

ECUADOR

Date of Elections: June 2, 1968

Characteristics of Parliament:

Citizens went to the polls to elect the members of the Parliament established under the new Constitution approved on May 25, 1967, by the Constituent Assembly.

The Ecuadorian Parliament consists of two Chambers:

- the 80-member Chamber of Deputies, elected for a term of 2 years by direct suffrage, with 1 deputy per 80,000 inhabitants, each of the 19 provinces being entitled, however, to at least 2 representatives in Parliament, except for the Galapagos Islands which has 1;
- the Senate, consisting of 54 members elected for a term of 4 years, 39 by direct suffrage—2 per province and 1 for the Colon Archipelago—and 15 functional senators elected indirectly by members of the main economic, cultural and occupational groups whose interests they represent.

Electoral System:

Under the new Constitution and the Electoral Law of December 15, 1967, all literate Ecuadorian citizens of both sexes, who are 18 years of age or over, possess full civic rights and are registered, are eligible to vote. Officials of the State Civil Registry are responsible for the electoral lists and deliver voter identification cards under the supervision of the Supreme Electoral Tribunal.

Voting is now a duty for both male and female citizens although, up to 1967, women, who have been enfranchised since 1929, were not obliged to do so.

Voters who are Ecuadorian by birth and resident or born in the province in which they are standing, are eligible for election. They

must furthermore be at least 25 years of age to run for election to the Chamber of Deputies and at least 35 for the Senate.

The elections for all deputies and the 39 senators chosen by direct suffrage are held in each province by a party-list system, without any preferential voting or vote splitting.

The distribution of seats, which is proportional, is carried out as follows:

1. In the provinces, which elect only two representatives, one seat is attributed to the first candidate on the list which has received the most votes and the other to the one on the following list, provided that the latter has obtained at least 50 per cent of the votes received by the winning list. If this is not the case, both seats go to the list which is leading.

2. When more than two seats have to be filled, the procedure is as follows:

- The total valid votes are divided by the number of seats to be filled, and those lists which have not received a number of votes equal to at least 70 per cent of the quotient thus obtained are eliminated.
- The total votes won by the eligible lists are divided by the number of seats to be filled so as to obtain a second quotient. When the latter is higher than 10,000, it is decreased by 10 per cent before being used as the basic quotient for the proportional distribution of seats. On the other hand, if the second quotient is 10,000 or less, it is utilized without alteration for the proportional distribution of seats. If any seats remain undistributed after this last division, they are awarded to the lists with the highest totals, in descending order, after the first operation.

General Political Considerations and Conduct of the Elections:

These elections were of particular significance since they marked the return in Ecuador to constitutional rule and representative institutions after many years of government by military junta.

The evolution in this direction had commenced with the election in November 1966 of the members of a Constituent Assembly and a Provisional President in the person of Mr. Otto Arosemena Gomez, a former member of the Radical Liberal Party who had shortly before formed a new Centre-Right group, the Democratic Institutional Coalition (CID).

This trend was continued in 1967 with the adoption by the Constituent Assembly of a new Constitution on May 25 (17th Supreme Law of the State of Ecuador) and a new Electoral Law on December 15.

Three political coalitions had been formed for the electoral campaign: the Popular Alliance (AP), which gathered together the Conservative Party (PC) and the Social Christian Movement (MSC), led by Mr. Camilo Ponce Enriquez; the Democratic Left-Wing Front (FID), presided over by Mr. Andres F. Cordova Nieto and composed of the Radical Liberal Party (PL), the Ecuadorian Socialist Party (PSE) and the Concentration of Popular Forces (CFP); and, finally, the Velasquista Popular Front Movement (MFPV), headed by Mr. Jose Velasco Ibarra and grouping the Popular Patriotic Party (PPP) and the National Velasquista Federation (FNV).

Two other parties, the Democratic Institutional Coalition (CID) and the Christian Democratic Party (PDC), had also designated candidates.

At the time of writing, no precise details of the results of the June 2 elections have as yet been received.