### O WOMEN IN NATIONAL LEGISLATURES

A Comparative Study of Six Countries

Walter S. G. Kohn

# WOMEN IN NATIONAL LEGISLATURES

A Comparative Study of Six Countries

Walter S. G. Kohn

#### Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Kohn, Walter S G Women in national legislatures.

**JF540.5.K**55 328'.33

Bibliography: p.
1. Women legislators. 2. Comparative government.
I. Title.

ISBN 0-03-047591-0 (Holt, Rinehart & Winston)

80-11601

Published in 1980 by Praeger Publishers CBS Educational and Professional Publishing A Division of CBS, Inc. 521 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10017 U.S.A.

© 1980 by Praeger Publishers

All rights reserved

0123456789 145 987654321

Printed in the United States of America

## WOMEN IN NATIONAL LEGISLATURES

To Rita and Tom, who in so many different ways helped to make this book a reality.

#### **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

I want to express my gratitude to the many people whose help and assistance was essential in the completion of this book. Various politicians, party leaders, legislators, and government employees in the United States, Canada, Britain, the German Federal Republic, Austria. and Switzerland have contributed in many different ways; only their large number prevents me from thanking them individually. Illinois State University has provided me with released time and a travel grant. The chairman of the Political Science Department. Professor Hibbert R. Roberts, has been most encouraging and helpful. The personnel at Praeger Publishers has made working with them a joy. My own immediate family had to exercise a lot of patience, especially my youngest son, Tom, who has waited in so many outer offices while his father was inside. Last but foremost. this book demonstrates the importance of partnership among spouses: many female legislators have pointed out that their success was due to an understanding husband. I want to say a heartfelt thank you to a most cooperative wife.

Walter S. G. Kohn

## WOMEN IN NATIONAL LEGISLATURES

#### **CONTENTS**

		Page
ACI	KNOWLEDGMENTS	vii
LIST OF TABLES		xii
Cha	pter	
1	INTRODUCTION	1
	Notes	6
2	THE UNITED STATES SENATE	7
	Women Members of the U.S. Senate	7
	Discussion	17
	Notes	23
3	THE UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES	25
	Women Members of the U.S. House of Representatives	25
	The Sixty-Seventh Congress	<b>2</b> 8
	The Sixty-Eighth Congress	29
	The Sixty-Ninth Congress	29
	The Seventieth Congress	30
	The Seventy-First Congress	31
	The Seventy-Second Congress	32
	The Seventy-Third Congress	33
	The Seventy-Fourth Congress	34
	The Seventy-Fifth Congress	34
	The Seventy-Sixth Congress	35
	The Seventy-Seventh Congress	36
	The Seventy-Eighth Congress	36
	The Seventy-Ninth Congress	37
	The Eightieth Congress	38
	The Eighty-First Congress	39
	The Eighty-Second Congress	40
	The Eighty-Third Congress	41
	The Eighty-Fourth Congress	41
	The Eighty-Fifth Congress	43
	The Eighty-Sixth Congress	43

Chapter		Page
	The Eighty-Seventh Congress	44
	The Eighty-Eighth Congress	45
	The Eighty-Ninth Congress	45
	The Ninetieth Congress	46
	The Ninety-First Congress	46
	The Ninety-Second Congress	46
	The Ninety-Third Congress	48
	The Ninety-Fourth Congress	49
	The Ninety-Fifth Congress	51
	The Ninety-Sixth Congress	51
	Discussion	52
	Notes	66
4	THE BRITISH HOUSE OF COMMONS	68
	History	68
	The British Electoral System	69
	Women Members of the British House of Commons	72
	The Parliament of 1918	72
	The Parliament of 1922	73
	The Parliament of 1923	73
	The Parliament of 1924	75
	The Parliament of 1929	77
	The Parliament of 1931	78
	The Parliament of 1935	79
	The Parliament of 1945	81
	The Parliament of 1950	83
	The Parliament of 1951	83
	The Parliament of 1955	84
	The Parliament of 1959	85
	The Parliament of 1964	86
	The Parliament of 1966	87
	The Parliament of 1970	88
	The Parliament of February 1974	90
	The Parliament of October 1974	90
	The Parliament of 1979	91
	Discussion	9 <b>2</b>
	Notes	111
5	THE CANADIAN HOUSE OF COMMONS	113
	History	113
	Women Members of the Canadian House of Commons	118
	The Parliament of 1921	118

