

PARLIAMENTARY BASICS

ELECTION DAY

a week or two is required to validate the results and publish them officially

FORMATION OF GOVERNMENT*

a prime minister is nominated by the head of state and asked to assemble a cabinet (government)

SWEARING IN OF GOVERNMENT*

cabinet is sworn in by the head of state (or rep.) and ministers take office

FIRST MEETING OF PARLIAMENT*

head of state issues proclamation summoning Parliament to meet for the first time and elect or appoint a Speaker to preside over its meetings

INAUGURAL (THRONE) SPEECH* & VOTE

head of state reads government's outline of its plans for the coming legislative Session, followed by debate and a vote to test the legislature's confidence

PARLIAMENT SITS

a parliamentary calendar determines when the legislature meets to do business or stands recessed

PROROGATION* ^[1]

having finished the agenda set out in the inaugural speech, or wishing to set new goals, the government ends the Session by asking the head of state (or rep.) to prorogue parliament, which ends the Session

PROCLAMATION OF OPENING*

head of state issues proclamation summoning Parliament to meet and open the new Session

INAUGURAL (THRONE) SPEECH & VOTE

head of state reads government's plans for the new Session, followed by debate and vote

PARLIAMENT MEETS

according to the parliamentary calendar, the legislature meets to do business or stands recessed until Prorogation or Dissolution

DISSOLUTION*

head of state (or rep) ends parliament and starts election period

ELECTION DAY . . .

*indicates involvement of head of state (or representative, such as a Governor General)

^[1] it was once common for parliaments to have one Session per year, beginning with a speech setting out the legislative agenda for the year and ending with Prorogation, a practice that made great sense when Parliament sat for only two or three months a year

Figure 6.5