

CHILE

Date of Elections: March 2, 1969

Characteristics of Parliament

The Chilean National Congress consists of 2 Chambers:

— The Senate, whose 50 members are elected for 8 years, 34 being renewable every 4 years (alternately in half the 10 constituencies);

— The Chamber of Deputies, comprising 150 members elected for 4 years in a ratio of 1 per 30,000 inhabitants.

On March 2, 1969, upon the normal expiry of the previous legislature, citizens went to the polls to renew the entire Chamber of Deputies — whose number had just been increased from 147 to 150 — and to fill the 20 senatorial seats, which had become vacant at the end of their holders' terms of office, together with 5 newly created seats resulting from the establishment of a 10th electoral constituency.

Electoral System

All citizens of both sexes, 21 years of age or over, who are able to read and write and have registered on the electoral rolls — which are revised annually and also before all legislative elections — with the exception of the mentally ill and persons sentenced to terms of imprisonment, are entitled to vote. The exercise of the right to vote is a duty, and failure to do so, except for legitimate reasons, is punishable by a fine.

Any citizen who meets the conditions required to be an elector and who has never been sentenced to prison is eligible for election

to the Chamber of Deputies, apart, however, from State Ministers, chief provincial executives and governors, justices of supreme courts and officials of the District Attorney's Office, as well as agents and administrators of companies which are under contract to the State. To stand for a Senate seat, a candidate must also have completed his 35th year.

The mandates of deputy and senator are incompatible with any public employment paid from Government or municipal funds, apart from the teaching profession.

All candidatures must be presented either by the central body of a political party or by 2,000 electors for a deputy or 5,000 electors for a senator.

In each constituency, members of both Houses are elected on the party-list system, without alliances or vote-splitting but with preferential vote.

Each voter, who receives a single ballot-paper containing all the lists submitted in the constituency, has 1 vote. This he casts by making a specific mark opposite the name of the candidate he supports on the list of his choosing.

The number of votes obtained by each list is calculated by adding the number of votes cast for its candidates. Seats are then distributed proportionally between the lists according to the d'Hondt method. Should a list thus prove to be entitled to more seats than the number of candidates it submitted, the surplus seats are allocated to the other lists according to the same method.

The seats obtained in each case are then attributed to the candidates who have received most preferential votes on their list.

General Political Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

The results of this poll were awaited with considerable interest as they would provide an indication of the relative strength of political currents in advance of the presidential elections scheduled for 1970.

There was moreover the question whether President Eduardo Frei's Christian Democratic Party would retain the large majority in Congress that it had won in 1965 by virtue of the enthusiasm generated at the time by the "revolution in liberty" platform.

Several other political parties contested the elections: the right-wing Nationalist Party, which grew out of the 1967 alliance between the Conservative and Liberal Parties and which supported Mr. Jorge Alessandri, Mr. Frei's predecessor as President; the Radical Party, in the Centre, which had been the main opposition party in the Chamber since the 1965 elections; the Communist Party; the Socialist Party, of which a breakaway group had formed the Popular Socialist Union; and the Social Democratic Party, comprising dissident Christian Democrats.

The results, showing a higher level of abstentions, reflected serious losses for the Christian Democratic Party, which was abandoned by some of its 1965 supporters who moved towards the Right and by a smaller number who moved to the Left.

The Nationalist Party made a big comeback, particularly in the capital, whereas the gains made by the Socialists and Communists were rather in terms of votes than in the number of seats.

In the Senate, however, the Christian Democratic Party, with only 2 seats previously, managed to make up somewhat for the losses sustained in the Chamber of Deputies, while the Communist Party substantially improved its position and could have obtained an additional seat if, in 1 of the constituencies, it had not forfeited the third seat to which it was entitled through not having submitted enough candidates.

Statistics

1. *Results of the Elections and Distribution of Seats in the Chamber of Deputies*

Number of registered voters.	3,244,892
Voters.	2,388,016 (73.6 %)
Void ballot papers.	62,503
Valid votes.	2,325,513
Blank ballot papers.	38,802
Valid votes cast for candidates.	2,286,711

Political Group	Votes obtained	%	Number of Seats in the Chamber of Deputies	Number of Seats in the Previous Legis- lature
Christian Democratic Party	710,064	31.1	55	82
Nationalist Party	477,112	20.9	34	9*
Communist Party	380,721	16.6	22	18
Radical Party.	307,126	13.4	24	20
Socialist Party.	292,954	12.8	15	15
Popular Socialist Union	51,629	2.3	—	—
National Democratic Party	44,564	1.9	—	—
Social Democratic Party	20,485	0.9	—	—
Independents	2,056	0.1	—	—
			150	147

* Liberal Party, 6 seats; Conservative Party, 3 seats

2. *Distribution of Seats in the Senate*

Political Group	Seats obtained March 2	Number of Seats in the Senate	Number of Seats in the Previous Legis- lature
Christian Democratic Party	11	23	13
Communist Party	3	9	5
Radical Party.	4	6	1)
Nationalist Party	4	5	7*
Socialist Party.	3	5	7
National Democratic Party			1
Independents			3
		50	45

* Liberal Party, 5 seats; Conservative Party, 2 seats.