

NETHERLANDS

Date of Elections: April 28 and 29, 1971

Reason for Elections

The Dutch had to effect a complete renewal of both Chambers of Parliament, which, in theory, were prematurely dissolved by the proclamation of a Royal Decree on March 11, 1971.

Normally the Deputies' mandate should have expired on September 21 1971; that of half the members of the Upper House in September 1972, and of the other half in September 1975. But the date of the elections corresponded with that which would have been fixed if dissolution had not been made constitutionally compulsory by the adoption in principle of draft amendments to the Constitution.

Characteristics of Parliament

The Netherlands Parliament, the States-General, consists of 2 Chambers. The First Chamber, or Upper House, comprises 75 members, elected for 6 years and renewable every 3 years by halves. The Second Chamber is composed of 150 members elected for 4 years.

Electoral System

Every Dutch citizen of either sex, who is at least 21 years old *, and resident in the Netherlands, is entitled to vote unless he has been disenfranchised as a result of certain criminal convictions. The electoral lists are drawn up, in the Communes, by the Mayor and his assistants. Voting is not compulsory, and the earlier obligation to be present at the polling station was suppressed before the elections.

To be eligible for election to either Chamber, the candidate must have Dutch nationality, be at least 25 years old, and never have been disenfranchised nor made ineligible by court decision. Every list of candidates must be presented by 25 voters.

An incompatibility exists between the parliamentary mandate and the functions of Minister, Vice-President or member of the Council of State; President, Vice-President or member of the Court of Appeal, Attorney-General or Solicitor-General to the Court of Appeal; President and member of the Court of Accounts and, lastly, provincial Governors.

* The lowering of the age required to vote from 21 to 18 years is now envisaged in the framework of the Constitutional Revision procedure now in operation and which caused the dissolution of the States-General.

Members of the Second Chamber are elected from 18 constituencies under the party-list system without vote-splitting or preferential vote. The seats are then distributed at national level among the lists which may combine amongst themselves to that end. For this distribution, an electoral quotient is obtained by dividing the number of valid votes by the number of seats to be filled (150). The seats not filled by the first distribution are allocated according to the Hondt method.

Members of the First Chamber are elected by members of Provincial Councils in four constituencies by party-list system with proportional distribution of seats in the same way as for members of the Second Chamber.

If a seat becomes vacant during the legislature, it is filled by the first of those " next-in-line " on the same list as the holder.

General Political Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

The dissolution of the States-General was proclaimed on March 11, in strict accordance with a constitutional provision which makes such a measure compulsory after the adoption of a law containing the principle of a constitutional revision.

Twenty-eight political groups campaigned. The number of lists varied from 22 to 27 by constituency for elections to the Second Chamber, and from 9 to 14 by constituency for the First Chamber.

Two big groups were closely contesting: 4 parties of the outgoing Government Coalition namely, 3 Christian groups — the Catholic People's Party, the Anti-Revolutionary Party and the Christian Historical Union (these last two representing the Reformed Church) — and the People's Party of Freedom and Democracy (Liberal), confronted 3 left-wing parties, which, prior to the elections, had set up a Shadow Cabinet. This progressively inclined opposition assembled together the Labour Party (Socialist), the Democrats 66 (D 66) and the Radical Political Party (left-wing splinter group of the People's Catholic Party). In addition to these two large groups, the Democratic Socialist Party 70 (DS 70), formed in 1970 by Dr. Willem Drees Junior and originating from the right of the Labour Party, centred its electoral campaign on the fight against inflation and reducing expenditure, criticising the administration of the outgoing Prime Minister, Mr. Piet de Jong.

The election results showed a certain disaffection on the part of the electors towards the confessional parties and the outgoing Coalition Government, which lost seats and the majority within the Second Chamber, while the progressive united opposition increased its representation.

As for the First Chamber, it reflects the Provincial Councils elected in 1970 and, more especially, includes 6 Democrat 66 deputies who, until then, had not been represented.

