

## NORWAY

**Date of Elections:** September 7 and 8, 1969

### **Characteristics of Parliament**

The Norwegian Parliament, the *Storting*, is of a particular type. Its **150** members, elected for 4 years, are divided at the beginning of the legislature into 2 sections, the *Lagting* and the *Odelsting*. Under the terms of the Constitution, the *Storting* nominates one-quarter of its members to form the *Lagting*, the remaining three-quarters make up the *Odelsting*. The *Lagting* in fact plays the role of a second Chamber.

### **Electoral System**

Norwegian citizens of either sex and over the age of 20 on polling day may vote, provided they have resided in Norway during the previous 10 years and have not been deprived of the right to vote following a prison sentence for criminal offence.

The electoral lists prepared in each county are revised every 4 years, before the elections.

Every elector is eligible to the *Storting*, with the exception of officials of the Ministries, the royal court and consular or diplomatic services. The office of Cabinet Minister is also incompatible with the parliamentary mandate.

Although the great majority of candidates are represented by a recognized political party, this is not strictly necessary and persons may stand as Independents. Moreover, they may stand in several constituencies simultaneously. If a candidate is elected in more than one, he must select the constituency that he wishes to represent.

Norway has 20 constituencies in each of which from 4 to 13 Representatives and several alternates are elected by party list system with proportional distribution of seats according to the St. Lagie method.

Should a seat fall vacant during a legislature, the first alternate of the incumbent Representative is called upon to fill it.

### **General Political Considerations and Conduct of the Elections**

The campaign preceding the election of September 7 and 8 was calm for the most part and was dominated by one central theme — tax reform.

The 4-party anti-Socialist coalition Government, made up of the Conservative Party, Liberal Party, the Christian People's Party and the Centre Party, led by Mr. Per Borten, the Prime Minister, proposed replacing turnover tax by a 20 per cent added value tax.

For its part, the opposition party, the Labour Party, under Mr. Bratteli, proposed a 15 per cent added value tax combined with fiscal reductions for persons with small incomes, shortening the working week from 45 to 40 hours, lowering the retirement age, legalizing abortion and making numerous improvements in social security. It also promised young people a greater number of places in the universities.

The victory of the out-going coalition was narrow since the main opposition party, the Labour Party, won 46.5 % of the votes and 74 seats, compared to the 68 it had held in the previous *Storting*. The 4 allied parties which have 76 seats in the new legislature, thus had their majority greatly reduced. And, whereas the Liberal Party lost 5 seats and the Conservatives 2, the Christian People's Party gained 1 seat and the Prime Minister's Party, the Centre Party, gained 2.

It appears that the Labour Party benefited to a certain extent from the decreasing influence of the Socialist People's Party and the Communist Party which lost, at the 1969 elections, one-half and one-third respectively of the votes they had polled in 1965. As they did not win a single seat, these two parties were unable to provide the Labour Party with the few additional seats it would have needed to form a Government.

Once again, a coalition Government was formed by Mr. Borten.

## Statistics

### 1. Results of the Elections and Distribution of Seats in the *Storting*

Number of registered voters. . . . .	2,579,566
Voters. . . . .	2,162,596 (83.75 %)
Blank or void ballot papers. . . . .	3,884
Valid votes. . . . .	2,158,712

p . . . . .	Votes obtained	o, %	Number of Seats in the <i>Storting</i>
Labour Party. . . . .	1,004,348	46.5	74 (+6)
Conservative Party. . . . .	422,466	19.6	29 (—2)
Centre Party. . . . .	227,354	10.5	20 (+2)
Christian People's Party. . . . .	202,893	9.4	14 (+1)
Liberal Party. . . . .	202,553	9.4	13 (-5)
Socialist People's Party. . . . .	75,510	3.5	- (-2)
Communist Party. . . . .	22,494	1.0	- (=)
Others. . . . .	1,094	0.1	- (=)
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2. *Distribution of Representatives according to Professional Category*

Superior administrative posts. . . . .	30
Subordinate administrators. . . . .	27
Farmers. . . . .	23
Teachers. . . . .	21
Tradesmen. . . . .	13
Journalists and members of the Press . . . . .	11
Workers. . . . .	10
Housewives. . . . .	6
Clergy. . . . .	3
Fishermen. . . . .	3
University professor, research worker. . . . .	2
Officer. . . . .	1
	150

3. *Distribution of Representatives according to Sex*

Men . . . . .	136
Women. . . . .	14
	150

4. *Average Age: 49.8*