



Office of the
Chief Electoral Officer
of Canada

**Report on the October 24, 2016,
By-election in
Medicine Hat–Cardston–Warner**

March 2017



Office of the
Chief Electoral Officer
of Canada

**Report on the October 24, 2016,
By-election in
Medicine Hat–Cardston–Warner**

For enquiries, please contact:

Public Enquiries Unit
Elections Canada
30 Victoria Street
Gatineau, Quebec
K1A 0M6
Tel.: 1-800-463-6868
Fax: 1-888-524-1444 (toll-free)
TTY: 1-800-361-8935
www.elections.ca



ElectionsCanE



@ElectionsCan_E



ElectionsCanadaE



Elections Canada | Élections Canada

ISBN 978-0-660-07843-4

Cat. No.: SE1-2/2016-1E-PDF

EC 94370 (03/2017)

© Chief Electoral Officer of Canada, 2017

All rights reserved

Printed in Canada



Le directeur général des élections • The Chief Electoral Officer

March 28, 2017

The Honourable Geoff Regan, P.C., M.P.
Speaker of the House of Commons
Centre Block
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

Dear Mr. Speaker:

I am pleased to provide my report following the by-election held on October 24, 2016, in the electoral district of Medicine Hat–Cardston–Warner. I have prepared the report in accordance with subsection 534(2) of the *Canada Elections Act*, S.C. 2000, c. 9. Under section 536 of the Act, the Speaker shall submit this report to the House of Commons without delay.

The report includes a summary of the official voting results and information about Elections Canada's activities since the agency last reported to Parliament on the 42nd general election. For more information, please see the Elections Canada website at www.elections.ca.

Yours sincerely,

Stéphane Perrault
Acting Chief Electoral Officer

Table of Contents

Foreword	7
1. The Medicine Hat–Cardston–Warner By-election	9
1.1. Launching the By-election	9
Issue of the writ.....	9
Opening returning office and hiring election workers	9
Working with political entities.....	9
Information campaign for electors.....	10
1.2. Voter Registration Services	12
The National Register of Electors.....	12
Coverage, accuracy and currency	12
Revision period	12
1.3. Voting Services.....	13
Polling places	13
Voting	13
1.4. Concluding the By-election	14
Election results.....	14
Complaints	15
Cost of the by-election	16
Poll worker compliance with voting day procedures.....	16
2. Activities Since the Last Statutory Report	19
2.1. Audit of Financial Returns from the 2015 General Election	19
2.2. Review of Special Ballot Administrative Procedures.....	19
3. Conclusion	21
Appendix 1 – Tables	23
Appendix 2 – Audit of Poll Worker Performance	27

Foreword

Under the *Canada Elections Act* (the Act), if one or more by-elections are held in a year, the Chief Electoral Officer must, within 90 days after the end of the year, produce a report that sets out “any matter or event that has arisen or occurred in connection with the administration of the Chief Electoral Officer’s office since the last report [...] and that he or she considers should be brought to the attention of the House of Commons.”

In 2016, a by-election was held on October 24 in the electoral district of Medicine Hat–Cardston–Warner (Alberta). This report discusses the conduct of this by-election as well as administrative improvements implemented since the 42nd general election, such as an updated training curriculum for election workers.

Since the 2015 general election, the agency has finalized its assessments and reports, which can be found at elections.ca > Resource Centre > Reports > Elections Canada’s Official Reports. The report from the Chief Electoral Officer on recommended amendments for the better administration of the Act is currently being studied by the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

The agency also conducted an administrative review of the procedures for tracking and handling shipments containing special ballots. The results of this review and recommendations for improvements are available on the Elections Canada website at elections.ca > Resource Centre > Reports > Other Reports.

In the new fiscal year, Elections Canada will continue to provide parliamentarians with technical advice as they pursue their legislative work. The agency will move forward with its agenda to modernize the electoral process to improve the voter experience. Elections Canada will also see the appointment of a new Chief Electoral Officer of Canada, as the sixth Chief Electoral Officer, Marc Mayrand, completed his mandate in December 2016.

While the year ahead brings challenges, it also presents an opportunity to make real progress towards providing Canadians with a more inclusive, convenient and efficient voting experience in the 43rd general election and beyond.

1. The Medicine Hat–Cardston–Warner By-election

1.1. Launching the By-election

Issue of the writ

The 2016 by-election was called to replace Jim Hillyer, who passed away on March 23, 2016. The Conservative Party of Canada Member of Parliament for Medicine Hat–Cardston–Warner (Alberta) was first elected for Lethbridge (Alberta) at the 2011 general election.

The writ for the by-election was issued on September 18, 2016. The date for the by-election was set for October 24, 2016, and advance polls were from October 14 to 17, 2016.

Opening returning office and hiring election workers

The returning officer opened one local office on September 18, 2016, in Medicine Hat and one satellite office on September 19, 2016, in Cardston.

A total of 605 people, including individuals on standby to act as replacements if needed, were hired to fill 655 poll worker positions.¹ Table 1 in Appendix 2 lists the positions occupied for the by-election.

A total of 292 poll workers were past workers from the 2015 general election. The rest were recruited through an online application form on the Elections Canada website and posters in the local office, at the Medicine Hat College and in the post office in Cardston. Four of the workers were under 18 years of age. In collaboration with the Medicine Hat College, information on how to apply was shared with the entire campus population. The candidates of the registered political parties did not provide any names of potential poll workers.

Based on observations at the 2015 general election, the agency updated the training curriculum for deputy returning officers and poll clerks to allow for more hands-on training. Presentation materials, notes for training officers, exercises and videos were either newly created or updated. Manuals for poll workers were improved, and the agency deployed two employees to the local office to observe and assist with training.

Working with political entities

At the close of candidate nominations at 2:00 p.m., local time, on October 5, 2016, there were six confirmed candidates for the by-election. The returning officer held a meeting with the candidates and their representatives on October 7, 2016.

¹ Some workers filled more than one position.

Elections Canada provided software for preparing financial returns and various information resources to candidates, their official agents and auditors. All official agents received multimedia kits that included handbooks and tutorials. Political entities also had access to a number of online resources published since the 2015 general election, including one written opinion, two interpretation notes and six new/updated guidelines, such as the *Political Financing Handbook for Candidates and Official Agents*.

The election expenses limit for candidates was \$112,531.55. The election expenses limit for political parties was \$78,302.90.

Information campaign for electors

The “Ready to Vote” information campaign, which was also used in the 2015 general election, seeks to communicate to Canadians effectively and clearly about the electoral process, registration procedures and the identification required to vote. Communications tools used in the 2016 by-election included webpages on elections.ca, a multimedia advertising campaign, electronic and print information products, direct mail, social media messages and outreach to specific groups of electors.

The campaign was delivered in phases that followed the themes and activities of the electoral calendar: registration, the mailing of the voter information card (VIC), voting at advance polls and voting on election day.

Electors could obtain information about their registration status, the location of their polling place, voting procedures and other topics from the returning office directly or by calling the national or returning office toll-free numbers. National contact centre agents responded to 228 enquiries; the local and satellite offices responded to 1,148 calls from electors in the electoral district.

Advertising, social media and website

A multimedia advertising campaign delivered print ads in daily and weekly newspapers in the electoral district, as well as ads on the radio, online and in out-of-home venues such as TimsTV at the five locations in the electoral district.

Elections Canada posted daily social media messages to its Facebook and Twitter accounts about where, when and the ways to register and vote, as well as key election dates. Elections Canada was able to monitor the public environment and respond to questions from electors in the electoral district. Most questions from the public were answered with a referral to specific information on the website, the toll-free phone number or the online complaints form.

The by-election website received 94,000 visits during the election period. Two online services helped electors find the information they needed to be ready to vote. The Voter Information Service showed electors when and where they could vote and provided information on the accessibility of their polling place. The Online Voter Registration Service allowed electors to check if they were registered and provided instructions about how to register online. The website also provided information about eligibility and identification requirements, and a variety of shareable information tools such as videos and infographics.

Finally, live election results were published on the website as soon as the polls closed. The election results section received over 17,000 visits on election night and 22,000 visits the next day.

Direct mail

The agency mailed 75,243 VICs to electors whose names appeared on the preliminary lists of electors. The VIC gave electors personalized information on when, where and the ways to vote, the accessibility of their polling place and how to contact their local returning office.

Following the discovery of a printing error, which affected the polling place information on all VICs, steps were taken to prevent the delivery of the incorrect VICs to electors. However, because there was no guarantee that all VICs could be intercepted, replacement VICs were issued to all electors. The new card was marked “Replacement Card” and included the correct polling place information; electors received it by Wednesday, October 12, 2016, prior to the advance polls. A news release, posts on the agency’s Facebook and Twitter accounts and messages posted prominently on the website were issued quickly to notify electors. The incident had no impact on electors’ ability to vote, and the agency is taking steps to prevent such an incident from happening in the future.

On October 11, 2016, an information brochure was mailed to all 31,324 households in the electoral district. It provided residents with information about voter eligibility, registration, identification requirements (including the list of accepted identification) and ways to vote. It also prompted electors to contact Elections Canada if they did not receive a VIC or received one with errors.

Community relations and outreach

Two community relations officers were hired to liaise with and provide information to youth and Indigenous electors. They set up kiosks, made presentations, hosted discussion groups, distributed information products and liaised with the administrators of relevant organizations or facilities.

