defeated.

Despite the fact that unelected governments have governed before, many Canadians were shocked by the possibility that the elected Conservative government could be replaced by a coalition. As you know, Prime Minister Harper, refused to go down without a fight, and he was able to get Governor General Michaëlle Jean to prorogue Parliament.

### The Governor General's Options

When Harper asked the Governor General to prorogue Parliament, she had two options:

- Decide that the Prime Minister's request was illegitimate because the House had been sitting for only two weeks since the election. This would force Harper to resign, and she would have to ask the coalition to form a government.
- Decide that the request was legitimate because he was asking for an adjournment of only a few weeks. This would force Harper to face the House and a possible vote of non-confidence.

### Your Task

In a small group, consider all that you have learned in this *News in Review* story and decide what you would have done if you were the Governor General. You will have to provide at least three solid reasons for your choice. You will be sharing your group's decision with the rest of your classmates.

### Extension

You may wish to forward your ideas to Governor General Michaëlle Jean directly. She can be reached by e-mail at: [info@gg.ca](mailto:info@gg.ca). You can also reach her office by phone at (613) 993-8200 or toll-free in Canada and the United States at 1-800-465-6890; by fax at (613) 998-8760; or by mail at Rideau Hall, 1 Sussex Drive, Ottawa, ON K1A 0A1.