

SWITZERLAND

Date of Elections: October 30 and 31, 1971

Reason for Elections

The Swiss electorate, including women for the first time, was called to the polls to renew the whole National Council and 31 of 44 Representatives — from 14 cantons and 3 half-cantons — in the Council of States.

These parliamentarians, elected in 1967, had reached the end of their mandate.

Characteristics of Parliament

The Swiss Federal Assembly is bicameral; it consists of the National Council, composed of popularly elected members, and the Council of States, wherein are represented the cantons.

The National Council is comprised of 200 members elected for 4 years. The Council of States is comprised of 44 cantonal representatives, 2 from each canton and 1 from each half-canton, all members being elected for 4 years with the exception of the canton of Glarus, where the mandate is 3 years.

Electoral System

While the electoral laws for the National Council are drawn up on the federal level, those for the Council of States are done so within the cantons.

Swiss men, and, since the constitutional amendment of March 25, 1971, Swiss women, at least 20 years of age and residing in Switzerland are eligible to vote for members of the National Council, unless they have been deprived of their civil rights by court decree.

A further prerequisite to voting is registration on the electoral rolls maintained and constantly under revision in each community. Voting is not compulsory, except in the cantons of St. Gallen, Thurgau and Schaffhausen, where unexcused abstention is punishable by fine.

Citizens of Switzerland of either sex, at least 20 years old and not deprived of their civil rights, may be candidates to the National Council. Neither residence in Switzerland nor registration on the electoral rolls is required. Membership in the National Council is incompatible with membership in the Council of States or in the Federal Council (Cabinet), or with the posts of federal judge, judge in the Federal Insurance Court, or Chancellor of the Confederation. Further incompatibilities are the exercise of a public federal or religious func-

tion. Lastly, no member of the National Council may accept decorations, titles, or pensions from foreign governments.

In theory, a list of candidates may be presented by 15 voters. In practice, candidates are chosen by the political parties.

There are 25 constituencies — one for each canton and half-canton. Voting in the multi-member constituencies is designed to ensure proportional representation; however, in the 5 smallest constituencies (half-cantons: Appenzell-Inner and Outer Rhodes, Unterwalden-Nidwalden and Obwalden; cantons: Uri and Glarus) which have only 1 representative, vote is by simple plurality.

The number of seats allotted to each canton is regulated by law on the basis of a census every 10 years.

To express his choice, the elector has as many votes as there are seats to be filled. He may express them in several ways: combine them all on a party list and vote for the list without modifying it; insert candidates from other parties in his list; or accumulate votes for his favorite candidate by repeating his name so as to improve his chances. If the ballot bears the name and number of a party, his write-in votes constitute an order of preference for the candidates; any write-in votes not expressed automatically revert to the relevant party. If he chooses a list without any heading, only his write-in votes are counted. Lists may be combined and together figure in the first distribution of seats.

As regards the distribution of seats, the Hagenbach-Bischoff method is used. The number of votes obtained by each party is divided by an electoral quotient which itself is calculated by dividing the number of seats to be filled in each constituency, plus one, into the total number of valid votes. Two or even three calculations may be necessary.

Cantonal law governs election to the Council of States. The same electoral body generally chooses both the National Council and the Council of States, except for 5 cantons and 3 half-cantons in German-Speaking Switzerland where women still do not have the vote. Moreover, in 2 cantons, members of the Council of States are elected indirectly by means of the cantonal Parliaments. In the other cantons party-list majority voting is used.

If a seat becomes vacant between general elections in the National Council it is filled by the " next-in-line " of the party list from which the holder had been elected; there are no by-elections except in the 5 constituencies using the majority system. By-elections are resorted to in case of a vacancy in the Council of States.

General Political Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

The election campaign opened in the last week of September 1971. The following groups participated therein: the 4 parties of the coalition Government (Federal Council) — the Social Democrats, the Radical Democrats, the Christian

Democrats, and the Swiss People's Party (formerly the Farmers', Traders' and Citizens' Party); 7 opposition parties — one left-wing, the Labour Party (Communist); 4 right-wing — the Independents, the Liberal Democrats, the Evangelical People's Party, and the Democrats; and 2 from the extreme right — the National Campaign and the Republican Movement. Altogether, 1966 candidates — including 268 women — were in contention and spread among 158 lists. Fifty-eight former parliamentarians decided not to run. Many identical issues were discussed by all parties — housing, the economy, environmental protection and pollution.

