

NORWAY

Dates of Elections: September 9 and 10, 1973

Purpose of Elections

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

Characteristics of Parliament

The Parliament of Norway, the *Storting*, consists of 155 members elected for 4 years. This body consists of two divisions, the *Lagting* and the *Odelsting*.

Under the terms of the Constitution, the *Storting* nominates one-fourth of its members to constitute the *Lagting*; the remaining three-fourths constitute the *Odelsting*. This nomination takes place at the first assembly of the *Storting* following a general election.

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Electoral System

Norwegian citizens of either sex and over the age of 20 years on polling day are entitled to vote provided they have resided in Norway during the previous 10 years. The right to vote is lost in the case of any person who is sentenced for criminal offences, enters the service of a foreign power without the consent of the Government, is found guilty of electoral fraud or is declared incapable of managing his own affairs.

The electoral registers are revised every 4 years. Voting is not compulsory.

Every elector is eligible for 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 nominated by a recognized political party, this is not obligatory and persons may run as independents. A candidate may run simultaneously in several constituencies; if he is elected in more than one he must select the constituency he wishes to represent.

Each of Norway's 20 provinces constitutes an electoral constituency. In each, 4 to 13 Deputies and their substitutes are elected by party list system, with proportional distribution of seats according to the St. Lagie method. These same substitutes are called upon to fill any vacant seat which may arise between general elections.

General Political Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

Since the previous 1969 elections, the Norwegian political scene saw a major reshuffling of Governments, caused largely by the controversial question of the country's joining the European Economic Community. The Labour Party, which had created a minority Government in 1971, following the " bourgeois " parties' (Centre, Liberal, Conservative and Christian People's parties) division and breakdown over the question of membership to the EEC, resigned after the 1972 referendum rejected such entry. While the bourgeois opponents of membership (Christian People's Party and Centre Party) in turn took over, the Liberal Party split on the issue of whether to enter the new coalition and its pro-EEC members broke away to form the New People's Party. The minority Government, on the eve of the elections, thus held 38 of the 150 *Starting* seats.

Against this background of disintegration of political groups, 14 different parties contested the 155 (up from 150) parliamentary seats. Campaign issues involved mainly prices and the question of the value-added tax (VAT). In the context of the high rate of taxation (equivalent to 45 % of the country's gross national product), which remained unreduced after the introduction of the VAT in 1969, the Anders Lange Party came into being, standing for substantial reduction of taxes, tolls and public intervention. Labour and the Socialist People's Party (which formed the " Socialist Election Alliance " together with the Communist Party and the Labour Information Committee (AIK)) both opposed the imposition of VAT on food.

On election day, Labour's total votes, for the first time since World War II, fell below 40 %. The notable triumph of the Socialist Election Alliance, however, enabled these two left-wing groups to edge the non-socialist bloc in Parliament by 78 seats to 77.

In view of this outcome, Mr. Lars Korvald, Prime Minister under the outgoing minority coalition, resigned and was replaced by Mr. Tryggve Bratteli of Labour. The latter headed another minority Government, whose composition was announced on October 14.

Statistics

1. *Results of the Elections and Distribution of Seats in the Starting*

Number of registered voters.	2,686,676
Valid votes.	2,153,145

Political Group	Votes obtained	0, %	Number of Seats
Labour Party.	759,484	35.3	62 (—12)
Conservative Party.	375,782	17.5	29 (=)
Christian People's Party.	261,869	12.2	20 (+6)
Socialist Election Alliance *.	241,816	11.2	16 (+16)
Centre Party.	237,073	11.0	21 (+1)
Anders Lange's Party **.	107,747	5.0	4 (+4)
Liberal Party.	76,155	3.5	2 (-11)
New People's Party ***.	73,855	3.4	M+i)
Others.	19,364	0.9	—
			155 ****

* The Alliance, which comprised the Socialist People's Party, the Norwegian Communist Party and the Labour Information Committee (AIK - an offshoot of the Labour Party) did not exist in a similar form at the time of the previous 1969 elections.

** New party, having full name of " Anders Lange's Party for a Strong Reduction in Taxation and Public Intervention ".

*** New party formed by former members of the Liberal Party.

**** 5 seats added since last elections.