On June 22, 1971, the Queen asked M. Barend Biesheuvel (Anti-Revolutionary Party) to form the new cabinet, which includes, in addition to members of the former coalition, two Democrat 70 members. With the support of the Democrats, the new Government controls 82 of the 150 votes in the Second Chamber.

Statistics

1. Results of the Elections and Distribution of Seats in the Second Chamber

Number of registered voters.	8,044,968
Voters.	6,362,305 (79.1 %)
Blank or void ballot papers.	43,137
Valid votes.	6,319,168

Political Formation	Votes obtained	%	Number of Seats in the Second Chamber	Seats won at Previous Election	Number of Seats just before Dissolution
Labour Party . . .	1,552,276	24.7	39	37	34
People's Catholic Party.	1,380,539	21.9	35	42	39
People's Party for Freedom & Democracy . . .	653,092	10.3	16	17	17
Anti-Revolutionary Party . . .	542,780	8.6	13	1-	1-
Democrats 66 . . .	427,720	6.8	11	7	7
Christian Historical Union	398,987	6.4	10	12	12
Democratic Socialists 70	336,282	5.4	5	—	3
Dutch Communist Party	246,299	3.9	6	5	5
State Reform Party	148,282	2.4	3	3	3
Radical Political Party	115,937	1.8	2	—	3
Reformed Political Association . . .	101,721	1.6	2	1	1

Political Formation	Votes obtained	o' %	Number of Seats in the Second Chamber	Seats won at Previous Elections	Number of Seats just before Dissolution
Party of the Middle Classes	95,323	1.4	2	—	—
Pacifist Socialist Party	90,663	1.3	2	4	4
Farmers' Party	69,661	1.1	1	7	2
National Party of the third age of the Netherlands	26,934	0.41		—	—
Dutch Call	24,596	0.4		—	—
New Catholic Par- ty	23,047	0.4		—	—
<i>Kabouters</i> ("Far- fadets ", progres- sive group)	22,177	0.3		—	—
Party for Old Peo- ple and Workers Alliance of the Right	21,525	0.3		—	—
Democrats 2000	15,343	0.2		—	3
Party for People of the Third Age (65+)	7,230	0.1		—	—
Van Velsen list	5,918	0.1		—	—
Party of Old Peo- ple for the gene- ral interest	3,717	0.1		—	—
Foundation of duped parties	1,843	0.03		—	—
Dutch Party of the third age	1,659	0.02		—	—
Party for the Right Positive Social De- mocrats	1,656	0.02	—	—	—
	489	0.01		—	—
	418	0.01			
			150		"

2. *Distribution <\/> Seats in the First Chamber*

Political Formation	Votes obtained	%	Number of Seats in the First Chamber	Number of Seats won at Previous Elections	Number of Seats just before Dissolution
People's Catholic Party	36,648	27.98	22	24	24
Labour Party	29,421	22.46	IS	20	20
People's Party for Freedom and Democracy	15,260	11.65	8	8	8
Anti-Revolutionary Party	11,671	8.91	7	7	7
Christian Historical Union	11,349	8.67	7	8	S
Democrats 66	10,926	8.34	6	—	—
Dutch Communist Party	4,532	3.47	3	1	1
Radical Political Party	3,648	2.79	2	1	1
State Reform Party	3,226	2.46	1	—	—
Pacifist Socialist Party	2,806	2.14	1	3	3
Farmers' Party	1,198	0.91	—	3	3
Democratic Socialists 70	282	0.22	—	—	—
Reformed Political Association	—	—	—	—	—
National Party	—	—	—	—	—

3. *Distribution of Members of the Second Chamber according to Professional Category*

Public service.	40
Social organisations.	23
Press, radio and television.	14
Industry.	14
Teaching	13
Agriculture.	9
Liberal professions.	9
Science.	8
Political organisations.	5
Trade union organisations.	5
Army.	5
Church.	4
Police.	1
	150

4. *Distribution of Parliamentarians according to Sex*

	First Chamber	Second Chamber
Men	72	140
Women	3	10
	75	150

5. *Average Age:*

First Chamber	Second Chamber
52.5 years	46 years