

## NORWAY

- Dates of Elections: September 11 and 12, 1977

### 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 Parliament of Norway, the *Storting*, consists of 155 members elected for 4 years.

The *Storting* is in reality a unicameral system, but when dealing with legislation, it divides in two parts. The first division is called the *Lagting* (acting as Upper Chamber) and the second division is called the *Odelsting* (acting as Lower Chamber).

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 parliamentary election.

### 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 or her own affairs.

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

Every qualified elector is eligible for the *Storting*, with the exception of Ministers and officials of the Ministries, the Royal Court and consular or diplomatic services, whose posts are deemed 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 19 counties (*fylker*) constitutes an electoral constituency. In each of them, four to 15 deputies and their substitutes are elected by party list system, with proportional distribution of seats according to the St. Lague method. These same substitutes are called upon to fill any vacant seat which may arise between the general parliamentary elections.

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

Following the general elections of 1973, Prime Minister Trygve Bratteli resigned in January 1976 and was succeeded by the Labour Party's parliamentary leader, Mr. Odvar Nordli. It will be recalled that Mr. Bratteli's minority Labour Government — dependent on the support of the Socialist Electoral League (the Socialist Left Party, from 1975 on) — had had a majority of one seat in the *Storting* over the non-socialist parties.

As was the case four years earlier, the 1977 elections were fiercely contested by the Conservatives, Christian Democrats and Centre Party. While it was reported that, among key campaign issues, the ruling coalition and the Opposition agreed on the general policy of a large social security system and high personal income taxes, the latter criticized the Government for the large foreign debt it had contracted, pointing out that this debt would have to be paid through future oil revenues. Labour pledged that if returned to power it would strive to maintain full employment and to create a " qualitatively better society ". The Opposition failed to define a common policy programme.

On a polling day marked by a heavy turnout, Labour's impressive gains were offset by the Socialist Left's equivalent losses, while the Conservatives solidified their second rank in the *Storting* and parliamentary representation was reduced to six parties. After several recounts, the net result gave the ruling Labour-Socialist Left coalition the same advantage it had held previously — one seat. On this basis, Mr. Nordli's Cabinet continued in office.

## Statistics

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

Number of registered electors	2,780,190
Valid votes . . . . .	2,301,110

Political Group	Votes obtained	o o	Number of Seats
Labour Party . . . . .	972,434	42.26	76 ( + 14 )
Conservative Party . . . . .	569,839	24.76	41 ( + 12 )
Christian Democrats . . . . .	285,569	12.41	22 ( + 2 )
Centre Party . . . . .	197,298	8.57	12 ( - 9 )
Socialist Left Party * . . . . .	96,248	4.18	2 ( - 14 )
Liberal Party . . . . .	74,669	3.24	2 ( = )
Progressive Party ** . . . . .	43,351	1.88	- ( - 4 )
New Liberal Party . . . . .	33,029	1.44	- ( - 1 )
Red Election Alliance . . . . .	14,515	0.63	- ( = )
Communist Party of Norway * . . . . .	8,448	0.37	- ( = )
Others . . . . .	5,710	0.25	- ( = )
			155

\* At the 1973 elections, the Communist Party was represented within the Socialist Election Alliance, which also comprised the Socialist People's Party and the Labour Information Committee. The Socialist Left Party was formed in March 1975 by the above-mentioned parties, excluding the Communist Party.

\*\* The former "Anders Lange's Party for a Strong Reduction in Taxation and Public Intervention"; the party changed its name in January 1977.

2. *Distribution of Members of Parliament  
according to Sex*

Men . . . . .	118
Women . . . . .	37
	155

3. *Average Age of Members of Parliament: 48.4 years*