Elections Canada headquarters also informed members of the Advisory Group for Disability Issues (AGDI) about the accessible services and alternate format products (e.g. Braille, large-print, audio or accessible digital formats) available to electors with disabilities. AGDI members were asked to share this information with their stakeholders in the electoral district.

1.2. Voter Registration Services

The National Register of Electors

Elections Canada maintains the National Register of Electors, a database of Canadians who are eligible to vote in federal elections. It is regularly updated between and during elections, using administrative data received through agreements with federal, provincial and territorial agencies. When an election is called, the Register is used to produce the preliminary lists of electors, which are shared with the returning officer, political parties and candidates, and are used to mail VICs to electors.

Coverage, accuracy and currency

The quality of the Register is key to ensuring that all electors receive a VIC. It is also important to the political entities that wish to engage electors. Quality estimates are measured in terms of coverage, accuracy and currency:

- Coverage is the proportion of eligible electors who are registered, historically varying between 91 and 94 percent. The coverage of the preliminary lists was 91.4 percent.
- Accuracy² is the proportion of registered electors who are listed at their current address, historically varying between 88 and 92 percent. These electors are correctly registered and can vote without taking extra steps. The accuracy of the preliminary lists was 95.3 percent.
- Currency is the proportion of eligible electors who are registered at their current address, historically varying between 81 and 86 percent. The currency of the preliminary lists was 87.1 percent.

Revision period

During the revision period from September 21 to October 18, 2016, the preliminary lists of electors were updated for use at advance polls and on election day. The local returning office offered registration services in person and over the phone. Revising agents were sent out to verify the accuracy of the lists of electors in high-density, highly mobile or new residential neighbourhoods. Throughout the by-election, electors could also go online to check whether they were registered, update their address or complete their registration. Elections Canada provided the preliminary lists to registered political parties that requested them and the returning officer provided the lists to candidates.

When the writ was issued on September 18, 2016, there were 76,124 electors on the preliminary lists, representing 91.4 percent of all eligible electors in the electoral district. Over the course of the revision period, 3,768 people were added to the lists of electors or had their information updated. A total of 1,591 electors, or 4.6 percent of those who voted, registered at their polling place on election day. This compares with 3,579 electors, or 7 percent of those who voted, for this electoral district in the 2015 general election. In all, the

² Accuracy of the electoral lists is derived by dividing the currency estimates by the coverage estimates.

final lists of electors included 77,608 names,³ representing a net increase of 1,484 over the preliminary lists.

Table 2 in Appendix 2 compares registration statistics for the 2016 by-election and 2015 general election.

1.3. Voting Services

Polling places

To identify a polling place's accessibility, the agency uses 35 criteria, 15 of which are mandatory. The VIC informs electors of their polling place's level of accessibility; this information is also available on Elections Canada's website. For the 2016 by-election, 98.4 percent of polling places met all 15 mandatory criteria (which includes level access), while 1.6 percent provided level access, but did not meet one or more of the other criteria and could not be modified to comply. Of the 64⁴ polling places, 63 met Elections Canada's mandatory accessibility criteria.

The returning officer set up 17 advance polling stations at 13 polling places from October 14 to October 17, 2016. On election day, 195 polling stations were located at 57 polling places. A total of 10 mobile polling stations visited 26 establishments on election day.

Voting

Election day and advance polls

Casting a ballot at a polling station on election day was the choice of the majority of electors during the by-election. A total of 27,443 electors voted this way, representing 79.9 percent of electors who voted, while 5,717, or 16.7 percent, voted at advance polls. In this electoral district in the 2015 general election, 41,224 electors voted on election day, representing 81.2 percent of those who voted, while 8,122, or 16 percent, voted at advance polls.

Voting by mail or at a returning office

Under the Special Voting Rules, electors can vote by mail or at any returning office. As well, Canadians temporarily outside the country can apply online for a special ballot voting kit. Regardless of which electoral district a by-election is held in, Elections Canada communicates with its partners at the Department of National Defence (for Canadian Armed Forces electors), Correctional Service Canada and Global Affairs Canada to disseminate information and registration materials to various groups of electors whose address of ordinary residence is in the electoral district. In all, 1,106 electors voted by special ballot. Table 3 in Appendix 2 provides a breakdown of special ballot voting by category.

³ Final lists are available on the Elections Canada website at elections.ca > Resource Centre > Reports > Elections Canada's Official Reports > Official Voting Results.

⁴ Six of the advance polling places were also used for election day polling places, resulting in a total of 64 polling places.

Voter turnout

Voter turnout was 44.2 percent of registered electors in Medicine Hat–Cardston–Warner. This compares with 65.1 percent for this electoral district in the 2015 general election. Table 4 in Appendix 2 compares turnout in 2015 and 2016 in greater detail.

Adaptation

The Chief Electoral Officer may, for the sole purpose of enabling electors to exercise their right to vote or enabling the counting of votes, adapt the Act under subsection 17(1) to address an emergency, an unusual or unforeseen circumstance, or an error. Adaptations only apply during an election period or within 30 days after polling day.

As described in Section 1.1, a printing error caused some electors to receive a VIC with the incorrect address for their polling place. Replacement VICs were mailed and an adaptation was made to the Act so that electors who may have gone to the wrong polling place could still exercise their right to vote. Procedures were in place on election day to ensure that these electors would receive a transfer certificate to vote. No electors required a transfer certificate. The table below describes this adaptation in more detail.

Adaptation of the *Canada Elections Act* pursuant to subsection 17(1) of the Act

Statutory Provision	Explanatory Notes
Section 158	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Purpose: To allow the issuance of transfer certificates to electors who went to the wrong polling station because of an erroneous voter information card.• Explanation: Due to a printing error, certain electors in the electoral district of Medicine Hat–Cardston–Warner received a notice of confirmation of registration (voter information card) which indicated the address of a polling station that was not their own. Sections 158 and 159 of the Act allow for a transfer certificate to be issued to an elector to vote at a polling station other than their own in certain specified situations. However, they do not cover the situation where an elector receives a voter information card with the wrong polling station location on it. Subsection 158(4) of the Act was thus adapted to make sure that electors who would have gone to the wrong polling station because of an incorrect address on a voter information card could receive a transfer certificate and vote there.

1.4. Concluding the By-election

Election results

Glen Motz, Conservative Party of Canada, was elected. Table 5 in Appendix 2 lists the number of valid votes obtained, by candidate.

There was no recount initiated after the by-election. The validation of results was completed on October 27, 2016, and the writ was returned on November 3, 2016. The official voting results were published on Elections Canada’s website at elections.ca > Resource Centre > Reports > Elections Canada’s Official Reports > Official Voting Results.

There was no change to the distribution of seats in the House of Commons after the by-election.

House of Commons seat distribution after the 2016 by-election	
Party	At the call of and after the 2016 by-election
Liberal Party of Canada	182
Conservative Party of Canada	97
New Democratic Party	44
Bloc Québécois	10
Green Party of Canada	1
Independent	1
Vacant	5

Complaints

Electors were able to provide feedback on all aspects of their voting experience during the 2016 by-election. Complaints on a range of matters,⁵ including accessibility issues, could be lodged with Elections Canada using an online form, by telephone, by email or by regular mail. Electors also had the option of lodging a complaint at a local office or at their polling place. The agency proactively asked electors to provide their feedback on accessibility and other issues.

Elections Canada received 23 complaints related to the by-election:

- 10 related to the agency's central services, such as VICs, lists of electors and voting by special ballot
- 3 related to polling place accessibility: one related to signage, one to walkways and pathways, and one to doors
- 2 related to services at the polls
- 8 related to activities of political parties, such as campaigning and spending

Two of these complaints related to a potential offence under the Act and were referred to the Commissioner of Canada Elections for further investigation.

⁵ The agency defines a complaint as an expression of dissatisfaction in regard to the products or services provided by Elections Canada, the way in which services were provided by Elections Canada, or the inappropriate conduct of a person or group in the electoral process.

Cost of the by-election

The estimated cost for the October 2016 by-election in Medicine Hat–Cardston–Warner is \$1.2 million, or \$16.16 for each registered elector. This includes \$55,000 projected to be paid to candidates for the partial reimbursement of their election expenses and the subsidies to candidates' auditors.

Overall, the cost for this by-election is 33 percent higher than the historical average. While there are many factors that affect the cost of a by-election, this increase is predominantly driven by an increase in the schedule of fees paid to election workers, following a re-evaluation of various functions, and the addition of a fourth day of advance polls, both in effect only since the 2015 general election.

The following table provides the cost breakdown of the by-election.

Estimated cost of the 2016 by-election ¹	
Activity	Estimated costs (\$ thousands)
Conducting the by-election – <i>Includes expenses related to fees and allowances to returning officers and election staff, printing ballots and lists of electors, leasing local offices and polling places, shipping election material, running communications campaigns, hiring temporary staff and deploying IT infrastructure and telecommunications</i>	1,188
Reimbursing election expenses to candidates and subsidies to candidates' auditors	55
Total	1,243

¹ Estimated cost as at March 2017. Actual cost will not be known until Elections Canada has received and processed all outstanding invoices for goods and services, and received and audited all candidates' election expenses reports.

