

REPUBLIC OF KOREA

Date of Elections: 25 March 1981

Purpose of Elections

Elections were held for all the members of Parliament under the terms of the new Constitution promulgated in October 1980*. General elections had previously taken place in December 1978.

Characteristics of Parliament

The unicameral Parliament of the Republic of Korea, the National Assembly, comprises 276 members elected for 4 years. Of these, 184 are elected directly from 92 districts and 92 seats are set aside for proportional representation. All members have the same status while in office.

Electoral System

All citizens who have attained the age of 20 are entitled to vote. Disqualified are the insane, undischarged bankrupts, persons convicted of crime unless the execution of the sentence has been suspended or the term of imprisonment completed, and persons convicted of electoral fraud.

Electoral registers are compiled on the local (city, county, town) level as of the announcement of the polling day and revised continuously during this pre-election period. Voting is not compulsory.

Every qualified elector who has attained the age of 25 may be a candidate for the National Assembly. Certain government officials, employees of public corporations and of agricultural, marine and rancher co-operatives may not simultaneously be Assembly members.

Candidates may figure on party lists or run as independents. In the latter case, they need the support of 500 to 700 voters in their constituency. All candidates must make a monetary deposit—7,000,000 *Won* for party nominees, 15,000,000 *Won* for independents; these sums are forfeited if at least one-third of the valid votes cast in the constituency are not obtained by each individual.

Under the new Electoral Law, Assembly members are chosen according to a combined system of simple majority direct election and proportional representation. The party that wins the most seats in the 92 two-member district constituencies is automatically given two thirds of the remaining 92 seats, with the rest divided proportionately among the other parties in accordance with their winnings, on condition that these have captured at least five elective seats. No one party may hold more than 55.4% of all parliamentary seats. All minor parties must be dissolved if they have not won at least one seat or 2% of the valid votes cast.

* See section *Parliamentary Developments*, pp. 23-24.

By-elections are held to fill constituency seats which fall vacant between general elections, while vacant proportional representation seats are filled by the "next-in-line" candidates of the political party concerned.

General Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

General elections had previously taken place in December 1978. President of the Republic Park Chung-Hee was assassinated in October 1979, and a military coup d'Etat took place two months later. In October 1980, a new Constitution was approved by popular referendum and a Legislative Council for National Security was formed to assume legislative functions*. Martial law was lifted in January 1981 and Mr. Chun Doo-Hwan of the Democratic Justice Party (DJP) was elected President the next month. He announced the date of the parliamentary elections on 5 March.

A total of 635 candidates and 12 parties competed for the National Assembly seats; of those in the running were 105 independents. Major contesting parties were the DJP, the main opposition Democratic Korea Party (DKP), and the Korea National Party (KNP). The DKP had been formed by former members of the dissolved opposition New Democratic Party (NDP), while the KNP contained elements of the former ruling Democratic Republican Party (DRP). The DJP asked that it be supported so that the Republic might enjoy continued stability and prosperity. The other groups' main campaign appeal was the need for an effective opposition in Parliament. Various social and economic issues of national import were also widely debated.

On polling day, voter turnout was high and the DJP scored a clear victory. Its candidates won 90 of the 184 directly elective seats and, as the strongest group at the polls, it was given a further 61 proportional representation seats for a total of 151.

The first session of the newly-elected Assembly was held on 11 April. The DJP Prime Minister is Mr. Nam Duck-Woo.

* See section *Parliamentary Developments*, pp. 23-24.

Statistics

1. Results of the Elections* and Distribution of Seats
in the National Assembly

| | |
|--|--------------------|
| Number of registered electors. | 20,909,120 |
| Voters. | 16,397,845 (78.4%) |
| Blank or void ballot papers. | 190,520 |
| Valid votes. | 16,207,325 |

*Excluding one constituency in which two candidates were elected unopposed.

| Political Group | Number of Candidates | Votes obtained | Number of Seats | | Total Number of Seats | |
|--|----------------------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|-----|
| | | | Direct Election | Proportional Representation | | |
| Democratic Justice Party (DJP) | 92 | 5,776,624 | 35.6 | 90 | 61 | 151 |
| Democratic Korea Party (DKP) | 91 | 3,495,829 | 21.6 | 57 | 24 | 81 |
| Korea National Party (KNP) | 75 | 2,147,293 | 13.3 | 18 | 7 | 25 |
| Civil Rights Party (CRP) | 82 | 1,088,847 | 6.7 | 2 | — | 2 |
| New Political Party (NPP) | 54 | 676,921 | 4.2 | 2 | — | 2 |
| Democratic Socialist Party (DSP) | 80 | 524,361 | 3.2 | 2 | — | 2 |
| Others | 85 | 763,226 | 4.7 | 2 | — | 2 |
| Independents. | 106 | 1,734,224 | 10.7 | 11 | | 11 |
| | | | | 184 | 92 | 276 |

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

| | |
|--|----|
| Former Assembly members and Cabinet members. | 54 |
| Businessmen. | 51 |
| Professors and teachers. | 30 |
| Political party staff members. | 26 |
| Civil servants. | 24 |
| Journalists. | 23 |
| Lawyers. | 22 |
| Career military personnel. | 17 |
| Others. | 29 |

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

| | |
|-----------------|-----|
| Men | 268 |
| Women | 8 |
| | 276 |

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

| | |
|-----------------------|-----------|
| 31-35. | 1 |
| 36-40. | 20 |
| 41-45. | 69 |
| 46-50. | 85 |
| 51-55. | 54 |
| 56-60. | 25 |
| 61-70. | 21 |
| Over 71. | 1 |
| | 276 |