

ITALY

Date of Elections: May 19, 1968

Characteristics of Parliament:

On May 19, Italian voters went to the polls for the fifth time in the history of the Republic to designate their representatives to the Chamber of Deputies and Senate. The previous Parliament was dissolved at the end of its five-year Legislature.

Parliament comprises a 630-strong Chamber of Deputies and a Senate, in which 315 members are elected, 5 nominated for life by the President of the Republic and 2 sit in an *ex-officio* capacity as former Presidents of the Republic.

The Chambers enjoy the same rights: no bill can be proclaimed law until it has been approved by both.

Electoral System:

All male and female Italian citizens at least 21 years of age, whose names appear in the annual electoral register, are entitled to take part in elections to the Chamber of Deputies. Participation in the poll is compulsory and failure to do so is punishable by law.

All voters at least 25 years of age are eligible for election.

The Chamber of Deputies is elected under a proportional party-list system, with universal, direct and secret ballot. The country is divided into 32 electoral colleges. The number of seats to be filled in each constituency is proportional to the resident population. For the calculation and allocation of the remainder, all the constituencies constitute a single national electoral college.

Electors can only vote for one of the lists submitted. However, they can indicate their preference for two or three of the candidates

on the list by numbering them accordingly. Vote splitting is prohibited.

Participants in the election of the Senate must be at least 25 years old, and the minimum age-limit for candidates is 40.

Senators are elected by uninominal majority vote in a single round. Each of the twenty Regions set up under the Constitution forms an electoral college; the number of senators attributed to each is laid down by presidential decree in proportion to the size of the population. All Regions are entitled to at least seven senators, except for Molisa (two) and the Aosta Valley (one). Candidates affiliated to a national political party must be sponsored by the central body of this party.

General Political Considerations and Conduct of the Elections:

The previous Legislature had been marked by the development of the "opening-to-the-Left" formula into a centre-left coalition which, from 1963 on, included the Christian Democratic (DC), Republican (PRI), Social Democratic (PSDI) and Socialist (PSI) Parties. In 1964, the latter two merged to form the United Socialist Party (PSU) while certain members of the PSI broke away to found the Socialist Party of Proletarian Unity (PSIUP).

After launching a vast programme which instituted State planning and announcing extensive structural reforms, the Government presided over by Mr. Moro was obliged to back-pedal and moderate its ambitions when, in July 1964, it was threatened by a grave economic crisis.

The main issue in the relatively calm electoral campaign was the continuation of the centre-left coalition whose parties offered to continue their association. They claimed that the experiment was still in its early stages but that the machinery which had been set up would make future progress possible. They also claimed credit for economic prosperity and favourable results in the field of foreign policy.

The right-wing parties, whose most immediate apprehensions had been calmed in 1964, put little spirit into their opposition to the centre's platform to which they were not in a position to offer any real alternative solution. On the other hand, the left-wing parties (Communists and PSIUP), which formed an alliance for the purposes of the elections, criticized the coalition for its lack of dynamism and for its limited achievements.

As a result of the elections, the position of the centre-left was paradoxically both strengthened and weakened. Its more right-wing elements, such as the Republican Party and Christian Democrats, gained 600,000 votes and 9 seats which they took from the declining right-wing parties — an achievement which compensated for the loss of four United Socialist seats. However, the latter, on the one hand, felt their position weakened in the coalition and, on the other, were concerned at the advance of the extreme left-wing. Here a major change was wrought, with the Communists and PSIUP winning back their pre-1963 strength and taking 200 seats. Interpreting the results as a disavowal of their participation in a centre-left Government which made too many concessions to the right and not enough to the left, the leaders of the PSU, whose ex-Nenni left-wing elements had suffered most, decided to withdraw from the tripartite alliance pending their annual Congress in the autumn.

Thus it was that Senator Leone — and not without some difficulty — formed a minority Christian Democratic Government, trusting to the support of his former partners in Parliament.

On polling day, 5,841 candidates contested 630 seats in the Lower House and 1,730 candidates the 315 Senate seats. The results appear below.

Statistics:

1. *Results of the Elections to the Chamber of Deputies.*

Number of registered electors	35,500,000 (approx.)
Valid votes	31,912,853

Political Group	Number of Votes		Number of Seats
Christian Democrats (DC) . . .	12,403,467	39.1	265 (+ 6)
Communist Party (PCI) . . .	8,551,397	26.9	177 (+ 11)
United Socialist Party (PSU). . .	4,603,192	14.5	91 (- 4)
Liberal Party (PLI).	1,850,650	5.8	31 (- 8)
Italian Social Movement (MSI)	1,414,038	4.5	24 (- 3)
Socialist Party of Proletarian Unity (PSIUP).	1,414,697	4.5	23 (— 2)
Republican Party (PRI) . . .	626,533	2.0	9 (+ 3)
Democratic Party of Monarchi- cal Unity (PDIUM) . . .	414,507	1.3	6 (- 2)
<i>Sildtiroler Volkspartei</i>	152,991	0.8	3 (- 1)
Christian Democrats of the Aosta Valley.	34,381	0.2	M =)
Others	477,000	1.4	..
			630

2. Results of the Elections to the Senate

Political Group	%	Number of Seats
Christian Democrats (DC).	38.4	135 (+ 2)
Communist Party (PCI).		87 (+2)
Socialist Party of Proletarian Unity (PSIUP).	30.0	14 (+ 2)
United Socialist Party (PSU) . . .	15.2	46(=)
Republican Party (PRI).	2.2	2(+ 1)
Liberal Party (PLI).	6.8	16 (-3)
Italian Social Movement (MSI) . .	4.6	11 (-4)
Democratic Party of Monarchical Unity (PDIUM).	1.0	2(=)
Others	1.8	2(=)
		315*

*To these 315 elected seats must be added 5 senators appointed for life by the Head of State and 2 *ex-officio* senators.

3. *Distribution of the Members of Parliament according to Profess*

	Chamber of Deputies						
	MSI	PDIUM	PLI	DC	PPvI	PSU	P
	10	2	9	57	1	24	
			3	6	1	3	
	2	1	4	60	2	ie	
<u>Industrialists</u>		!	3	1			
Tradesmen, Insurance Agents, Accountants . . .	2		1	9			
	4		4	12	2	8	
<u>Trade Unionists, Workers. . .</u>	1			17	1	7	
	2			43	1	22	
<u>Employees</u>				31		5	
Doctors, Pharmacists	2		4	10	1	1	
				3			
<u>Others (Fishermen, Writers, Craftsmen, Retired Per- sons, War Veterans). . .</u>	1	2	3	17		5	
<u>Total</u>	24	(i	31	266	9	91	

Professions	Senate						
	MSI	PDIUM	PLI	DC	PRI	PSU	P
Lawyers			6	:(7	1	10	
Engineers			3	3		1	
Teachers			2	37		5	
Industrialists				1			
Tradesmen, Insurance Agents, Accountants . . .			1	5			
Journalists						3	
Trade Unionists, Workers. . .				6		6	
Career Politicians				V>		11	
Employees				17		2	
Doctors, Pharmacists			3	8	1	3	
Farmers							
Others (Fishermen, Writers, Craftsmen, Retired Persons, War Veterans).				10			
Total	11		16	135		46	