Poll worker compliance with voting day procedures

The Act requires Elections Canada to arrange for an independent audit of poll workers' performance for each election. Following a competitive procurement process, the Chief Electoral Officer commissioned PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP (PwC) to conduct the audit and report on whether certain categories of poll workers (deputy returning officers, poll clerks and registration officers) performed the duties and functions imposed on them under specific sections of the Act. PwC was also tasked with determining the degree to which the established administrative controls, including manuals and training material, supported poll workers in performing their duties. The audit sample included polling places designated as urban or rural dispersed across the electoral district and resulted in PwC auditing approximately 200 electoral interactions.

The audit's findings are in line with those in the *Retrospective Report on the 42nd General Election of October 19, 2015*. The audit concluded that election staff properly exercised their powers and properly performed their duties when processing the 85 percent of electors who arrived at the polls already registered and with documentary proof of identity and address. The audit reached the same conclusion regarding election staff's processing of the 15 percent of electors who required special procedures, such as those who registered at the polls or had to take an oath. However, for the latter group, it noted that some of the administrative procedures (e.g. record keeping) were not performed consistently. The audit also concluded that training programs and their delivery were effective. The report recommends further enhancements to the training program with a focus on special procedures.

The PwC report can be found in Appendix 1.

2. Activities Since the Last Statutory Report

2.1. Audit of Financial Returns from the 2015 General Election

Nearly 1,800 candidate returns were received for the 2015 general election. Although the long election period resulted in considerable candidate expenses, essentially all candidate files that resulted in a reimbursement of election expenses to the candidates were completed and reimbursements were made in accordance with Elections Canada's service standards. The agency is currently reviewing the returns of candidates who are not eligible for reimbursement. This should be concluded by August 2017. Financial reports can be found on Elections Canada's website at elections.ca > Political Financing.

2.2. Review of Special Ballot Administrative Procedures

During the 2015 general election, approximately 29,000 Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) electors cast their ballots through the Special Voting Rules process. The operation of CAF voting was generally successful. Unfortunately, in one instance, a parcel of 247 marked, sealed special ballots from a CAF unit was inadvertently set aside at Elections Canada's distribution centre in Ottawa and not discovered until after counting had taken place.

The incident was recorded by Elections Canada's Military Vote Coordinator and related to the Coordinating Officer at the Department of National Defence shortly after election day. However, it was not brought to the attention of the Chief Electoral Officer until October 2016. At that point, the Chief Electoral Officer considered unsealing and counting the ballots. However, he ultimately decided against it since: a) it would not have changed the outcome in any of the 139 electoral districts in which the ballots were cast, and; b) adjusting the vote totals at that point would have compromised the secrecy of the vote. The Chief Electoral Officer immediately contacted the political parties that are entitled under subsection 183(1) of the Act to appoint special ballot officers, to inform them of the incident and of his decision.

To ensure that such an incident is prevented in the future, the Chief Electoral Officer mandated an administrative review of the procedures for sending and receiving special ballots. The review found that the incident was isolated. It concluded that with better procedures and systems, the incident could have been detected in time for the special ballots to be counted in the official results.

The review made several recommendations: strengthening and adding controls, harmonizing procedures across business lines, improving communications, and clarifying and reinforcing governance around incident management. Elections Canada accepted all recommendations. A review of processes, procedures and training material will be conducted and changes will be implemented before the next general election. Elections Canada will also develop practical instruments to facilitate the timely identification, escalation and resolution of severe risks and incidents.

The administrative review can be found on the Elections Canada website at elections.ca > Resource Centre > Reports > Other Reports.

3. Conclusion

The by-election held on October 24, 2016, in Medicine Hat–Cardston–Warner was a success. Awareness was very high, and most voters knew where, when and ways to vote. Satisfaction with the voting experience was widespread among electors—most felt that it was very easy to cast their vote, nearly all found their locations convenient and easy to reach and most reported high satisfaction with Elections Canada staff. Overall, electors thought that the by-election was run fairly and felt that they could trust the accuracy of the by-election results. Further information on the by-election can be found in the report on the survey of electors, which was commissioned following the by-election. The report will be made available on Elections Canada’s website at elections.ca > Resource Centre > Research > Post-election Evaluations.

In the year ahead, the agency will focus on delivering the by-elections currently underway and on readiness to deliver any future by-elections. The agency will continue to work on its plans to modernize the electoral process and will support Parliament with any legislative changes.

Appendix 1 – Tables

Table 1 – Number of positions filled* for Medicine Hat–Cardston–Warner for the 2015 general election and 2016 by-election

Position	2015 general election	2016 by-election
Poll Workers		
Central poll supervisor	55	55
Deputy returning officer	251	247
Information officer	66	67
Poll clerk	222	225
Registration officer	53	60
Special messenger	2	1
Subtotal	649	655
Other Election Workers		
Additional assistant returning officer	1	1
Assistant automation coordinator	1	1
Assistant recruitment officer	2	1
Assistant returning officer	1	1
Automation coordinator	1	1
Community relations officer	2	2
Financial officer	1	1
Inventory clerk (Electoral material coordinator)	2	2
Office clerk	17	8
Office coordinator	1	2
Office messenger	1	0
Receptionist	5	3
Recruitment officer	1	1
Returning officer	1	1
Revising agent	40	22
Revision centre clerk	5	10
Revision supervisor	1	1
Special ballot coordinator	11	9
Support staff for office of additional assistant returning officer	2	0
Training officer	4	3
Witness—validation of results	0	2
Subtotal	100	72
Total	749	727

*Includes individuals on standby. Excludes trainees not retained.

Table 2 – Voter registration statistics for Medicine Hat–Cardston–Warner for the 2015 general election and 2016 by-election

	2015 general election	2016 by-election
Electors on preliminary list	75,944	76,124
Electors added ¹	3,049	1,251
Inter-ED address changes ²	1,931	506
Moves within ED ³	4,872	1,530
Other corrections ⁴	1,802	477
Electors removed ⁵	3,109	278
SVR Group 1 update ⁶	77	5
Electors on final lists ⁷	77,892	77,608

¹ Electors who did not appear on any lists of electors at the beginning of the by-election and were added during the by-election.

² ED = electoral district. Electors who appeared on the lists of electors of one ED at the beginning of the by-election but changed their address during the by-election because of a move to another ED.

³ Electors who appeared on the lists of electors of one ED at the beginning of the by-election and changed their address during the by-election because of a move to another polling division. These figures also include administrative changes the returning officer made to elector records during the by-election.

⁴ Electors who appeared on a list of electors and requested a correction to an error in their name or mailing address during the by-election.

⁵ Electors who appeared on a list of electors but were removed because of one of the following: the elector was deceased, the elector requested to be removed, the elector was no longer resident at that address or the elector was not qualified to be on the list (for example, less than 18 years old or a non-citizen). Figures also reflect elector records removed as a result of electors moving to another ED during the by-election and other duplicates removed during the by-election, including those removed during the preparation of the final lists of electors.

⁶ SVR = Special Voting Rules. This row indicates the increase in the number of Group 1 electors registered under the SVR (Canadian electors temporarily residing outside Canada, Canadian Armed Forces electors and incarcerated electors) during the by-election.

⁷ The total number of electors on the final lists is the sum of electors on the preliminary lists of electors, electors added, inter-ED address changes and SVR Group 1 updates, minus removed records.

Table 3 – Special Voting Rules ballots for the 2016 Medicine Hat–Cardston–Warner by-election

	Ballots issued	Valid ballots	Rejected ballots	Total ballots cast	Ballots returned³
Group 1 (Canadian Armed Forces, International, Incarcerated)	122	16	0	16	13.1%
Group 2 (Local ¹ and National ²)	1,112	1,085	5	1,090	98.0%
Grand totals	1,234	1,101	5	1,106	89.6%

¹Electors whose applications were processed and whose ballots were counted by local returning offices. This includes electors who registered to vote in acute care facilities.

²Electors whose applications were processed and whose ballots were counted by Elections Canada in Ottawa.

³Total ballots cast divided by ballots issued.

Table 4 – Voter turnout for Medicine Hat–Cardston–Warner for the 2015 general election and 2016 by-election

	2015 general election	2016 by-election	Increase or decrease (-) from the 2015 general election
Ballots at ordinary polls	41,224	27,443	-13,781
Ballots at advance polls	8,106	5,717	-2,389
Voting by special ballot (SVR)	1,320	1,101 ¹	-219
Total valid ballots	50,650	34,261	-16,389
Total rejected ballots	118	61	-57
Total ballots cast	50,768	34,322	-16,446

¹Total valid ballots for Group 1 and Group 2 electors in Table 3.

Table 5 – Valid votes obtained in the 2016 Medicine Hat–Cardston–Warner by-election, by candidate

Candidate and affiliation	Place of residence	Occupation	Valid votes obtained	Percentage of valid votes
Glen Motz Conservative	Medicine Hat, AB	Retired police officer	23,932	69.9
Stan Sakamoto Liberal	Medicine Hat, AB	Caterer	8,777	25.6
Rod Taylor Christian Heritage Party	Telkwa, BC	Quality control supervisor	703	2.1
Beverly Ann Waege New Democratic Party	Dunmore, AB	Retail clerk	353	1.0
Sheldon W. Johnston Libertarian	Medicine Hat, AB	Chaplain	285	0.8
Kayne Cooper Rhinoceros	Medicine Hat, AB	Artist	211	0.6

Appendix 2 – Audit of Poll Worker Performance

Elections Canada

Independent audit report on the performance of the duties and functions of election officials – By-election Medicine Hat–Cardston– Warner

January 12, 2017

Submitted to Mr. Stéphane Perrault, Acting Chief Electoral Officer of Canada

Submitted by PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP, Ottawa



Contents

Executive summary	1
1 Introduction	4
2 Focus of the audit	7
3 Our approach	9
4 Findings – Major and Other Observations	12
5 Conclusion	18
Appendix A – Recommendations	
Appendix B – Audit criteria	
Appendix C – Glossary of terms	

Executive summary

In response to section 164.1 of the *Canada Elections Act*, PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) was engaged to perform an independent, statutory audit and report on whether deputy returning officers (DRO), poll clerks (PC) and registration officers (REGO) have, on all days of advance polling and on polling day, properly exercised the powers conferred on them, and properly performed the duties and functions imposed on them, under sections 143 to 149, 161 to 162 and 169 (hereinafter referred to as “the relevant sections”) of the *Canada Elections Act* (CEA or “the Act”) for each general election and by-election. This report is in relation to the by-election held in Medicine Hat–Cardston–Warner on October 24, 2016.

