

FINLAND

Date of Elections: March 15 and 16, 1970

Characteristics of Parliament

The Finnish Parliament (*Eduskunta*) is unicameral and comprises 200 deputies elected for a period of 4 years.

On March 15 and 16, 1970, Finnish citizens went to the polls to renew the whole House upon the normal expiry of the previous legislature.

Electoral System

All Finnish citizens of either sex, who have attained the age of 20 before the year in which the elections take place, are entitled to vote, with the exception of those who are under guardianship, who have been convicted of vagrancy or electoral corruption, and naturalized foreigners of less than three years standing.

Voting is not compulsory and the electoral lists are revised annually.

Every member of the electorate may stand for Parliament, except those who are on active military service.

Each candidature must be presented by at least 30 citizens with the right to vote, forming a "voters' association". Voters' associations in each constituency form an "electoral alliance" to support candidates of the same party or, on occasion, of different political beliefs. However, political parties play a predominant role in this process. This situation has been recognized by an amendment to the Electoral Law, passed in 1969, which stipulates that, as from the elections of 1974, only parties will be able to present candidatures, with the exception of the Province of Aland where the former system will remain in force.

Moreover, a candidate may stand for election in more than one constituency; this will no longer be possible after 1974.

Finland is divided into 15 constituencies.

In 14 of them, deputies are elected by party list system with preferential vote; the Province of Aland, which is very small, elects one single deputy by simple plurality.

Each elector, who has only one ballot, votes by writing the number allotted to the candidate of his choice in the printed circle in the centre of the ballot paper.

The number of votes won by each list is determined by adding up the votes obtained by its candidates. The seats to be filled are then distributed proportionally among the lists according to the d'Hondt system.

For the distribution of seats within each list, candidates are classed according to the number of votes they have won. The leading candidate is deemed to have received a number of votes equivalent to the total number of votes polled by the list, the second candidate is given a comparison number equivalent to half the number of votes cast for the list, the third candidate a comparison number equivalent to one-third of this number of votes, etc. A candidate standing for more than one constituency is declared elected from the constituency where his comparison number is greatest. In the others, he is replaced by the next in line on the same list who is also mandated to replace him in the event of a vacancy in Parliament during a legislature.

General Political Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

Political life in Finland is characterized by the existence of numerous parties, from which 4 main groups emerge: the Centre Party (Agrarian), the Social Democratic Party, the National Coalition Party (Conservative), and, finally, the Democratic League (Communist) which had been excluded from the Government from 1948 to 1966.

The 1966 elections had been won by the Social Democrats, whose leader, Mr. Rafael Paasio, had formed a coalition with the Communists, the Simonites (dissident left-wing Social Democrats) and the Centre Party. This popular front in the Finnish style, or "green-red coalition", had been enlarged by the entry into the Government of a minister belonging to the Swedish People's Party when Mr. Mauno Koivisto succeeded Mr. Paasio as President of the Council in 1968.

The focal point of the recent election campaign was whether or not the Socialist majority resulting from the elections of March 15, 1966, could be maintained.

The results of the elections revealed a considerable swing to the right. The Parties of the coalition lost 29 seats; one of them, the Social Democratic Union of Workers and Small Farmers (Simonites) no longer has a representative in the Parliament.

On the other hand, the National Coalition Party increased its representation by 11 seats and won 18 % of the votes, while the Finnish Rural Party, violently opposed to the Government, obtained 17 more seats. Finally, due to its alliance with the Centrists, the new Christian Union Party succeeded in having one of its candidates elected.

Forming a Government proved to be a long and laborious process. The Centre Party, having made known its reluctance to form a "bourgeois" coalition with the conservatives, and faced with the difficulties of resorting to

a broad alliance that would exclude only the Communists and the Rural Party, finally fell back on the "green-red" coalition after several months of negotiation, during which an interim cabinet had been appointed to deal with current affairs.

Finally, it should be noted that the elections have brought a substantial number of new and younger members into the Parliament. In fact, 87 of the 200 deputies are new-comers, and the average age has dropped from 49.5 to 46.

Statistics

1. Results of the Elections and Distribution of Seats in the Parliament

Number of registered voters	3,094,359
Voters	2,544,510 (82 %)
Blank or void ballot papers	8,728
Valid votes.	2,535,782

Political Group	Votes obtained	%, 10	Number of Seats in the Parliament
Social Democratic Party.	594,182	23.4	52 (-3)
National Coalition Party.	457,582	18	37 (+11)
Centre Party (ex-Agrarian).	434,150	17.1	36 (-13)
Democratic League of the People of Finland (CP).	420,556	16.6	36 (-5)
Finnish Rural Party.	265,939	10.5	18 (+17)
Swedish People's Party.	144,436	5.7	12 (=)
Liberal Party.	150,823	6	8 (-1)
Social Democratic Union of Workers and Small Farmers (<i>Simonites</i>)	35,453	1.4	—(-7)
Christian Union	28,547	1.1	1 (+1)
Others.	4,111	0.2	

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2. *Distribution of Parliamentarians according to Professional Category*

Farmers.	42
Managers.	31
Teachers.	20
Party officials.	18
Journalists.	16
Workers.	16
Lawyers.	14
Engineers.	9
Municipal officials.	8
Doctors, surgeons.	5
Nurses.	4
Clergymen.	2
University professors.	2
Student.	1
Others.	12
	200

3. *Distribution of Parliamentarians according to Sex*

Men.	167
Women.	33
	200

4. *Average Age: 46*