

DENMARK

Date of Elections: Jannary 31, 1968

Characteristics of Parliament:

Elections were held for the renewal of the *Folketing*, the single House of the Danish Parliament. The latter comprises 179 seats, 4 of which are set aside for the representatives of Greenland and the Faroe Islands who are elected under a special procedure in a separate ballot. Although the duration of a Legislature is normally four years, the previous House was dissolved after only thirteen months.

Electoral System:

In metropolitan Denmark, the electoral procedure combines the advantages of the party-list system and the uninominal ballot while applying an ingenious method of ensuring the proportional representation of political forces as faithfully as possible. Its main characteristics are as follows:

1. Metropolitan Denmark is divided into three zones (Great Copenhagen, Jutland, Islands), cut up into 23 electoral areas which are further sub-divided into 124 constituencies.

2. The parties can choose between three ways of designating their candidates: a single candidate per constituency; several candidates per constituency with the indication of an order of priority; or a single candidate per constituency with the indication of an order of priority by constituency. In this way, they receive both personal and party votes. The elector can vote either for a candidate or for a party, but he can impose his own order of preference on the latter. He can vote for any one of the candidates

or parties in his area and is therefore not bound by the lists drawn up for his particular constituency.

3. To ensure that Parliament reflects as closely as possible the composition of the electorate, the seats are filled in two stages.

First, 135 deputies are elected in the light of the results obtained by each party in the electoral area, the seats being distributed according to the Saint-Lague method. Then, 40 supplementary seats are distributed in each of the three zones among the parties which

- (a) have won at least one area seat, or
- (b) have obtained, in two out of the three zones, at least as many votes as the average number of valid votes cast in the zone per area seat, or
- (c) have obtained at least 2 per cent of all valid votes in the country as a whole.

A fictitious distribution of the 175 seats then takes place among the parties fulfilling the above conditions, in proportion to the total number of votes cast for these parties in all parts of the country.

From the number of seats thus allotted to each party, the number of area seats already obtained in each case is deducted. The figure thus arrived at is the number of supplementary seats due to the party.

The right to vote — and eligibility for election — is held by every Danish subject of both sexes of 21 years of age and over who is permanently domiciled in Denmark and is enrolled in the annual electoral lists.

General Political Considerations and Conduct of the Elections:

On November 2, 1966, Mr. Krag, leader of the Social Democratic Party and head of a minority Government since September 1964, decided to dissolve the Folketing. However, the elections which took place twenty days later did not fulfil the expectations of the

Danish Prime Minister, whose party lost seven seats. Only the Socialist People's Party, set up a few years earlier by a dissident branch of the Communist Party and led by Mr. Larsen, recorded substantial gains and doubled the number of its seats in Parliament. Thanks to the support of its twenty representatives, Mr. Krag was able to form a new Socialist Cabinet which governed the country for fourteen months.

On December 15, 1967, however, six members of Mr. Larsen's party refused to support the Prime Minister's austerity measures when these, which were designed to stabilize the country's economy after the devaluation of the pound sterling and the Danish crown, were submitted to the Folketing for approval.

When the Government did not obtain a majority, Mr. Krag once again dissolved the Chamber, and it was thus that Danish electors went to the polls for the third time in four years.

There was an exceptionally high participation in the poll (89.45%). The principal consequences were the elimination of one of the groups — the Liberal Centre Party — which had previously been represented in the Folketing by four deputies, and the defeat of the Left, constituted by the Social Democratic Party and the Socialist People's Party. On the other hand, the three large centre and conservative groupings — the Liberal Democratic Party (VENSTRE), the Conservative Party and the Radical Liberal Party — obtained 98 seats, thus winning a majority and making possible the constitution of a stable, non-Socialist Government, which was formed a few days later under the premiership of Mr. Baunsgaard (Radical Liberal).

Statistics:

Number of registered voters	3,208,646
Voters	2,864,805 (89.45%)
Blank or void ballot papers	10,158
Valid votes	2,854,647

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Political Group	Votes obtained	%	Number of Seats in the Folketing
Social Democratic Party	974,833	34.2	62 (— 7)
Conservative Party.	581,051	20.4	37 (+ 3)
Liberal Democratic Party	530,167	18.6	34 (- 1)
Radical Liberal Party	427,324	15.0	27 (+14)
Socialist People's Party	174,553	6.1	11 (- 3)*
Left-Socialist Party.	57,184	2.0	4 (- 2)*
Liberal Centre Party.	37,407	1.3	- (- 4)
Communist Party.	29,706	1.0	— —
Single-Tax Party (Georgists) . . .	21,124	0.7	— —
Independent Party.	14,360	0.5	— —
Slesvig Party.	6,831	0.2	— —
			175**

* Taking into account the scission which occurred on December 15, 1967, within the Socialist People's Party.

** The Faroe Islands and Greenland have two representatives apiece who should be added to the 175 deputies.