In addition to other roles required to prepare for and support advance polling and election day, each returning officer (RO) is responsible for appointing a DRO, a PC and a REGO (collectively referred to as “election officials”) to perform election related duties at a polling site. One DRO and one PC is required per polling station and typically, one REGO is assigned to each central polling site/place. It is the duties of these specific election officials that are included in the scope of this audit under S.164.1 of the Act.

The scope of the duties of election officials as prescribed in the relevant sections of the Act require election officials to register electors, request and examine each elector’s proof of identity and address as well as administer and complete prescribed forms and certificates on all days of advance polling (held October 14–17, 2016) and on election day (held on October 24, 2016) in relation to the by-election in Medicine Hat–Cardston–Warner (ED).

Any Canadian citizen who is at least 18 years of age on election day may vote in the ED in which they reside. The CEA provides procedural safeguards designed to protect the integrity of the electoral process, one of which requires electors to prove eligibility (identity and residency) before receiving a ballot. For most electors who are already registered at their current address and therefore included on the List of Electors, election day procedures involve a simple, efficient check of one or more pieces of acceptable identification to confirm identity and address of residence. Based on our testing results, approximately 85% of electors voted in this manner. The remaining 15% of electors tested required special administrative procedures prior to being issued a ballot.

Election officials must administer special procedures for all electors whose residence is going to be attested to, who are not on the List of Electors, whose name has been previously crossed off the List of Electors in error or who require minor corrections to their information. Depending on the circumstances, special procedures include initiating the appropriate certificate, administering a verbal or written oath/declaration to the elector and administering a verbal warning/written oath to an elector and their attester.

Our audit did not validate election results, assess whether election officials other than DROs, PCs and REGOs performed their specific legislative duties, assess performance of legislative duties that are not specifically referred to in S.164.1 of the Act nor did it assess the administrative controls of EC beyond those implemented for purposes of supporting election officials in the conduct of their duties under S.164.1 of the Act.

Our audit findings and conclusions are presented at an aggregate level. For this electoral event, the by-election was called for one ED. Accordingly, our results are presented at the ED level. Our results are not attributed to any specific polling site, polling station or election official. Our major findings and other observations are described below. Our recommendations are included in Appendix A to this report.

We performed our audit in accordance with the Canadian Standard on Assurance Engagements 3001: *Direct Engagements* (CSAE 3001).

Audit criteria

For this audit, the principal criteria and therefore our audit mandate are specifically prescribed in the relevant sections of the Act described above. For the purpose of this audit, a significant deviation in the exercise of

powers and the performance of the duties and functions of election officials was based on two levels of controls and procedures as well as reporting thresholds. Key controls and procedures are those performed by election officials which establish a person's qualification and entitlement to vote. Secondary controls are those which support/reinforce the elector's established qualification/entitlement to vote and are typically more record-keeping in nature. Our audit criteria for this audit is consistent with our audit criteria reported on in our independent audit report on the performance of the duties and functions of election officials dated February 16, 2016 in relation to the 2015 general election.

The establishment of thresholds for reporting purposes was critical during the planning of the audit. The reporting thresholds were agreed with management and reflect the relative importance of the control. For key controls, a deviation of 5% or more was considered a major finding. For those same key controls, a deviation of 2%–4.9% was considered as other observations. For secondary controls, a deviation of 11% or more was considered as other observations. The reporting thresholds are consistent with our report on the 2015 general election.

Approach

In order to provide reasonable assurance as to whether election officials performed their duties and functions as prescribed by the CEA, we selected a sample of polling sites within the ED and gathered sufficient and appropriate evidence to conclude on the audit objective. Evidence gathering techniques comprised of direct observation, enquiries and inspection of election documents (representing the certificates, forms, reports and other paperwork required to serve an elector and document the results).

In order to assess whether DROs, PCs and REGOs properly performed the duties imposed on them under the relevant sections of the Act, we determined that it was necessary to perform audit procedures on site at polling sites and stations at advance polls and on election day (October 24, 2016). Our sample included polling sites designated as urban or rural dispersed across the ED and resulted in PwC auditing approximately 200 electoral interactions.

We evaluated the design and implementation of specific administrative controls – specifically the training of election officials and associated guidebooks/other materials. This included a review of the content of the training program, attendance at a sample of training sessions and interviews with the RO, the recruitment officer and one training officer. During advance polls, as well as on election day, we posed a series of questions to election officials to obtain their perspective on their training experience and supporting materials.

Summary of findings

We concluded that:

On all days of advance polling and on election day, election officials properly exercised the powers conferred on them, and properly performed the duties and functions imposed on them under the relevant sections of the Act with respect to regular electors (representing approximately 85% of electors). We did not note any major findings or other observations relating to deviations in key and secondary controls and procedures with respect to regular voters.

On all days of advance polling and on election day, election officials properly exercised the powers conferred on them and properly performed the duties and functions imposed on them under the relevant sections of the Act with respect to electors subject to special procedures (approximately 15% of electors). We noted one major finding from a deviation related to key controls relating to special procedures. We noted that some of the administrative procedures were not performed consistently but these deficiencies were record-keeping in nature (secondary controls).

The content of the training programs and the delivery of these programs was effective. Election officials reported that the guidebooks and other aids were useful in performing their responsibilities and troubleshooting when they

were unsure of how to proceed. We identified opportunities to streamline the training curriculum to enhance the delivery of scenarios and the associated duties and functions that lead to the administration of special procedures.

EC asked us to report any other relevant observations that we captured during the course of our work that might assist them to improve or enhance their processes. In this context, we did not identify additional observations other than those already noted in our report on the 2015 general election.

Summary of recommendations

In our report on the 2015 general election, we identified three primary recommendations for consideration by the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO). More specifically,

1. Modernize the electoral process, including automation of components. EC agreed with this recommendation and since has begun to identify elements of the electoral process at the polls that could benefit from automation.
2. Explore opportunities for streamlining procedures at advance polls and for special procedures. EC agreed with the findings and the recommendation in this area. EC since has begun to review functions and procedures at the polls in order to simplify them and has made recommendations to Parliament to modify the Canada Elections Act in line with this objective.
3. Consider enhancements to the existing training program to ensure that the necessary focus/time is given to the administration of the special procedures and to ensure election officials understand why/how to complete the activities. EC agreed to consider this recommendation in conjunction with any changes that result from automation and simplified procedures and functions at polling places. PwC's assessment of the training program for the by-election was included in the scope of the report and all findings and corresponding recommendations have been incorporated into this report.

While some of the recommendations above are still relevant, the recommendation below is in relation to the audit pertaining to this by-election only. It is suggested that the recommendation be fully evaluated and if a decision is made to proceed, it should be tested fully before full implementation. The proposed recommendation is summarized as follows:

In relation to the by-election, we propose the following recommendation:

1. We recommend that the CEO consider further enhancements to the existing training program to ensure that the necessary focus/time is given to the administration of the special procedures.

Full recommendations and EC's responses are presented in Appendix A to this report.

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

The Office of the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO), commonly known as Elections Canada (EC), is an independent, non-partisan agency that reports directly to Parliament. The CEO, an agent of Parliament, is responsible for directing and supervising the conduct of elections and referendums at the national level and monitoring compliance under the *Canada Elections Act* (CEA or “the Act”).

On June 19, 2014, Bill C-23 received Royal Assent. C-23 amended the Act by adding section 164.1 to introduce a legislated audit. Section 164.1 of the Act states the following:

FOR EACH GENERAL ELECTION AND BY-ELECTION, THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER SHALL ENGAGE AN AUDITOR THAT HE OR SHE CONSIDERS TO HAVE TECHNICAL OR SPECIALIZED KNOWLEDGE — OTHER THAN A MEMBER OF HIS OR HER STAFF OR AN ELECTION OFFICER — TO PERFORM AN AUDIT AND REPORT ON WHETHER DEPUTY RETURNING OFFICERS, POLL CLERKS AND REGISTRATION OFFICERS HAVE, ON ALL DAYS OF ADVANCE POLLING AND ON POLLING DAY, PROPERLY EXERCISED THE POWERS CONFERRED ON THEM, AND PROPERLY PERFORMED THE DUTIES AND FUNCTIONS IMPOSED ON THEM, UNDER SECTIONS 143 TO 149, 161 TO 162 AND 169.

PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP (PwC) was engaged to perform an independent audit and report on the performance of the duties and functions of election officials in relation to sections 143 to 149, 161 to 162 and 169 of the Act (hereinafter referred to as “the relevant sections of the Act”), including our assessment on the degree to which administrative controls established by EC support election officials in this regard for each general election and by-election. The relevant sections of the Act pertain to an elector’s proof of identity and residence, attestation to an elector’s qualification or residence, registration of electors who are not on the List of Electors and record-keeping duties.

The scope of the duties of election officials as prescribed in the relevant sections of the Act require election officials to register electors, request and examine each elector’s proof of identity and address as well as administer and complete prescribed forms and certificates on all days of advance polling (held October 14–17, 2016) and on election day (held on October 24, 2016) in relation to the by-election in Medicine Hat–Cardston–Warner (ED).

1.2 EC’s operating context

The statutory mandate of EC is highly operational. The writ for this by-election was issued on September 18, 2016. Once the writ was issued, EC and an appointed returning officer (RO) in the ED started mobilizing hundreds of temporary workers to prepare for the by-election. The RO has a very small window of time to hire and train these temporary workers before election day. In addition to other roles required to prepare for and support advance polling and election day, the RO was responsible for appointing a deputy returning officer (DRO), a poll clerk (PC) and a registration officer (REGO) (collectively referred to as “election officials”) to perform election related duties at polling sites throughout the ED. One DRO and one PC is required per polling station and, typically, one REGO is assigned to each central polling site/place. It is the duties of these specific election officials that are included in the scope of this audit under S.164.1 of the CEA.

The delivery of the by-election is highly dependent on the RO, in collaboration with the Recruitment Officer, to hire and train a temporary workforce of approximately 600. These individuals are the ones who, for advance polls and election day polls, confirm the appropriateness of identification provided by the elector, confirm that the individual is at the appropriate polling station and is on the List of Electors, confirm that the individual has not previously voted, strike the individual off the List of Electors, provide the elector with a ballot and confirm that they voted. In special circumstances, the election officials initiate and complete additional steps and associated paperwork to allow electors to vote. EC has implemented measures to support election officials by providing them with training, tools and guidance to perform their duties and functions. It is our understanding that following the 41st General

Election, EC took actions to improve processes and tools, focusing on compliance, and implemented a quality control framework to test these changes in a controlled environment. Furthermore, as a result of the audit of the 2015 general election, additional measures were taken to strengthen the design and delivery of the training program.

Election officials are required to work long days, with minimal breaks, serving electors. In addition, the requirements of the Act result in complexities relative to the procedures they are expected to undertake (i.e. number of different acceptable forms of identification, number and nature of special procedures) throughout the day. In this by-election, advance polls were open for eight hours a day for four consecutive days, and election day polls were open for 12 hours to allow the maximum number of people to vote. This by-election saw a voter turnout of 44.2%¹ compared to 65.2% at the 42nd General Election in the ED.

The current administrative processes required to be completed by the election officials are currently very manual – with only printouts, checklists and booklets available to document the results of the interactions with electors. Human error is unavoidable due to the manual nature of the processes to serve electors and the approximately 600 election officials required to administer the associated procedures.

1.3 Special procedures applied for advance polls / election day

Any Canadian citizen who is at least 18 years of age on election day may vote in the ED in which they reside. The CEA provides procedural safeguards designed to protect the integrity of the electoral process, one of which requires electors to prove eligibility (identity and residency) before receiving a ballot. For most electors who are already registered at their current address and therefore included on the List of Electors, election day procedures involve a simple, efficient check of one or more pieces of acceptable identification to confirm identity and address of residence. As per our testing results, approximately 85% of electors voted in this manner. The remaining 15% of electors tested required special administrative procedures (see table in Section 4.1 for list of circumstances that required special procedures) prior to being issued a ballot. The typical special procedures administered are outlined below.

Registration certificate

A registration certificate is initiated when an elector has not been previously registered on the List of Electors. This typically can happen if an individual has become eligible to vote or has moved into a different ED or polling division since the last election. This certificate enables the individual to vote in the appropriate polling division and requires the elector to sign a written declaration confirming they are a qualified elector and have not previously requested a ballot in the current electoral event.

Correction certificate

A correction certificate has two purposes. If the information on the List of Electors is noted to have minor errors as compared to the name/address of the elector's official identification, this certificate is used to note the correction so that the List of Electors can be updated for the next election. In this case, a verbal oath is administered to the elector before providing the elector their ballot. The other use of the correction certificate is when the List of Electors already shows that the individual elector has already been crossed off the List of Electors. In this case, the correction certificate is used to document that the elector should not have been previously crossed off the List of Electors. Similar to the registration certificate, the elector is required to sign a written oath confirming that they have not previously requested a ballot in the current electoral event.

Oath of residence certificate

In cases where an individual does not have valid proof of residency, an individual who resides in the same polling division can attest to that elector's residence. Both the elector and attestor must sign written oaths and a verbal

¹ As provided by Elections Canada.

warning is read to both parties notifying them of the consequences of falsifying information. An attestor can only attest for one individual and must not have been attested for in the current electoral event.

1.4 Roles and responsibilities of election officials

For an elector who is on the List of Electors and has the appropriate identification, together, the DRO and PC at the polling station are responsible for obtaining and reviewing the elector's identification and establishing that an elector is qualified to vote by performing a series of prescribed (by the CEA) duties prior to providing a ballot and documenting that the elector has voted.

Election officials must administer special procedures for all electors who are not on the List of Electors, whose residence needs to be attested to, whose name has been previously crossed off the List of Electors in error, who require minor corrections to their information, and when there is doubt about an elector's qualification to vote or residence. Depending on the circumstances, special procedures include completing the appropriate certificate, administering a verbal or written oath/declaration to the elector and administering a verbal warning/written oath to an elector and their attestor.

Once the DRO is satisfied that the elector is considered qualified to vote, they are issued a ballot. During the process of serving an elector at the registration desk and at the polling station, the CEA prescribes certain duties that must be performed including record-keeping tasks.

Deputy returning officer

The DRO is responsible for opening their polling station, authorizing and signing pre-filled certificates, verifying acceptable identification, administering oaths and warnings to electors and attestors, issuing ballots, counting the ballots and returning materials to the returning office.

Poll clerk

The PC supports the DRO with the primary responsibility of documenting the voting process which includes crossing an elector's name off the List of Electors, assisting in completing certificates if there is no REGO, marking the elector as voted, completing the Record of Votes Cast (advance polls only), completing the statement of electors who voted (Bingo Sheet), and recording applicable proceedings in the poll book, as required.

Registration officer

An elector who is not on the List of Electors is required to register with the REGO (or PC if there is no REGO assigned to the polling site). For an elector who needs to be registered, the REGO has to be satisfied that the address of the elector is within the appropriate polling division. The REGO is responsible for obtaining the elector's address and, where necessary, comparing it to the poll key to confirm that the elector's residence is within the ED and a polling division being served by that polling site. The REGO is responsible for pre-filling a registration, correction or oath of residence certificate as applicable.

Central poll supervisor

Although not included in the scope of the audit as outlined in the relevant sections of the Act, the central poll supervisor plays a key role at both advance and election day polls. The central poll supervisor swears in candidates' representatives, liaises with the RO, ensures accessibility, oversees the polling site activities, troubleshoots, and supports the election officials as they serve electors. The central poll supervisor is also expected to perform some quality assurance procedures to ensure the completeness and accuracy of the documentation produced by the election officials.

2 Focus of the audit

2.1 Objective and scope

The objective of the audit, as set out in our contract with EC, was to report on:

whether DROs, PCs and REGOs have, for the by-election, on all days of advance polling and on polling day, properly exercised the powers conferred on them, and properly performed the duties and functions imposed on them, under the relevant sections of the Act; and

the degree to which the administrative controls established by EC, including manuals and training material, support election officials in the exercise of their powers and performance of their duties and functions in accordance with section 164.1 of the Act.

Collectively, these objectives represent the subject matter for our audit. The CEO is the official who is responsible for the subject matter.

We performed our audit in accordance with the Canadian Standard on Assurance Engagements 3001: *Direct Engagements* (CSAE 3001).

2.1.1 Limitations

We did not:

Assess election results;

Assess whether election officials other than DROs, PCs and REGOs performed their specific legislative duties;

Assess performance of legislative duties that are not specifically referred to in S.164.1 of the CEA; and

Assess the administrative controls of EC beyond those implemented for purposes of supporting election officials in the conduct of their duties under S.164.1 of the CEA.

Our audit approach is discussed in some detail below; however, it is important to recognize that there are certain inherent limitations of the auditing process. For example, audits are generally based on the concept of selective testing of the data being examined and are, therefore, subject to the limitation that material errors, material or significant weaknesses in internal controls, or fraud or other illegal acts having a direct and material impact on the subject matter, if they exist, may not be detected, simply because they did not occur in the transactions we observed or at the polling stations that we attended. In addition, because of the characteristics of fraud, particularly those involving concealment through collusion and falsified documentation (including forgery), an audit may not detect a material fraud.

2.2 Auditor's responsibility

Our responsibility is to provide reasonable assurance² that there were no significant deviations in the exercise of powers and performance of the duties and functions of election officials from the requirements set out in the subject matter described above.

² CSAE 3001 defines reasonable assurance as follows: Reasonable Assurance Engagement – An assurance engagement in which the practitioner reduces engagement risk to an acceptably low level in the circumstances of the engagement as the basis for the practitioner's conclusion. The practitioner's conclusion is expressed in a form that conveys the practitioner's opinion on the outcome of the measurement or evaluation of the underlying subject matter against criteria. A reasonable assurance engagement may be referred to as an audit engagement.

