

# Grandfathers and Grandchildren in the Parliament of Canada

Building on an earlier study of Canadian parliamentarians who were part of the same nuclear families, the author explores grandfathers and grandchildren who served as parliamentarians.

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In an earlier article, I presented a comparative study of Canadian parliamentarians who lived under the same roof (spouses, parents–children, brothers).<sup>1</sup> In this study, I looked at grandfather–grandchild relationships in Parliament. When reporters ask Justin Trudeau how his father influenced his own political career, he tells them that they should not overlook the influence of his maternal grandfather, James Sinclair. Born in Scotland in 1908, Sinclair was a trained civil engineer. He served as a squadron leader in the Royal Canadian Air Force during the Second World War, and he was elected as the Liberal Member for Vancouver North in 1940 and then for Coast-Capilano in 1949. From 1949 to 1952 he was the Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Finance, and then from 1952 to 1957 he served as the Minister of Fisheries. His political career ended nine months later with the second election of John D. Diefenbaker's Conservative government. He died in 1984 at the age of 75.<sup>2</sup>

The younger Trudeau credits his people skills and the ease with which he works a crowd to his grandfather. It is a commonly held belief that grandparents can pass on physical features and even personality traits to their

grandchildren. Although I did not go that far with my research, I did look at whether there are any political constants to be found in the family ties in Canada's Parliament since 1867. I first looked at the nine three-generation families of parliamentarians (grandfathers, sons or sons-in-law, grandchildren) separately from the 23 two-generation families (grandfathers and grandchildren). I did not see any major differences between the two sub-groups, so I continued my analysis of the 32 families together.<sup>3</sup>

As expected, there is a generation gap between when grandfathers entered politics and when their grandchildren did. Most grandfathers began their political careers before 1935, and most grandchildren after 1935.

## Periods during which the 32 grandfathers and 33 grandchildren became parliamentarians, by historical period

First we will look at how many grandchildren were able to know their grandfathers. If a grandchild was born at least five years before the death of his or her grandfather, then the grandchild would have likely

| Period                                                  | Grandfathers | Grandchildren |
|---------------------------------------------------------|--------------|---------------|
| 1867-1896 Virtual back-to-back Conservative governments | 9            | 0             |
| 1896-1935 Alternating Liberal–Conservative governments  | 20           | 3             |
| 1935-1968 Virtual back-to-back Liberal governments      | 3            | 15            |
| 1968-2008 Alternating Liberal–Conservative governments  | 0            | 15            |

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had the opportunity to have some memory of him. This was the case for two-thirds of grandchildren (23 out of 33), although this does not appear to have had any influence on their political careers: 19 grandchildren

entered Parliament at a later age than did their grandfathers; only six grandchildren represented the same riding as their grandfathers; and 10 were affiliated with a different party.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, only four grandchildren experienced a political career of the same duration as their grandfather (with a gap of one or two years).<sup>5</sup>

Quebec is the province with the most grandfathers and grandchildren as parliamentarians, and more grandfathers and grandchildren were affiliated with the Liberals than with the Conservatives.

*32 grandfathers and 33 grandchildren by province and by party*

| Province      | Grandfathers | Grandchildren |
|---------------|--------------|---------------|
| Quebec        | 13           | 16            |
| Ontario       | 9            | 9             |
| Nova Scotia   | 4            | 4             |
| New Brunswick | 2            | 1             |
| P.E.I.        | 1            | 1             |
| Manitoba      | 1            | 1             |
| Saskatchewan  | 1            | —             |
| B.C.          | 1            | 1             |

| Party              | Grandfathers | Grandchildren |
|--------------------|--------------|---------------|
| Liberal Party      | 20           | 17            |
| Conservative Party | 10           | 15            |
| Unionist           | 2            | -             |
| NDP                | -            | 1             |

The main finding is that there is less continuity between the political careers of parliamentarian grandfathers and their grandchildren than within nuclear families (spouses, parents–children, brothers) in a number of respects: age at entry into Parliament, representation of the same riding or senatorial district, or political affiliation. However, this does not in any way detract from Justin Trudeau’s opinion about how much he was influenced by his grandfather, James Sinclair.

