

## PARAGUAY

**Date of Elections:** February 11, 1973

### **Purpose of Elections**

Elections were held to renew all the members of Parliament on the normal expiry of their terms of office.

### **Characteristics of Parliament**

The bicameral Parliament of Paraguay, the Congress, consists of the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies. The Senate has 30 members, the Chamber of Deputies 60.

The term of office of all members of Parliament is 5 years.

### **Electoral System**

Paraguayan citizens of either sex who have attained the age of 18 years have the right to vote. This right is lost or suspended by reason of loss or suspension of citizenship, the latter including physical or mental incapacity declared by a court, the serving of a judicial sentence with a punishment depriving the convicted person of his freedom, and being in military service.

In order to be able to vote, electors must be inscribed on the electoral register. Voting is compulsory except for those over 60 years of age or prevented by certain circumstances (absence, sickness, etc.).

In order to be eligible as a Senator or Deputy, a person must be a natural-born Paraguayan. Furthermore, in order to be eligible as a Senator, he must be at least 40 years of age and, in order to be eligible as a Deputy, at least 25. Members of the clergy and persons on active military service may not be elected to Congress. Neither may persons who are employed by an enterprise that operates a public service or has obtained a concession from the Government, nor attorneys, representatives or advisors of such enterprises.

Members of Congress are elected by a party-list system established for the entire country. Each recognized political party must present a list of candidates with as many names on it as seats are available. Any vote must be expressed for the list of a given party.

Two-thirds of the seats, in either Chamber, belong to the party which obtains the highest number of valid votes, whereas one-third of the seats are dis-

tributed proportionately among the other parties. This latter distribution is carried out as follows: the total of the votes obtained by the minority parties is divided by the number of seats remaining to be filled (that is, by 10 for the Senate and 20 for the Chamber of Deputies); the number of votes obtained by each of the said parties is then divided by the resulting quotient; the result of this division indicates the number of seats available to each party. The seats which still remain to be filled after this computation go to the party which has received the highest number of votes.

The seats available to any party are allocated to the candidates of that party in the order in which such candidates appear on the list of the said party.

If, during the legislative term, a vacancy occurs, such vacancy is automatically filled by the next in line on the list of the party to which the former titular member of Parliament belonged.

### General Political Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

Held simultaneously with presidential elections, the legislative elections were contested by 3 parties: the National Republican Association (commonly referred to as the *Colorado* (Red) Party), the Liberal Radical Party and the Liberal Party. The *Colorado* Party is the ruling party of General Alfredo Stroessner, President of Paraguay since 1954.

The platform of the 2 Opposition parties did not markedly differ from that of the ruling party, all 3 standing for free enterprise and being opposed to State intervention in the economy. The Liberal Party, however, demanded a democratization of President Stroessner's regime.

The Christian Democrats and the Revolutionary *Febrerista* Party presented no candidates and recommended a boycott of the elections.

Voting resulted in a clear victory for the *Colorado* Party. Congress began its sessions on April 1, while President Stroessner was to begin his term on August 15, 1973.

### Statistics

#### 1. Results of the Elections and Distribution of Seats in the Congress

Number of registered voters . . . . .	1,052,652
Voters . . . . .	814,610 (77.4%)
Blank or void ballot papers . . . . .	10,597
Valid votes . . . . .	804,013

Political Group	Votes obtained	%	Number of Seats in the	
			Chamber of Deputies	Senate
<i>Colorado</i> Party. . . . .	681,306	85	40 (=)	20 (=)
Liberal Radical Party. . . . .	98,096	12	16 (=)	8 (-1)
Liberal Party. . . . .	24,611	3	4 (+1)*	2 (+1)
			<b>80</b>	<b>30</b>

\* The *Febrerista* Party held one seat in the previous legislature.