While the Radicals boasted of their governmental representatives' accomplishments in public financial and economic matters, the Socialists stressed social questions and the rise in the cost of living. The Christian Democrats (formerly the Conservative-Christian Social Party) proposed that its coalition partners join it in drafting a common platform before the formation of the new Government. The Agrarians, fourth member of the coalition, underlined the problems of agriculture and migration out of rural areas.

Among the opposition, the Labour Party deplored the general rise in prices, notably that in rents, whereas the opposition of the right, also emphasizing economic problems, split into 2 distinct factions. On the one hand, the extreme right was represented by the National Campaign and the Republican Movement, of xenophobic orientation. As for the other parties of the right, they assumed more traditional stances, the Independent Alliance reaffirming its belief in free commerce and industry.

After a calm campaign, the elections revealed — except for a slight breakthrough by the extreme right — the stability of the Swiss electorate.

In spite of losing 6 seats, the 4 governmental parties maintained their large majority in the National Council, with 160 of 200 seats. Nevertheless, a slight overall swing to the right was occasioned by the 2 xenophobic groups (National Campaign and Republican Movement), which had not been founded at the time of the previous elections, and which had had only 1 representative in the outgoing Parliament.

On December 8, 1971, the Federal Assembly elected the Government (Federal Council). Six of 7 of the latter's members were re-elected; 1 new Christian-Democrat replaced another, who had resigned.

Statistics

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

Number of registered voters	3,551,008
Voters	2,018,122 (56.8 %)
Blank or void ballot papers	25,700
Valid votes	1,992,422

Political Group	Number of Candidates	Votes obtained	%	Number Seats in the National Council
Social Democrats	248 (20)*	452,194	22.9	46
Radical Democrats	318 (23)	431,364	21.8	49
Christian Democrats	194 (21)	402,528	20.4	44
Swiss People's Party	272 (9)	217,907	11.0	23
Independents' Party	145 (11)	150,684	7.6	13
Republican Movement	98 (10)	88,327	4.5	7
National Campaign	74 (10)	62,749	3.2	4
Liberal Democrats	33 (4)	43,338	2.2	6
Evangelical People's Party	92 (4)	42,298	2.1	3
Labour Party	72 (6)	50,834	2.6	5
Others	150 (10)	33,370	1.7	—
Democrats **	—	—	—	—
	1,696			200

* In parentheses appear the number of cantons in which each party presented candidates.

** The Democratic Party was dissolved on the eve of the elections. Together with the Radical Democrats, it had formed a single parliamentary group. Of the 3 Democratic representatives, 1 joined the Swiss People's Party. Presently, the Evangelical People's Party is united with the Liberal Democrats in a parliamentary group.

2. *Distribution of Seats in the Council of States*

Political Group	Number of Seats in the Council of States	Number of Seats in the Previous Legislature
Social Democrats	4	2
Radical Democrats	15	14
Christian Democrats	17	15
Swiss People's Party	1	3
Independents' Party	1	1
Liberal Democrats	2	5
Labour Party		
Democrats		
Christian Democrat dissidents Team 1967 (Aargau canton).		
	44	44

3. *Distribution of Members of the National Council
according to Professional Category*

Lawyers	34
Public (communal) officials	25
High administrative officials	19
Professors	19
Journalists	16
Public (cantonal) officials	15
Businessmen	15
Architects	14
Agricultural workers	13
Public (federal) officials	11
Doctors	8
Artisans	7
Others	4
	~200

4. *Distribution of Parliamentarians according to Sex*

	National Council	Council of States
Men	189	43
Women	11	1
	200	44

5. *Distribution of Members of the National Council according to Age Group*

20-29.	2
30-39.	15
40-49.	64
50-59.	79
60-69.	39
70 and over.	1
	200