

IRELAND

Dates of Elections: 18 February 1982 (*Ddil Eireann*)
12 August 1981 and 21 April 1982 (*Seanad Eireann*)

Purpose of Elections

Ddil Eireann

Elections were held to renew all the seats of the House of Representatives (*Ddil Eireann*) following the premature dissolution of this body on 27 January 1982. *Ddil* elections were previously held on 11 June 1981.

Seanad Eireann

According to Article 18(8) of the Constitution, a general renewal of the Senate (*Seanad*) must take place not later than 90 days after a dissolution of the *Ddil*. In view of the *Ddil* dissolutions of May 1981 and January 1982, *Seanad* renewals were effected on the dates indicated above.

Characteristics of Parliament

The bicameral Parliament of Ireland, the *Oireachtas*, is composed of a House of Representatives (*Ddil Eireann*) and a Senate (*Seanad Eireann*).

The House of Representatives has 166 members elected for a maximum of 5 years.

The Senate is composed of 60 members, of whom:

- (a) 11 are nominated by the *Taoiseach* (Prime Minister);
- (b) 3 are elected by the National University of Ireland;
- (c) 3 are elected by the University of Dublin;
- (d) 43 are elected from five panels of candidates, consisting of persons having knowledge of and practical experience in, respectively, culture and education, agriculture, labour, industry and commerce, public administration and social services.

Not more than 11 and not less than 5 members of the Senate are elected from any one panel.

Electoral System

Every citizen who is not disqualified by law and who has reached the age of 18 has the right to vote in elections to the *Ddil* in the constituency in which he ordinarily resides.

Registers of electors are revised annually at the county or county borough level. Voting is not compulsory. Members of the armed and police forces are authorized to vote by post.

As regards elections for the Senate, the following persons may vote:

- (a) For the 3 representatives of the National University of Ireland, every citizen over 18 years of age who has received a degree from the University;

- (b) For the 3 representatives of the University of Dublin, every citizen over 18 years of age who has received either a degree or a foundation scholarship from the University or, if a woman, has obtained a non-foundation scholarship;
- (c) For the 43 other Senators, members of the new *DM*, the outgoing Senate and every council of a county or county borough.

Electoral rolls for Senate elections are revised before each election.

Citizens who fulfil the conditions required of electors to the *DM* are entitled to stand for election to this House, with the exception of the insane, undischarged bankrupts, persons undergoing imprisonment with hard labour for at least six months or penal servitude for any term imposed by a court of competent jurisdiction, and persons convicted of corrupt electoral practices. Members of the armed and police forces, civil servants (unless excepted), the President of the Republic, the Comptroller and Auditor General and all judges are excluded from membership while holding these posts.

For election to the *DM*, a persons may nominate himself or may, with his consent, be nominated by another person (who is registered as a *Dail* elector in the same constituency), as proposer. Nominations must be made within nine days after the issue of the writ for election and be accompanied by a deposit of £ 100, which is reimbursed if the candidate is elected or gains at least one-third of the electoral quota.

Candidates for the Senate must be eligible to become members of the *DM* and, in addition:

- (a) Be nominated by 10 registered electors of the University concerned, if they are standing for a University seat;
- (b) Be nominated by either 4 members of Parliament or a registered nominating body, if they are standing as panel members.

Members of the *DM* are elected in a ratio of 3, 4 or 5 to each of the 41 electoral constituencies, by proportional representation under the single transferable vote system.

According to this system, each voter receives a ballot paper containing the names of all the candidates in his constituency. He votes for one of these by writing the figure 1 opposite the name of his choice; he is then at liberty to indicate an order of preference for the other candidates by adding the figures 2, 3, 4, etc., against their names.