2.3 Management's responsibility

EC is responsible for establishing and maintaining administrative controls (key and secondary) to ensure election officials have the training, tools and guidance necessary to allow them to carry out their duties and functions in accordance with the Act.

2.4 Criteria

CSAE 3001 also requires us to describe in our report the criteria that we used to come to our conclusion. The criteria are the benchmarks we use to measure or evaluate the underlying subject matter. We identify the criteria before we start our work. These requirements are reflected in our audit criteria as outlined in Appendix B to this report.

For this audit, the principal criteria and therefore our audit mandate are specifically prescribed in the relevant sections of the Act described above. For the purpose of this audit, a significant deviation in the exercise of powers and the performance of the duties and functions of election officials was based on two levels of controls and procedures as well as acceptable tolerance levels. Key controls and procedures are those performed by election officials which establish a person's qualification and entitlement to vote. Secondary controls are those which support/reinforce the elector's established qualification/entitlement to vote and are typically more record-keeping in nature. Our audit criteria for this audit is consistent with our audit criteria reported on in our independent audit report on the performance of the duties and functions of election officials dated February 16, 2016 in relation to the 2015 general election.

The establishment of thresholds for reporting purposes was critical during the planning of the audit. The reporting thresholds were agreed with management and reflected the relative importance of the control. For key controls, a deviation of 5% or more was considered a major finding. For those same key controls, a deviation of 2%–4.9% was considered as other observations. For secondary controls, a deviation of 11% or more was considered as other observations. The reporting thresholds are consistent with our report on the 2015 general election. It is important to note that the sample testing for the by-election (with only one ED) is proportionately lower when compared to the sample observed at the 2015 general election. Accordingly, the relatively smaller sample population has a significant impact on the calculation of the error rate, even more so when determining the deviation percentage relative to the administration of special procedures (15% of the sample for this by-election). The smaller sample population effectively results in a lower tolerance threshold and decreases the number of errors required to reach the reporting threshold.

CSAE 3001 requires us to describe the quality control standards for our audit and whether we complied with relevant independence and ethical standards of our profession.

- In conducting our audit, we applied the Canadian Standard on Quality Control 1 (CSQC 1) issued by the Chartered Professional Accountants of Canada. This standard requires that our work be adequately planned and conducted while adhering to performance, reporting and quality control standards throughout the duration of the audit.
- To the best of our knowledge, throughout the engagement, we complied with all relevant independence and ethical requirements.

3 Our approach

In order to provide reasonable assurance as to whether election officials performed their duties and functions as prescribed by the CEA, we selected a representative sample from across the ED and gathered sufficient and appropriate evidence to conclude on the audit objective. Evidence gathering techniques were comprised of direct observation, enquiries and inspection of election documents (representing the certificates, forms, reports and other paperwork required to serve an elector and document the results).

3.1 Approach to sample selection of polling sites

We selected a sample of polling sites within the ED. Our sample of polling sites was designed to reflect the population density of the ED and included polling sites in areas designated as urban or rural according to EC's designation of polling divisions.

We conducted audit procedures, designed to test how election officials carried out specified duties, on site at polling stations within the ED at advance polls and on election day. Our testing procedures included observation of the duties of the election officials. We tested how election officials performed their duties with respect to approximately 200 electoral interactions. There are certain inherent limitations to our audit approach, including:

- The presence of our auditors at polling stations observing the performance of election officials as they carried out their duties had the potential to affect the way in which election officials carried out their duties.
- Eligible voter population characteristics such as age, income, ethnic origin and aboriginal identity were not available at the polling division level. Accordingly, we based our sample on EC's designation of polling divisions as either rural or urban which may not be representative of current demographics and may not reflect the demographics of the population of election officials.

These factors were discussed with and disclosed to EC.

Accordingly, our sampling and testing approach was designed specifically to support our overall audit mandate as specified by legislation at an aggregate level. For this electoral event, the by-election was called for one ED. Accordingly, our results are presented at the ED level. We did not attempt to draw any conclusions with respect to the performance of officials serving individual polling sites or individual geographic regions within the ED.

3.2 Assessment of election officials' compliance with legislative duties

In order to assess whether DROs, PCs and REGOs properly performed the duties imposed on them under the relevant sections of the Act, we determined that it was necessary to perform audit procedures on site at polling sites and stations at advance polls and on October 24, 2016.

We performed the following procedures at advance and election day polls.

1. Observed the duties performed by the REGO at a sample of polling sites for a sample of electors served at the registration desk to verify that duties performed met the requirements of the CEA. More specifically, that the following duties were performed.
 - 1.1. Confirmed the elector was at the correct polling site.
 - 1.2. Checked whether the elector was included on the List of Electors.
 - 1.3. Administered the required forms and certificates, as required by the specific circumstances.

2. Observed the duties performed by DROs and PCs for a sample of electors served at a sample of polling stations. More specifically, that the following duties were performed.
 - 2.1. Obtained acceptable identification from each elector for proof of name and address³.
 - 2.2. Validated the elector’s information by comparing it to the List of Electors to determine whether the elector was registered.
 - 2.3. Administered special procedures as prescribed by the CEA.
 - 2.4. Completed forms and certificates, as applicable.
 - 2.5. Administered correct oaths, verbal or written, and verbal warnings when applicable.
 - 2.6. Recorded proceedings in the poll book, as required.
 - 2.7. Performed the following duties for all electors.
 - Crossed the elector off the List of Electors (for electors who were registered).
 - Marked the elector as “voted” immediately after the ballot was placed in the ballot box.
 - Completed the Statement of the electors who voted (Bingo Sheet) for electors who were registered (for distribution to candidate representatives)
 - Recorded proceedings on Record of Votes Cast (advance polls only)

Our procedures were limited to observation without interacting or interfering with election officials as they were serving electors and administering their paperwork.

During advance polls, as well as on election day, we posed a series of questions to election officials to obtain their perspective on their training experience and supporting materials. We discuss our procedures in relation to our assessment of EC’s approach to training and support of election officials in the section that follows.

3.3 Assessment of EC’s approach to training and support of election officials

We performed the following procedures to assess EC’s approach to training and supporting election officials to prepare them for their roles in relation to the by-election.

- Made enquiries with representatives within EC to understand significant changes to the overall design and delivery of the training program for election officials.
- Reviewed guides, manuals, videos and instructions (“training material”) provided to election officials in relation to their duties on advance polling and on polling days to assess whether the information provided is complete, sufficient and appropriate for the effective discharge of their responsibilities.
- Compared the training presentation and guidance materials prepared for both the 2015 general election (October 2015) and the by-election (October 2016). We restricted our review to ordinary poll training materials for DROs and PCs as it relates to the duties and functions of these election officials within the scope of this audit. Our review did not include an analysis of the training related to duties out of scope such as reconciling ballots, counting ballots and closing the polling station/site.

³ As defined by Elections Canada using the “Have your ID ready” list.

- Conducted interviews with the RO, recruitment officer and one training officer to understand the design of the training program and the delivery of the training curriculum to participants.
- Reviewed poll worker training course notes issued to the training officers which provides guidance on managing and delivering the training program.
- Conducted interviews with one training officer to obtain an understanding of their perspective on the effectiveness of the support, tools and guidance that is provided to election officials.
- Observed the delivery of training to election officials at selected training sessions.
- Conducted enquiries with election officials during periods of elector inactivity at the polls.

4 Findings – Major and Other Observations

Our audit findings and conclusions are presented on an aggregate level. Our results are not attributed to any specific polling site, polling station or election official. Our key findings and other observations are described below. Our recommendations are included in Appendix A to this report.

4.1 Performance of the duties and functions of election officials

A Canadian citizen who is at least 18 years of age on election day may vote in the ED in which they reside. The CEA provides procedural safeguards designed to protect the integrity of the electoral process, one of which requires electors to prove eligibility (identity and residence) before receiving a ballot. For most electors who are already registered at their current address and therefore included on the List of Electors, election day procedures involve a simple, efficient check of one or more pieces of acceptable identification to confirm identity and address of residence. Based on the sample tested, approximately 85% of electors voted in this manner in this by-election. The remaining 15% of electors required special administrative procedures prior to being issued a ballot and exercising their right to vote.

The following table outlines circumstances that require special procedures as well as the approximate percentage of electors (making up the 15% referred to above).

Special Circumstances	Percentage of electors (Approximate)
An elector is not on the List of Electors for their polling division (Registration Certificate).	8.0 %
An elector requires a minor correction to their electoral information on the List of Electors (Correction Certificate).	4.0 %
An elector is previously crossed off as voted on the List of Electors (Correction Certificate).	N/A*
An elector does not have identification with their address; requires an attessor to provide proof of the elector's residence (Oath of Residence Certificate).	3.0 %
An elector's qualification or residence is challenged (verbal oath of qualification or residence).	N/A*
An elector is voting by transfer certificate (Transfer Certificate).	N/A*
Total	15.0 %

*Circumstance was not observed during testing.

4.2 Major findings

4.2.1 No major findings resulting from deviations in key controls and procedures for regular electors

Our testing did not identify any major findings from deviations in key controls and procedures for regular electors (i.e. approximately 85% of electors). In addition, we only noted one major finding from a deviation related to a key control for special procedures (i.e. where those electors requiring special procedures make up approximately 15% of electors). Details of this finding are outlined in the section below.

