

LEBANON

Date of Elections: March 24 and 31, and April 7, 1968

Characteristics of Parliament:

Upon expiry of the four-year Legislature's mandate, the 99 deputies in the Lebanese unicameral Parliament were elected in March-April of 1968.

Electoral System:

A peculiarity of the Lebanese electoral system is its concern with ensuring the proportional representation not only of the different regions of the country but also of the various religious communities of which its people are members. In each of the twenty-six constituencies, citizens vote for lists whose seats have been distributed among the different communities to which they belong. Article 27 of the Constitution provides that a deputy shall represent the nation as a whole; this provision is attained by the election of a candidate not only by electors belonging to the same confessional group as he but by all the electors in the constituency. Lebanese electoral law also admits vote splitting, but this is possible only within the same community, i.e. the name of a Maronite candidate, for instance, can only be replaced by that of a Maronite candidate belonging to another list. The ballot can also be uninominal since electors may strike out as many names as they wish from the voting paper and may, in the end, vote for only one candidate. Multi-confessional representation depends on the size of the constituency. In fact, the larger it is the more chances there are of its encompassing varied groups of confessions.

All Lebanese, both male and female, aged 21 years and over, who enjoy full civic and civil rights and are regularly registered on

electoral lists which are revised annually, are eligible to vote. Registration is compulsory. The electoral lists of each constituency contain the names of all electors who have, for at least six months, had their legal or real domicile there. Members of the armed forces are not qualified to vote.

All Lebanese citizens, at least 25 years of age, who enjoy full civil and civic rights and are literate, are eligible for election to Parliament. Persons who have acquired Lebanese nationality through naturalization can only stand for election ten years after they have become citizens. Members of the armed forces, even if they have been released from active service or have become part of the reserve army, cannot present their candidature. This is possible only if they have retired or if their resignation was accepted six months prior to the elections. Public office is in some cases incompatible with the mandate of deputy.

General Political Considerations and Conduct of the Elections:

General elections traditionally arouse considerable interest in Lebanon although participation in the poll is always fairly low. On this occasion, it was 57.8 per cent for the whole country.

The huge variety of ideological tendencies and alliances based on personal or confessional considerations makes it very difficult to analyse the political make-up of the Chamber which resulted from the election.

At opposite poles, and of roughly equal strength, were to be found the Parliamentary Democratic Front (FDP) allied to Mr. Kamal Joumblatt's National Struggle Front (FLN) and the Destour Party, on the one hand, and, on the other, the National Liberal Party (PNL) under Mr. Camille Chamoun and the Phalangists (Kataeb) of Mr. Pierre Gemayel, which are in turn allied to the National, Skaff and El Assaad Blocs. The constitution of the majority therefore depended on the attitude adopted by the 25-odd deputies of the centre.

Finally, these elections resulted in a large number of new mem-

bers of Parliament. More than a third of the members of the former Chamber were not re-elected.

Statistics:

1. *Distribution of Seats in the Chamber*

Political	Group	tfifite
National Struggle Front (Joumblatt)		7 (—2)
No Affiliation		14 (+6)
Naijade		1 (+ 1)
Parliamentary Democratic Front and Affiliates		27 (—11)
Destour		3 (—2)
Tachnag		4 (=)
El Assaad Bloc		6 (—3)
Arslane Bloc		3 (=)
Salam Bloc		4 (—1)
SkaffBloc		4(=)
Kataels		9 (+5)
National Bloc		6 (+ 3)
National Liberal Party		11 (+4)

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2. *Distribution of Deputies according to Profession*

Profession	$f^N \gg m^b f$ of Deputies
Lawyers.	36
Businessmen.	19
Landowners.	13
Doctors and Pharmacists.	8
Former Officials.	6
Engineers and Entrepreneurs.	3
Officials.	3
Employees.	2
Members of the Armed Forces.	2
Teachers.	2
Various Cadres.	2
Opticians.	1
Ecclesiastics.	1
Notaries.	1
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3. *Representation of the Different Confessional Communities in the Chamber of Deputies*

Community	Number of Seats
Maronite.	30
Sunnite.	20
Shiite.	19
Greek Orthodox.	11
Greek Catholic.	6
Druse.	6
Orthodox Armenian.	4
Catholic Armenian.	1
Evangelist.	1
Others.	1
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