At the opening of the count, the ballot papers are sorted according to the first preferences recorded. The total number of valid papers is then computed, and from that figure the electoral quota is calculated through division by the number of seats to be filled, plus one. Candidates who obtain a number of first preferences equal to, or greater than, this quota on the first count are immediately declared elected. If, however, no candidate has reached the quota, the candidate who received the lowest number of votes is eliminated and his votes are transferred to the candidate for whom a second preference is recorded. If a candidate receives more than the quota required for election, his remaining votes are transferred to the remaining candidates in accordance with the subsequent preferences expressed by the electors. When the number of remaining candidates neither elected nor eliminated equals the number of vacancies to be filled, those candidates are declared elected, although they may not have reached the quota.

Voting for the Senate, which is by secret postal ballot, is also conducted according to the single transferable vote system.

The Speaker is automatically deemed to have been re-elected to the *Ddil* without having to go through the electoral process.

Vacancies which occur between general elections are filled through by-elections, except that the Prime Minister nominates a person to fill a vacant seat formerly held by a nominated Senator.

General Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

Ddil Eireann

General elections for the *Ddil* were previously held only eight months before—on 11 June 1981. On 27 January 1982, the coalition centre-left Government of Prime Minister Garret FitzGerald (*Fine Gael*) was defeated in Parliament by a single vote on a budget issue (tax increases on certain consumer goods). Mr. FitzGerald then resigned and the *Ddil* was prematurely dissolved.

During the three-week campaign, the outgoing Prime Minister called for the drastic austere budget proposals that he insisted were necessary to avert a financial crisis, particularly a mounting foreign debt. Mr. Charles Haughey, leader of *Fianna Fail* and former Prime Minister, emphasized, among other things, the country's high unemployment rate. Apart from the economic issues, the campaign focused some attention on the policies of the major parties to British-ruled Northern Ireland.

On polling day, *Fianna Fail* edged out the *Fine Gael*-Labour Party coalition, gaining 81 seats to the latter's combined total of 78 (63 and 15). In this context of no major party obtaining an absolute parliamentary majority (84 seats), formation of a Government again entailed several weeks of negotiations with the seven remaining elected members. On 9 March, the newly-elected Parliament met and chose Mr. Haughey as Prime Minister, by 86 votes to 79. His 16-man Cabinet was announced the same day.

Seanad Eireann

August 1981: After polling by postal ballot for the various panels and university seats, votes were counted from 12 to 15 August, and the full membership of the Senate was completed on 19 August by the 11 nominees of the Prime Minister (then Mr. G. FitzGerald). A total of 14 outgoing Senators lost their seats and 20 individuals entered the Senate for the first time. Of the nominated Senators, six were members of *Fine Gael*, four were from Labour and one was an independent.

April 1982: The poll for all elective seats closed on 21 April.

Statistics

1. Results of the 18 February 1982 Elections and Distribution of Seats in the Dail Eireann

Number of registered electors	\	2,275,450				
Voters		1,679,500	(73.8%)			
Blank or void ballot papers		14,367				
Valid votes.		1,665,133				
Political Group	Number of Candidates	First Preference Votes obtained		Number of Seats	Number of Seats held at Dissolution	Number of Seats won at Previous Election
<i>Fianna Fail.</i>	131	786,951	47.26	81	78	78
<i>Fine Gael.</i>	113	621,088	37.30	63	65	65
Labour Party.	41	151,875	9.12	15	15	15
<i>Sinn Fein</i> the Workers' Party.	14	36,263	2.18			
Irish Republican Socialist Party.	6	2,716	0.16			
Communist Party of Ireland	2	462	0.03			
Independents.	58	65,778	3.95			7
				166	165*	166

* There was one vacancy at the time of dissolution.

Ireland

*2. Distribution of Seats in the Seanad Eireann
following the August 1981 Renewal*

Political Group	Number of Seats
<i>Fine Gael.</i> .	26
<i>Fianna Fail.</i> .	19
Labour Party	10
Independents	5

3. Distribution of Members of Parliament according to Sex

	<i>Ddil</i>	<i>Seanad</i>
Men. .	158	52
Women	166	60