**Nine families with three generations of parliamentarians**

**Parliamentarian / Chamber / Province or Territory / Riding or Senatorial Division / Party / Start of Term (Age)**

1. Beaubien, Louis (d.1915), Commons, Quebec, Hochelaga, Conservative, 1872 (35 years)

2. Beaubien, Charles-Philippe, Senate, Quebec, Montarville, Conservative, 1915

3. Beaubien, Louis-Philippe (b.1903), Senate, Quebec, Bedford, Conservative, 1960 (57 years)

1. Belleau, Isidore-Noël (d.1936), Commons, Quebec, Lévis, Conservative, 1883 (35 years)

2. Fortin, Émile, Commons, Quebec, Lévis, Conservative, 1930

3. Fortin, Louis (b.1920), Commons, Quebec, Montmagny-L’Islet, Conservative, 1958 (38 years)

1. David, Laurent-Olivier (d.1926), Senate, Quebec, Mille Isles, Liberal, 1903 (63 years)

2. David, Louis-Athanase, Senate, Quebec, Saurel, Liberal, 1940

3. David, Paul (b.1919), Senate, Quebec, Bedford, Conservative, 1985 (66 years)

1. Harrison, John Hornby (d.1964), Commons, Saskatchewan, Meadow Lake, Liberal, 1949 (41 years)

2. Regan, Gerald Augustine, Commons, Nova Scotia, Halifax, Liberal, 1963

3. Regan, Geoff (b. 1959), Commons, Nova Scotia, Halifax West, Liberal, 1993 (34 years)

1. Mercier, Honoré (d.1894), Commons, Quebec, Rouville, Liberal, 1872 (32 years)

2. Gouin, Jean Lomer, Commons, Quebec, Laurier-Outremont, Liberal, 1921 (60 years)

3. Gouin, Léon Mercier (b.1891), Senate, Quebec, De Salaberry, Liberal, 1940 (49 years)

1. Pouliot, Jean-Baptiste (d.1888), Commons, Quebec, Témiscouata, Liberal, 1874 (58 years)

2. Pouliot, Charles-Eugène, Commons, Quebec, Témiscouata, Liberal, 1896

3. Pouliot, Jean-François (b.1890), Commons, Quebec, Témiscouata, Liberal, 1924 (34 years)

1. Power, William (d.1920), Commons, Quebec, Quebec West, Liberal, 1902 (53 years)

2. Power, Charles Gavan, Commons, Quebec, Quebec South, Liberal, 1917

3. Power, Francis Gavan (b.1918), Commons, Quebec, Quebec South, Liberal, 1955 (37 years)

1. Rowell, Newton Wesley (d.1941), Commons, Ontario, Durham, Unionist, 1917 (50 years)

2. Jackman, Harry Rutherford, Commons, Ontario, Rosedale, National Government (Conservative), 1940

3. Nancy Ruth (b.1942), Senate, Ontario, Cluny, Conservative, 2005, (63 years)

1. Sinclair, James (d.1984), Commons, British Columbia, Vancouver North, Liberal, 1940 (32 years).

2. Trudeau, Pierre Elliott, Commons, Quebec, Mount Royal, Liberal, 1965

3. Trudeau, Justin (b.1971), Commons, Quebec, Papineau, Liberal, 2008 (37 years)

### **23 families with two generations of parliamentarians**

#### **Parliamentarian / Chamber / Province or Territory / Riding or Senatorial Division / Party / Start of Term (Age)**

1. Bell, Thomas (d.1945), Commons, New Brunswick, St. John-Albert, Conservative, 1925 (62 years)

3. Bell, Thomas Miller (b.1923), Commons, New Brunswick, St. John-Albert, Conservative, 1953 (30 years)

1. Blair, Andrew George (d. 1907), Commons, New Brunswick, Sunbury-Queen's, Liberal, 1896 (52 years)

3. Brewin, Francis Andrew (b. 1907), Commons, Ontario, Greenwood, NDP, 1962 (55 years)

1. Carroll, William F. (d. 1964), Commons, Nova Scotia, Cape Breton South, Liberal, 1911 (34 years)

3. Murphy, John (b.1937), Commons, Nova Scotia, Annapolis Valley-Hants, Liberal, 1993 (56 years)

1. Chaplin, James Dew (d.1937), Commons, Ontario, Lincoln, Unionist, 1917 (54 years)

3. Anderson, Edna (b.1922), Commons, Ontario, Simcoe Centre, Conservative, 1988 (66 years)

1. Cannon, Lucien (d.1950), Commons, Quebec, Dorchester, Liberal, 1917 (30 years)

1. Power, Charles Gavan (d.1968), Commons, Quebec, Quebec South, Liberal, 1917 (29 years)

3. Cannon, Lawrence (b.1947), Commons, Quebec, Pontiac, Conservative, 2006 (59 years)

1. Choquette, Philippe-Auguste (d. 1948), Commons, Quebec, Montmagny, Liberal, 1887 (33 years)

3. Choquette, Auguste, (b. 1932), Commons, Quebec, Lotbinière, Liberal, 1963 (31 years)

1. Comeau, Joseph Willie (d.1966), Senate, Nova Scotia, Clare, Liberal, 1948 (72 years)

3. Thibault, Robert (b.1959), Commons, Nova Scotia, West Nova, Liberal, 2000 (41 years)

1. Fitzpatrick, Charles (d.1942), Commons, Quebec County, Quebec, Liberal, 1896 (45 years).

