

## COLOMBIA

**Date of Elections:** March 17 and 18, 1968

### **Characteristics of Parliament:**

The Colombian Parliament consists of the House of Representatives, comprising 204 members elected for 2 years, and the Senate, with 106 senators elected for 4 years.

Colombian citizens went to the polls on March 17 and 18 to renew the entire House of Representatives which had reached the end of its legislature.

### **Electoral System:**

Deputies and senators are elected in each department on a closed-list, proportional representation system.

However, under the terms of an amendment to the 1889 Constitution approved by referendum on December 1, 1957, the seats in both Houses, like all elective offices in the country, are shared on a half-and-half basis between the two traditional parties: Conservatives and Liberals.

Furthermore, if one of the two political parties submits two or more lists in an electoral district in which there are more than two seats to be filled, the latter are distributed as follows:

- The total votes obtained by the concurrent lists of each traditional party are divided by the number of seats allotted to the party according to the Constitution.
- Lists whose total votes do not equal at least half this electoral quotient are eliminated and their votes are added to those of the party which has already obtained the largest number of votes.

- By dividing the total number of votes for each remaining list by the above-mentioned quotient, the number of candidates elected on each list is then calculated. Any remaining seat or seats are attributed to the list which has the largest residue of votes as a result of this division.

Citizens of both sexes aged at least 21, whose names appear on the electoral register of their commune and who enjoy their civil and political rights, are eligible to vote. However, members of the armed forces on active service and members of the national police force are barred from participating in the poll.

All registered electors who are at least 25 years of age are eligible for election to the Lower House and all electors at least 30 years of age to the Senate.

Candidatures must be sponsored by one of the parties or their factions.

### **General Political Considerations and Conduct of the Elections:**

As mentioned above, the constitutional amendment of December 1957 instituted a system of distribution of elective offices between the Conservative and Liberal Parties.

Opposition lists thereupon started to be formed within the two official parties combined as a National Government Front. Elections thus became an expression of opposition between the factions within the Conservatives and Liberals — who submitted competitive lists — rather than between the two major parties themselves.

The Opposition to the official Conservative and Liberal Parties includes a Liberal Party called Liberal Revolutionary Movement (MRL), the Alvarista Conservative Party, the National Popular Alliance (ANAPO), founded by the former dictator, Rojas Pinilla, and the Lauro-Rojistas.

The defection, in August 1967, of most MRL supporters to the official Liberal Party enabled the Government lists to win more

than two-thirds of the seats in the House of Representatives, i.e. 142 seats instead of the 99 obtained in the March 1965 elections.

Statistics:

Number of registered electors. . . . .	7,099,575
Voters. . . . .	2,431,643*
Blank or void ballot papers. . . . .	4,423
Valid votes. . . . .	2,427,219

Political Group	Votes obtained	Number of Seats in the House of Representatives
<i>Government Lists</i>		
Government Liberal Party   I National	1,175,735	94
Unionist Conservative Party   Front	579,676	48
	1,755,411	142
<i>Opposition Lists</i>		
ANAPO (Conservative). . . . .	309,717	62
ANAPO (Liberal). . . . .	75,350	
Alvarista Party. . . . .	188,959	
Liberal Revolutionary Movement.	47,487	
Lauro-Rojistas . . . . .	50,295	
	671,808	204

\* These figures are provision!.