

REPUBLIC OF KOREA

Dates of Elections: February 27, 1973 (members directly elected)
March 7, 1973 (members elected by the National Conference of Unification)

Purpose of Elections

Elections were held for all the members of a new National Assembly, which replaced the former legislative body dissolved by the President of the Republic on October 17, 1972 — 22 months prematurely. Of these members, 146 were directly elected by the people and 73 by the National Conference of Unification from a slate of candidates recommended by the President of the Republic.

Characteristics of Parliament

As laid down in the Electoral Law approved in December 1972*, the unicameral Parliament of the Republic of Korea, the National Assembly, has a total of 219 members: 146 elected for 6 years and 73 — elected by the National Conference of Unification — for 3 years. Despite these differences, all members enjoy the same status while in office.

Electoral System

All citizens of either sex, aged 20 or over, are entitled to vote. The following persons nevertheless do not have the right to vote: persons adjudged incompetent or of limited competence; those who have been sentenced to confinement or a heavier penalty and who have not completed serving their punishment, or in whose case a final decision has not been made concerning the execution thereof; those for whom 2 years have not elapsed since receiving the penalty of a fine in an amount exceeding 5,000 Won as an election criminal, or those sentenced to confinement or the penalty mentioned above for whom 4 years have not elapsed since the final decision not to receive the execution thereof, or since the completion or exemption of the execution thereof; and persons who have been suspended from, or deprived of, the right to vote by court decision.

Whenever an election is to be held, electoral lists, established on the level of electoral districts, are revised and prepared within 5 days from the day of the announcement of the election. Voting is not compulsory.

* See section *Parliamentary Developments*, p. 12.

Every voter over the age of 25 may be a candidate to the National Assembly. The same disqualifications apply as for electors, except that the time span since receiving the penalty of a fine of 5,000 Won is 6 years, not 2. Membership in the National Assembly is incompatible with membership in the National Conference for Unification and local assemblies, or the office of public official or officer of a public enterprise and other public or private organization which purports to make a profit. Such positions as Prime Minister or Minister, those permitted by law, committee membership of each Ministry, Board or Office of the Administration or any other position similar thereto, however, are not considered as incompatible with the office of Assemblyman.

A candidate, upon registering as such, must entrust the Committee on the Election Management with a deposit of 2,000,000 Won if running on a party ticket. This deposit amounts to 3,000,000 for an Independent. If elected, any candidate is refunded his deposit minus the expenses required for his election. A defeated candidate's deposit is forfeited.

The Republic of Korea is divided into 73 electoral districts, each of which return 2 Assemblymen. The latter must gain a simple plurality of the vote. The remaining one-third of the National Assemblymen, as previously mentioned, are elected by the National Conference for Unification from among the list recommended by the President of the Republic.

By-elections are held to fill a seat of any member elected by popular vote, if the vacancy arises more than one year prior to the normally scheduled dissolution of the Assembly. The next-in-line fills the vacant seat of a member elected by the National Conference for Unification, according to the order of the recommended candidate list.

General Political Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

On October 17, 1972, upon proclaiming martial law throughout the country, dissolving the National Assembly and suspending all activities by political parties, President Park Chung Hee announced that he was resorting to these means in order to favor the peaceful reunification of Korea and to introduce a series of structural "revitalizing reforms" which would be submitted to a referendum.

A total of 339 registered candidates contested the 146 elective seats. In discussing its platform, the ruling Democratic Republican Party (DRP) announced a 69-point basic policy guideline. In the area of Korean unification, diplomacy and defense, farming and fishing and social welfare, the DRP and the 2 other major parties — the New Democratic Party (NDP) and the Democratic Unification Party (DUP), constituted 2 months before the elections —

shared a number of common views. All 3 proposed measures to strengthen the efficiency of the National Assembly; to establish firm foundations for the peaceful unification of Korea, for example, through a pan-national organization which would include all political parties and factions; to build up the defense industries and to carry on a pragmatic and flexible diplomacy vis-a-vis Socialist and Western countries, in pursuit of national interests; to modernize the rural and fishing areas and to increase the income of farmers and fishermen; to revise the labour laws so as to provide for a minimum wage; and to insure full employment.

The DRP, for its part, sought to advance the concepts of the "revitalizing reforms" of President Park. It furthermore strove for the attainment of a \$10,000 million export goal and \$1,000 per capita income by the early 1980's; a renovation of the tax system; encouraging the New Village Movement, through the setting-up of factories; insuring a compulsory education system for the middle schools by 1978; the guaranteeing of a free religious life; and the promotion of free press activities. In similar fields, the NDP advocated a drastic reduction in commodity taxes, raising the tax exemption level for wage earners and stabilizing prices and foreign exchange rates; opposed forced participation in the New Village Movement; and favoured expanding the benefits of scholarship to the poor and needy. The DUP, in turn, sought to set up a collective security system for the Pacific and Asia through the balance of power among the United States, the Soviet Union, the People's Republic of China and Japan; and strove to extend the term of free compulsory education from 6 to 9 years while reducing the education fee.

Polling took place in a quiet atmosphere and independent candidates, permitted to run for the first time since 1963, gained 19 seats. While the DRP only won half the total seats contested it was assured of a comfortable majority in the National Assembly, having also within its ranks the 73 mem-

Statistics

1. Results of the Elections held on February 27 and Distribution of Seats in the National Assembly

Number of registered voters	15,690,130
Voters	11,196,484 (72.9%)
Blank or void ballot papers	205,048
Vabd votes	10,991,436

Political Group	Number of Candidates	Votes obtained	°	Number of Seats won on Feb 27	Number of Seats won on March 7
Democratic Republican Party (DRP)	80	4,251,754	38.7	73	73
New Democratic Party (NDP).87	3,577,300	32.6	52	—
Democratic Unification Party (DUP)	57	1,114,204	10.1	2	
National Party *	—				
Independents115	2,048,178	18.6	19	
				<hr/> 143	<hr/> 73

* The National Party did not present candidates in the 1973 elections.

* New total established since last elections.

2. *Distribution of Members of the National Assembly according to Professional Category*

Former members of National Assembly	122
Public officials.	23
Professors.	15
Businessmen.	11
Members of the armed forces (incl. retired Generals).	10
Journalists.	9
Lawyers.	6
Physicians.	3
Farmers.	1
Others.	19
	219

3. *Distribution of Members of the National Assembly according to Sex*

Men	209
Women.	10
	219

4. *Distribution of Members of the National Assembly according to Age Group*

30-39.	19
40-49.	111
50-59.	69
60-69.	20
	219

5. *Average Age: 48 years and 7 months*