4.2.2 Mandatory procedures not consistently administered for electors who require special procedures

Depending on the circumstances, special procedures may include validating that the elector is at the correct polling site and polling station, administering a verbal oath to the elector, administering an oral warning to the elector and their attester, and/or administering written oaths/declarations to the elector and/or their attester. These procedures are intended to reinforce the integrity of the electoral process by ensuring that ballots are only issued once to eligible electors.

In several of the special procedures that are administered, specifically the registration certificate, the correction certificate and the oath of residence certificate, a written or verbal oath/declaration is required to be read and signed or acknowledged by the elector (and the attester where applicable). The following outlines the nature of the oath/declaration required under each of the special circumstances that were observed during the audit for this by-election.

- Registration certificate – Declaration by elector that they are qualified to vote (i.e. a Canadian citizen and 18 years of age or older on election day) and that they previously have not requested a ballot for the electoral event. For this by-election, an additional declaration was required by the elector confirming that they were a resident of the ED since September 21, 2016.
- Correction certificate (minor correction required on the List of Electors) – Verbal oath that they are qualified to vote and they previously have not requested a ballot for the electoral event.
- Oath of residence certificate (elector) – Oral warning to elector on qualifications of an elector and relevant offences and penalties as well as a written oath that the elector resides in the electoral district. For this by-election, an additional declaration was required by the elector confirming that they were a resident of the ED since September 21, 2016.
- Oath of residence certificate (attester) – Written oath that the attester knows the elector personally, the elector resides in the address noted on the certificate, the elector resides in the same polling division, they have not attested to the residence of another elector during the by-election and that their own residence has not been attested to at the by-election.

Our findings during this by-election are consistent with our findings reported in our report on the 2015 general election whereby errors were noted with the administration of special procedures. Elector interactions were observed where the oaths/declarations that would have been required under the circumstances were not administered. In most of these cases, this is based on election officials not administering the correct form in the first place. This is an important distinction as there were situations when the election official did not administer special procedures at all compared to other situations where special procedures were administered but they were wrong based on the circumstances. For example, in some cases a correction certificate would have been required but special procedures were not administered at all. In other cases, a certificate was initiated but it was the wrong one. The latter example indicates that an election official is aware that special procedures are required but lacks clarity on which form to administer under the circumstances.

During the observation of the administration of these oaths/declarations by the DRO, our audit noted circumstances above our reporting threshold where the DRO did not obtain the signature of the elector on the applicable certificate. As a result, the certificate did not include evidence that the elector had read and signed the applicable oath/declaration.

The reporting thresholds are consistent with our report on the 2015 general election. It is important to note that the sample testing for the by-election (with only one ED) is proportionately lower when compared to the sample observed at the 2015 general election. Accordingly, the relatively smaller sample population has a significant impact on the calculation of the error rate, even more so when determining the deviation percentage

relative to the administration of special procedures (15% of the sample for this by-election). The smaller sample population effectively results in a lower tolerance threshold and decreases the number of errors required to reach the reporting threshold.

4.3 Other observations

For key controls, a deviation of 2%–4.9% was considered an Other Observation. For secondary controls, a deviation of 11% or more was considered an Other Observation.

4.3.1 No other observations related to key controls

The results of our testing indicate that there was no deviation in the range of 2% to 4.9% for key controls.

4.3.2 Verbal oaths were not administered consistently and certificates were not always documented completely

As noted above, the administration of special procedures requires the initiation of a certificate based on the nature of the situation. The sections of the individual certificates require information pertinent to the situation and typically require the name and address of the elector and any other relevant information, the information related to the oath/declaration to be administered, a signature of the elector and attestor, as applicable, and the signature and date by the DRO.

Detailed testing results identified situations when certificates were not signed by the DRO and verbal oaths were not administered to the elector.

4.4 Assessment of administrative controls established by EC

The delivery of the by-election is highly dependent on the RO, in collaboration with the Recruitment Officer, to hire and train a temporary workforce of approximately 600 within a short time frame. The requirements of the Act result in complexities relative to the procedures they are expected to undertake (i.e. number of different acceptable forms of identification, number and nature of special procedures) throughout the day. To meet these requirements, Election Officials are expected to learn extensive technical information which includes detailed procedures that must be performed in a particular order and vary depending on the circumstances of the elector. Recognizing the need for Election Officials to learn and assimilate a complex set of procedures, EC has taken measures to strengthen the design and delivery of the training program.

As outlined in our approach section, the assessment of the administrative controls was based on results of our review of the training program materials and guidebooks, observation of the delivery of selected training sessions and interviews, and enquiries with EC staff and election officials, including DROs, PCs, REGOs, training officers and recruitment officers. We focussed our assessment on changes to the overall design and delivery of the training program since the 2015 General Election. Based on our discussions with EC and review of material, certain changes were made to the training presentations and to the guidebooks to improve clarity.

Based on the results of our interviews with REGOs, DROs and PCs, overall, feedback was positive on the content of the training programs and the format of how the training was delivered. Further, election officials found the availability of the guidebooks and other aids very useful in assuming their responsibilities and troubleshooting when they were unsure of how to proceed. Feedback was positive on the role of the central poll supervisor in consistently providing ongoing support. Opportunities were identified, however, to focus more time on the administration of the special procedures and the associated documentation as election officials did not feel fully equipped to deal with these scenarios after completing their in-class training program.

The following represent our findings related to the design of the training program and associated tools.

4.4.1 Opportunities were noted to enhance the training program to better equip election officials to perform their duties

In order to equip the temporary workforce hired to successfully serve electors, a formal training program is in place and delivered to each election official in advance of taking on their responsibilities. This is no small task; once the writ is dropped, the RO has the task of finding people who are qualified and available for the election period to fill key support functions – including the recruitment officer and training officers in supporting them in seeking out/screening potential candidates, training, assessing and swearing them in, and supporting them in the completion of their assigned functions during the advance and ordinary polls.

For this by-election, approximately 600 resources were recruited and trained to work at advance and ordinary polls, which includes a redundancy factor to allow flexibility for those who drop out in advance or do not show on the day of voting.

4.4.1.1 Format of the training program

As we noted in our report on the 2015 general election, the content and format for the training program was redesigned, focusing on learning techniques appropriate for adult learners, which included the support of videos to demonstrate scenarios that could be faced at the polling site and to supplement the information being delivered by the training officer. In addition, the training program materials were designed to ensure consistency in training delivery: a standard slide deck to be used by training officers with mandatory speaking notes in the delivery of the training, a training guide for training officers and pre-established exercises for participants to complete. Since the 42nd General Election, EC made some modifications to the training presentations as well as to format for delivering the training material to participants.

The training program for this by-election, consistent with the 42nd General Election, was designed so that there was a tailored training curriculum depending on the intended role at the polls and whether the duties would be performed at advance or ordinary polls. Content-specific in-class training courses were delivered by the training officers for the DRO/PC, REGO/Information Officer and the Central Poll Supervisor. For the by-election, the delivery of training was tailored to include CPSs at DRO/PC training sessions to serve as facilitators and help participants during the practice sessions of the curriculum. According to the training course notes prepared by EC in support of training officer materials, the intent of having CPSs attend the sessions was to give CPSs an opportunity to practice supervision (the role of a CPS at the polls), help participants during the practice component of the training sessions and to observe how well each learner completes certain tasks. The latter would help assess the participants' comprehension of their duties and functions and help to ensure that polls are staffed by qualified resources. It is our understanding that CPSs may not have been present at all DRO/PC training sessions.

For this by-election, training officers provided over 40 training sessions leading up to the advance and ordinary poll days. Based on the curriculum for the DRO/PC training sessions, the agenda covered 11 key topics and included approximately 1 hour of practice which covers a variety of tasks such as assessing identification, serving electors, reconciling the ballots, closing the polls, and counting the ballots. The curriculum is designed to provide a combination of methods of instruction such as lectures, discussion, walkthroughs and practice over a 3-hour period with limited time for one break. As per the design of the training program, training officers used a combination of visual aids (videos and posters), slide decks, the guidebooks and the actual templates/tools used at the polls to instruct participants.

Results of interviews with one training officer confirmed the challenge with delivering a significant amount of technical information in a limited timeframe. This is consistent with our observations during the audit of the 2015 general election. While the training curriculum was based on a duration of 3 hours (for DRO/PC session), we noted that the training calendars allotted 4 hours to the training for DRO/PCs. In some cases, training extended beyond 4 hours.

Based on the results of our interview with 20 Election Officials (combination of REGOs, DROs and PCs), overall, participants wished for more practice on the administration of special procedures.

4.4.1.2 Training curriculum

The training curriculum for each of the intended audiences covered the following topics.

- Background to the electoral process
- Introduction to the different roles at the polling site
- Introduction to reference guide and advance preparation for election day
- Specifics of the roles/responsibilities of the election official (depending on the audience)
- Practice scenarios (interspersed throughout the training session)
- Overview of the core values at the polling site
- Oaths (not applicable to REGO training)
- Rules regarding candidates and their representatives
- Counting ballots (not applicable to REGO training)
- Closing the polls
- Returning election material (not applicable to REGO training)

Certain topics are general and provide the necessary background material assuming limited exposure to the electoral process. The topics covered in these areas relied on videos to deliver key messages. The information provided allowed all participants to have a baseline understanding of the electoral process and expectations for polling days. Other topics were more specifically geared to the intended audience and provide technical information on the duties and tasks to be performed at the polls.

