

NEW ZEALAND

Date of Elections: November 29, 1975

Purpose of Elections

Elections were held for all the members of Parliament on the normal expiry of their term of office.

Characteristics of Parliament

The unicameral Parliament of New Zealand, the House of Representatives, comprises 87 members elected for 3 years. Of these, 83 are reserved for representatives of citizens of European stock, occupying "general" seats, while four are set aside for representatives of the aboriginal Maori population.

Electoral System

Every person 18 years of age or over who is ordinarily resident in New Zealand and who has resided continuously in the country for at least one year may register as an elector and vote in that electoral district in which he has resided continuously for at least one month immediately preceding the date of his application for registration, except the insane and persons found guilty of corrupt electoral practices in the preceding three years.

There is no legal obligation to vote, but each elector is bound to register on the electoral rolls, which are revised before each election.

All registered electors may be candidates for Parliament. If a public servant stands for election he is placed on leave of absence for the purpose of his candidature and, if elected, must resign.

A candidate must be nominated by at least two registered electors of his district between 27 and 20 days prior to election day; no elector may make more than one nomination. A deposit of NZ\$100 is also compulsory and is forfeited by an unsuccessful candidate if he receives less than one-fourth of the total number of votes obtained by the candidate elected.

For the three months preceding an election a candidate must not spend more than NZ\$2000 on election expenses.

New Zealand is divided into 87 single-member constituencies, of which four are reserved for Maori electors. All members of the House are elected by simple majority.

By-elections are held to fill any seat falling vacant in the House of Representatives between general elections.

General Political Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

The campaign for the 1975 elections was marked by the personality clash between the leaders of the country's two principal parties, Labour Prime Minister Wallace Rowling — who had assumed this post after Mr. Norman Kirk died in 1974 — and Mr. Robert Muldoon of the conservative National Party, which had lost the previous (1972) elections after ruling the country for 20 of the preceding 23 years.

Mr. Muldoon's supporters characterized him as the politician capable of giving New Zealand firm leadership in a time of economic recession, rising inflation (14.8% in 1975), and a balance-of-payments deficit which necessitated borrowing from foreign sources. Mr. Rowling's party contended that substantial imports had been necessary to keep certain industries operating to prevent a further rise in unemployment, and that import prices had risen sharply due to strong price inflation in industrialized countries. Both parties favoured a reduction of immigration.

Over 400 candidates, including a record 51 women, contested the 87 seats, with the Social Credit League, as in 1972, and the Values Party joining the two major parties in fielding candidates in all the constituencies. There also existed 25 smaller parties and groups.

In an upset on polling day, the National Party exactly regained the 23 House seats it had lost three years earlier, to arrive at a total of 55. As compared to 1972, the electorate — which for the first time included 18-year-olds — swung its votes an unprecedented 8.4%. A National Party Cabinet was formed by Prime Minister Muldoon on December 12.

Statistics

*1. Results of the Elections and Distribution of Seats
in the House of Representatives*

Number of registered voters.	1,938,108	(including 68,983 in Maori constituencies)
Voters.	1,611,104	(including 43,777 in Maori constituencies) (83.13%)
Blank or void ballot papers.	8,231	
VaUd votes.	1,602,873	

Political Group	Number of Candidates	Votes obtained	%	Number of Seats
National Party.	87	760,462	47.20	55 (+23)
Labour Party.	87	636,322	39.50	32 (-23)
Social Credit League	87	119,123	7.39	—
Values Party.	87	83,211	5.17	—
Others.	66	3,755	0.23	—
				87

*2. Distribution of Members of Parliament according to
Professional Category*

Professions.	31
Business.	24
Farming.	15
Law.	10
Industry.	7
	87

3. Distribution of Members of Parliament according to Sex

Men	83
Women.	4
	87