Creation of a Debates Commission for the 2019 Leaders’ Debates

Objectives
- Open and transparent organization of leaders’ debates in the public interest
- Phased approach: 2019 experience to inform creation of a permanent entity post-2019

Debates Commission

Selection Criteria
- One decision maker:
  - Eminent Canadian, politically impartial, and well respected across the Canadian population
  - Experience sought in broadcasting/journalism; leaders’ debates; and/or building relationships across political parties

Selection Criteria
- Seven members nominated by Commissioner:
  - Reflect regional representation, gender balance, and Canadian diversity
  - Have experience in journalism, politics, broadcasting, or accessibility
  - Aim to include statespersons (e.g. former politicians from across the political spectrum) to bring experience and gravitas

Rationale
- Government and Parliamentary consultations revealed that:
  - Leaders’ debates make an essential contribution to the health of Canadian democracy
  - There is a need to bring the public interest squarely into debate negotiations
  - There is broad support for and value in the creation of a Debates Commission

Mandate
- Organize two leaders’ debates for the 2019 election (one in each official language)
- Issue a call for proposals with clear evaluation criteria to produce leaders’ debates
- Consider the interests of Canadians, including minority groups
- Provide free of charge the feed for debates it organizes
- Work to ensure broad debate distribution across multiple platforms
- Report to Parliament outlining findings, lessons learned and recommendations
- Work to negotiate terms of debates with political parties

Phase 1
- Fall 2018: Appointment of Commissioner
- Spring 2019: Commission fully operational
- Sept/Oct 2019: Leaders’ Debates for 43rd General Election
- March 2020: Report to Parliament

Policy development to inform a “built-to-last” Debates Commission

Phase 2
- Winter 2020: Government brings forward approach for a permanent Debates Commission

Debates Commissioner:
- Engages with Canadians, stakeholders, media and political parties
- Convenes meetings with Advisory Board
- Develops approach to ensuring a high quality of debates
- Issues a call for proposals for production of debates and selects winning bid
- Makes Canadians aware of debates
- Ensures broad media distribution

Advisory Board

Eminent Canadian, politically impartial, and well respected across the Canadian population
Experience sought in broadcasting/journalism; leaders’ debates; and/or building relationships across political parties

Reflect regional representation, gender balance, and Canadian diversity
Have experience in journalism, politics, broadcasting, or accessibility
Aim to include statespersons (e.g. former politicians from across the political spectrum) to bring experience and gravitas