

IRELAND

Dates of Elections: 24 November 1982 (*DM Eireann*)
31 January 1983 (*Seanad Eireann*)

Purpose of Elections

DM Eireann

Elections were held to renew all the seats of the House of Representatives (*DM Eireann*) following the premature dissolution of this body on 4 November 1982. *DM* elections were previously held on 18 February 1982.

Seanad Eireann

Under Article 18(8) of the Constitution, a general election for the Senate (*Seanad*) must take place not later than 90 days after a dissolution of the *DM*. Following the *DM* dissolution of November 1982, the *Seanad* general election took place on 31 January 1983.

Characteristics of Parliament

The bicameral Parliament of Ireland, the *Oireachtas*, is composed of a House of Representatives (*Dail 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 *DM* 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 *Ddil*, 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 *Ddil* 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 *Ddil*, a person may nominate himself or may, with his consent, be nominated by another person (who is registered as a *Ddil* 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 I£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 *Ddil* 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 *Ddil* 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 deemed to have been re-elected to the *Ddil* automatically 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 *Dail* were previously held only nine months before - on 18 February 1982 - and in November Ireland's voters went to the polls for the third time in 18 months.

On 4 November 1982, the *Fianna Fail* Government headed by Prime Minister Charles Haughey was defeated in Parliament by two votes on a motion of confidence. The *Dail* was dissolved the same day.

Principal election campaign issues included the country's economic problems, abortion, the question of Northern Ireland and UK-Irish relations. A total of 315 candidates from six parties, as well as 48 independents, were in the running for the 166 *Ddil* seats.

On polling day, as in the two previous elections, no single party secured an overall majority. *Fianna Fail* lost five seats while *Fine Gael* gained six and the Labour Party gained two. These two latter parties formed a coalition Government on 14 December under the leadership of Mr. Garret FitzGerald, leader of *Fine Gael*, who had already been Prime Minister in 1981-82.

Seanad Eireann

After polling by postal ballot for the various panels and university seats, votes were counted from 31 January to 2 February, and the full membership of the Senate was completed on 7 February by the 11 nominees of the Prime Minister.

Statistics

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

Number of registered electors.	2,335,153
Voters. . . . .	.1,701,393(72.86%)
Blank or void ballot papers. . . . .	.12,673
Valid votes. . . . .	.1,688,720

Political Group	Number of Candid- ates	First Preference Votes obtained	%	Number of Seats	Number of Seats held at Dissolution	Number of Seats won at Previous Elections
<i>FiannaFail.</i> . . . . .	.132	763,313	45.20	75	80	81
<i>Fine Gael.</i> . . . . .	.115	662,284	39.22	7(1	64	63
Labour Party. . . . .	.40	158,115	9.36	16	14	15
Workers' Party. . . . .	.20	54,888	3.25	2	3	3
Democratic Socialist Party	7	7,012	0.42			
Communist Party of Ireland	1	259	0.02			
Independents.	48	42,451	2.51			
				166	165*	166

* There was one vacancy at the time of dissolution.

Ireland

*2. Distribution of Seats in the Seanad Eireann
following the January 1983 Renewal*

Political Group	Number of Seats
<i>Fine Gael</i>	25
<i>Fianna Fail</i>	19
Labour Party.	11
Independents.	3
	58*

* In addition, there are two members from Northern Ireland who are not aligned with any of the recognized groups.

*Distribution of Members of Parliament
according to Sex*

	<i>Ddil</i>	<i>Seanad</i>
Men.	153	54
Women	13	6
	<hr/> 166	60