DRO/PC training

For the by-election, the organization of the training course was different from the 2015 general election. There was some limited background and the program went directly into the roles which had an overview of a lot of different concepts including: responsibility for ballots, eligibility of voters, certificates, tools (i.e. List of Electors).

After the background, there was a more detailed presentation on how to get ready for election day and a more detailed review of the List of Electors and Bingo Sheet and then exercises were presented. In the exercises, eligible identification was discussed; however, there had not been a detailed presentation of acceptable identification concepts to this point. In the second example, an exception was presented including a registration certificate. It appears that some critical concepts such as acceptable identification and exception processing was introduced as part of the examples and not as concepts on their own, with examples to reinforce the concepts presented.

After the break, some of the background/overall concepts were presented, including being neutral, protecting the voters information, official languages, accessibility, and good service.

After these background/overarching topics were presented, a more detailed presentation on acceptable forms of identification was presented (although the examples had come before the break). It does appear that more examples of acceptable/non-acceptable identification were presented in this section as compared to the 2015 general election. Subsequent to this, more exercises were completed but covering different topics such as the poll book, Bingo Sheet and oaths/forms.

Significant additional slides were added to the slide deck to cover counting the ballots and closing the polling station as compared to the 2015 general election training program.

No additional exercises were available to be completed at the end of the course to allow additional practice serving electors and completing forms with the support of the training officer.

Overall, the organization of the by-election training program appears less organized as compared to the 2015 general election. For the 2015 general election, the background topics were covered up front together and then the more specific duties, responsibilities were presented with examples and practice exercises to complete. The topics generally appeared to build on each other in logical manner – following the process to serve an elector. For the by-

election, the background topics were presented throughout the training program which made the program appear less fluid.

REGO training

The training curriculum for the REGO was similar as the training program for the DRO/PC with the exception of certain topics that were not applicable to the REGO and therefore were excluded (e.g. oaths, counting ballots and returning election material). For the most part, the time allocated to practice was consistent with the DRO/PC training program. Overall, training for the REGO was based on approximately 2-1/2 hours.

4.4.1.3 Tools and guidance

As part of the delivery of the training program, participants were provided with guidebooks to use as a reference when serving electors. In addition, the role of central poll supervisor exists to provide support and guidance to election officials when serving electors. As part of their duties, the central poll supervisor has been encouraged to conduct regular touch points with election officials responsible for greeting, registering and serving electors to address and resolve any questions or concerns in relation to the discharge of their responsibilities. In addition, expectations were set with the central poll supervisor to periodically conduct quality checks related to the documentation being completed by the election officials to identify and resolve any issues in a timely manner.

As noted above, given the amount of background content that had to be included in the in-class training, although the voting scenarios, the certificates, the poll book and the associated oaths were covered in training, insufficient time was able to be spent in-class to sufficiently cover these topics. Accordingly, the guidebooks were a useful resource for election officials in preparation for and on advance and ordinary poll days. Feedback from DROs, PCs and REGOs confirmed the usefulness of the guidebooks as a quick reference (if time permitted) if they were unsure of how to proceed. These support tools and functions mitigated, to some extent, the risk of inappropriate administration of the different voting scenarios.

5 Conclusion

We conclude that election officials properly exercised the powers conferred on them, and properly performed the duties and functions imposed on them under sections 143 to 149, 161 to 162 and 169 of the CEA, on all days of advance polling and on polling day for this by-election.

Overall, our testing results confirmed that regular electors (approximately 85% of electors) were processed appropriately. EC officials properly performed their duties and functions by verifying elector identification, issuing a ballot and documenting that electors cast their ballot. For the 15% of electors who were subject to special procedures, overall, the testing results confirmed that identification of the electors was verified appropriately, including the duties performed by the REGO; however, some of the special procedures were not performed consistently. Despite this, our audit noted that election officials consistently acted in the best interest of the electors and worked diligently to ensure the most positive election experience for all.

Our findings during this by-election are consistent with our findings reported in our report on the 2015 general election whereby errors were noted with the administration of special procedures. Elector interactions were observed where the oaths/declarations that would have been required under the circumstances were not administered. We identified situations when the election official did not administer special procedures at all compared to other situations where special procedures were administered but they were wrong based on the circumstances. While some election officials are aware that special procedures are required, there is a lack of clarity in terms of which certificates/forms to administer.

In addition, verbal oaths were not administered consistently and certificates were not always documented completely.

We noted changes to the design of the training curriculum that reinforce certain tasks and procedures. However, there are aspects of the training curriculum that can be streamlined to enhance the delivery of scenarios and the associated duties and functions that lead to the administration of special procedures.

In reaching our conclusion, we considered the following factors:

1. We were not charged with auditing the election results, our scope was limited and did not touch on the duties of all election officials and we did not assess all of the duties of the election officials we did observe. For example, we did not observe the counting of the ballots and recording and reporting of voting results.
2. We did not note any major findings relative to regular voters.
3. We noted one major finding relative to special procedures.

We did observe and have reported certain errors and mistakes in documentation and record-keeping relative to electors requiring special procedures and have reported those errors and mistakes that we believe to be significant as “other observations”.

While we believe that EC can and should streamline procedures, and modernize its voting processes and controls which would reduce the complexities of the voting processes and minimize the number of record-keeping errors, it is our understanding some changes may require legislative amendments. The issues that we observed and reported do not affect our underlying conclusion as set out above.

Appendices

Appendix A – Recommendations

Further to audit of the 2015 general election, we provided three primary recommendations. While some of those recommendations are still relevant, the recommendation below is in relation to the audit pertaining to this by-election only. It is suggested that the recommendation be fully evaluated and if a decision is made to proceed, it should be tested fully before full implementation.

Recommendation 1

We recommend that the CEO consider further enhancements to the existing training program to ensure that the necessary focus/time is given to the administration of the special procedures, specifically:

- a. Revisit the training curriculum (agenda) to improve the timing and delivery of technical content as it relates to the administration of special procedures.
- b. Ensure trained CPSs are in attendance at all DRO/PC and REGO/Information Officer training sessions to serve as facilitators to coach and guide participants in the conduct of mock electoral duties and functions, to observe the participants in the conduct of their tasks during their practice sessions and to provide support to the training officer and RO for assessing the competence of recruits.

EC response

In September 2016, the Chief Electoral Officer made several recommendations to Parliament on possible amendments to the Canada Elections Act that would allow, amongst other things, to simplify existing processes and improve compliance with special procedures. The review of these recommendations by Parliament is currently ongoing. Elections Canada is also studying different models to improve procedures at the polls, including the automation of certain elements of the electoral process. We will be reviewing and updating our training to reflect any changes made to the Canada Elections Act in that regard. In the meantime, we will take into account the recommendations made by PwC regarding training and ensure that Central Poll Supervisors (CPSs) be in attendance at all DRO/PC and REGO/Information Officer training sessions.

Appendix B – Audit criteria

Audit objective	Audit criteria	Audit subcriteria
Compliance		
<p>Assessment of whether DROs, PCs and REGOs have, on all days of advance polling and on polling day, properly exercised the powers conferred on them, and properly performed the duties and functions imposed on them, under sections 143 to 149, 161 to 162 and 169 of the CEA.</p>	<p>DROs, PCs and REGOs performed their duties as prescribed by sections 143 to 149, 161 to 162 and 169 of the CEA.</p>	<p>Election officials establish a person’s qualification to register and/or vote, e.g. obtain proof of identity and residence and elector’s signature on registration certificate declaring to being a Canadian citizen and at least 18 years old.</p>
		<p>REGOs and DROs identify situations when special procedures must be administered to qualify an elector.</p>
		<p>REGOs, DROs and PCs administer the prescribed procedures and forms in accordance with the CEA.</p>
		<p>DROs administer the required oaths.</p>
<p>Forms and related election documents are duly completed.</p>		
Administrative controls		
<p>Assessment of the degree to which the administrative controls established by EC, including manuals and training material, support election officials in the exercise of their powers and performance of their duties and functions in accordance with section 164.1 of the CEA.</p>	<p>Adequate tools, guidance and training are provided to election officials to ensure accurate and consistent exercise of power and duties in accordance with sections 143 to 149, 161 to 162 and 169 of the CEA.</p>	<p>Training courses have been designed to equip election officials to efficiently and effectively take on the duties and functions of their specific roles.</p>
		<p>Training officers have appropriate qualifications and training themselves to effectively deliver training to a large number of non-specialists in a very short time period.</p>
		<p>Training officers provide training consistently to election officials in accordance with the training expectations/program of EC.</p>
		<p>Election officials obtain the appropriate training programs and tools given their assigned responsibilities.</p>
		<p>Training officers conduct comprehension tests and use other tools to evaluate and assess whether election officials have the competencies and abilities to fulfill their duties.</p>
		<p>Mechanisms are in place for election officials to highlight any need for additional training or support prior to exercising their duties.</p>
		<p>Tools, guidance materials and functions have been established to support election officials in assuming the duties and functions of their specific roles.</p>

Appendix C – Glossary of terms

Term	Definition
C-23	Bill C-23
CEA	<i>Canada Elections Act</i>
CEO	Chief Electoral Officer
CSAE	Canadian Standard on Assurance Engagements 3001: <i>Direct Engagements</i>
DRO	Deputy returning officer
EC	Elections Canada
ED	Electoral district
PC	Poll clerk
PwC	PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP
REGO	Registration officer
RO	Returning officer