3. Cannon, Charles-Arthur Dumoulin (b.1905), Commons, Quebec, Îles-de-la-Madeleine, Liberal, 1949 (44 years)

1. Gauthier, Louis-Philippe (d.1946), Commons, Quebec, Gaspé, Conservative, 1911 (35 years)

3. Gauthier, Jean-Robert (b.1929), Commons, Ontario, Ottawa East, Liberal, 1972 (43 years)

1. Hughes, James Joseph (d.1941), Commons, Prince Edward Island, Kings, Liberal, 1900 (44 years)

3. Rossiter, Eileen (b.1929), Senate, Prince Edward Island, Prince Edward Island, Conservative, 1986 (57 years)

1. Le Vesconte, Isaac (d.1879), Commons, Nova Scotia, Richmond, Conservative, 1869 (47 years)

3. MacDougall, Isaac Duncan (b.1897), Commons, Nova Scotia, Inverness, Conservative, 1925 (28 years)

1. Lynch-Staunton, George (d.1940), Senate, Ontario, Hamilton, Conservative, 1917 (59 years)

3. Lynch-Staunton, John (b.1930), Senate, Quebec, Granville, Conservative, 1990 (60 years)

1. McLean, Murdo Young (d. 1916), Commons, Ontario, Huron South, Liberal, 1908 (60 years)

3. McLean, Andrew Young (b. 1909), Commons, Ontario, Huron Perth, Liberal, 1949 (40 years)

1. McCool, Charles-Arthur (d.1926), Commons, Ontario, Nipissing, Liberal, 1900 (47 years)

3. McGee, Frank Charles (b.1926), Commons, Ontario, York-Scarborough, Conservative, 1957 (31 years)

1. Meighen, Arthur (d.1960), Commons, Manitoba, Portage la Prairie, Conservative, 1908 (34 years)

3. Meighen, Michael A. (b.1939), Senate, Ontario, St. Marys, Conservative, 1990 (51 years)

1. Mercier, Honoré (d.1894), Commons, Quebec, Rouville, Liberal, 1872 (32 years)

3. Fauteux, Gaspard (b.1898), Commons, Quebec, St. Mary, Liberal, 1942 (44 years)

1. Monteith, Andrew (d.1896), Commons, Ontario, Perth North, Conservative, 1874 (51 years)

3. Monteith, Jay Waldo (b.1903), Commons, Ontario, Perth, Conservative, 1953 (50 years)

1. Mulock, William (d.1944), Commons, Ontario, North York, Liberal, 1882 (39 years)

3. Mulock, William Pate (b.1897), Commons, Ontario, North York, Liberal, 1934 (37 years)

1. Osler, Edmund Boyd (d.1924), Commons, Ontario, Toronto West, Conservative, 1896 (51 years)

3. Osler, Edmund Boyd (b.1919), Commons, Manitoba, Winnipeg South Centre, Liberal, 1968 (49 years)

1. Proulx, Edmond, Communes (d.1956), Ontario, Prescott, Liberal, 1904 (29 years)

3. Proulx, Marcel (b.1946), Commons, Quebec, Hull-Aylmer, Liberal, 1999 (53 years)

1. Roberge, Eusèbe (d.1957), Commons, Quebec, Mégantic, Liberal, 1922 (48 years)

3. Roberge, Fernand (b.1940), Senate, Quebec, Saurel, Conservative, 1993 (53 years)

1. Tobin, Edmund William (d.1938), Commons, Quebec, Richmond-Wolfe, Liberal, 1900 (35 years)

3. Asselin, Edmund Tobin (b.1920), Commons, Quebec, Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, Liberal, 1962 (42 years)

3. Asselin, Joseph Patrick Tobin (b.1930), Commons, Quebec, Richmond-Wolfe, Liberal, 1963 (33 years)

1. Tupper, Charles Hibbert (d. 1927), Commons, Nova Scotia, Pictou, Conservative, 1882 (27 years)

3. Merritt, Charles Cecil Ingersoll (b. 1908), Commons, British Columbia, Vancouver-Burrard, Conservative, 1945 (37 years)

## Notes

- 1 "Elementary Kinship Structures in Parliament Since 1867," *Canadian Parliamentary Review*, Vol. 34, no. 3, autumn 2011, pp. 25–28. I take this opportunity to correct an inexplicable omission concerning Liberal Senator Cairine Reay Wilson (1930), daughter of Liberal Senator Robert Mackay (1901) and the first woman named to the Senate.
- 2 Taken from PARLINFO on the Parliament of Canada website.
- 3 One grandfather (Edmund William Tobin) had two parliamentarian grandsons, and one grandson (Lawrence Cannon) had two parliamentarian grandfathers. This means that there were 32 grandchildren and 33 grandfathers in 32 families.
- 4 We considered Unionist Chaplin to be Conservative, therefore in the same party as his granddaughter Edna Anderson.
- 5 Louis Fortin, Charles-Arthur Dumoulin Cannon, Andrew McLean Young and Frank Charles McGee. In addition, two members are still working for an indefinite time: Geoff Regan, the newly elected Speaker of the House of Commons, and Justin Trudeau, the new prime minister.