Chapter		Page	
	The Parliaments of 1925, 1926, and 1930	118	
	The Parliament of 1935	119	
	The Parliament of 1940	119	
	The Parliament of 1945	120	
	The Parliament of 1949	120	
	The Parliament of 1953	121	
	The Parliament of 1957	121	
	The Parliament of 1958	122	
	The Parliament of 1962	122	
	The Parliament of 1963	123	
	The Parliament of 1965	123	
	The Parliament of 1968	124	
	The Parliament of 1972	124	
	The Parliament of 1974	125	
	The Parliament of 1979	126	
	Discussion	128	
	Notes	133	
6	THE GERMAN PARLIAMENT	135	
	History	135	
	Women Members of the National Assembly and		
	the Reichstag	138	
	The National Assembly of 1919	138	
	The First Reichstag (1920-24)	142	
	The Second Reichstag (May-December 1924)	143	
	The Third Reichstag (December 1924-28)	144	
	The Fourth Reichstag (1928-30)	144	
	The Fifth Reichstag (1930-May 1932)	145	
	The Sixth Reichstag (July-November 1932)	147	
	The Seventh Reichstag (November 1932-March 1933)	147	
	The Eighth Reichstag (March 1933)	147	
	The Reichstag under Hitler	148	
	Women Members of the Bundestag	149	
	The First Bundestag (1949-53)	151	
	The Second Bundestag (1953-57)	154	
	The Third Bundestag (1957–61)	156	
	The Fourth Bundestag (1961-65)	157	
	The Fifth Bundestag (1965-69)	158	
	The Sixth Bundestag (1969-72)	159	
	The Seventh Bundestag (1972-76)	160	
	The Eighth Bundestag (1976-80)	162	
	Discussion	162	
	Notes	180	

Chapter		Page
7,	THE AUSTRIAN NATIONALRAT	183
	History	183
	Women Members of the Austrian Nationalrat	184
	The Election of 1919	184
	The Election of 1920	186
	The Election of 1923	187
	The Election of 1927	187
	The Election of 1930	187
	The Undemocratic Era	188
	The Election of 1945	188
	The Election of 1949	190
	The Election of 1953	191
	The Election of 1956	191
	The Election of 1959	192
	The Election of 1962	192
	The Election of 1966	193
	The Election of 1970	193
	The Election of 1971	194
	The Election of 1975	195
	The Election of 1979	195
	Discussion	196
	Notes	207
8	THE SWISS PARLIAMENT	- 210
	History	210
	Women Members of the Swiss Legislature	216
	The Election of 1971	218
	The Election of 1975	222
	The Ständerat	224
	Discussion	225
	Addendum	229
	Notes	232
9	CONCLUSION	234
	Notes	241
вп	BLIOGRAPHY	242
AΒ	OUT THE AUTHOR	250

#### LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
1.1	Comparative Data	4
2.1	Length of Service of Women Senators	9
2.2	Women as Senatorial Candidates of Major Parties, 1960-78	20
2.3	Women Members of the U.S. Senate	21
2.4	The U.S. Senate and Female Members	22
3.1	Woman Suffrage in the United States before the Nineteenth Amendment	27
3.2	Ages of Women Entering the House	55
3.3	Female Representatives and Senators per State, 1917-79	56
3.4	Female Representation in the U.S. House by Population of States	57
3.5	Length of Service of Congresswomen	58
3.6	Women Members of the U.S. House of Representatives	59
3.7	The House of Representatives and Female Members	63
4.1	Women Candidates in British General Elections	93
4.2	Termination of Service of Women M.P.s	95
4.3	Party Affiliation of Women Members of the British House of Commons	96
4.4	Women Candidates for Parliament during the 1979 Election	97
4.5	Geographic Distribution of Seats Held by Women	99

Table		Page
4.6	Ages of Women Entering British Parliament	100
4.7	Women Members of the British House of Commons	102
4.8	The British House of Commons and Female Members	107
5.1	Woman Suffrage in Canada	115
5.2	Women Candidates in the Canadian Election of 1979	127
5.3	Women Members of the Canadian House of Commons	130
5.4	The Canadian House of Commons and Female Members	132
6.1	Party Affiliations of Women in the German Reichstag	150
6.2	Number of Women at the Start of German Legislative Periods	163
6.3	Vacancies Filled by Women	165
6.4	Female Bundestag Members Elected from Districts	166
6.5	Ages of Women Entering Weimar Legislature	168
6.6	Ages of Women Entering Bonn Legislature	169
6.7	Female Bundestag Members by States and Parties	171
6.8	Women Members of the East German Volkskammer	173
6.9	The Weimar Republic's Legislatures and Female Members	174
6.10	West Germany's Bundestag and Female Members	176
7.1	Women in the Nationalrat by Party and Province	197
7.2	Ages of Women Entering Austrian Legislature	200
7.3	Elected Women Members of the Austrian Parliament	202

Table		Page
7.4	Austrian Elected Legislatures and Female Members	205
8.1	Woman Suffrage in Switzerland	215
8.2	Party Affiliation of Female Members of the Swiss Parliament	226
8.3	Ages of Women Entering Swiss Nationalrat	227
8.4	Cantonal Representation of Women	228
8.5	Female Members of the Swiss Legislature	230
8.6	The Swiss National and Female Members	231

### *1*INTRODUCTION

"Where are the women?" exclaims Lysistrata in the opening scene of Aristophanes' play when hardly anyone shows up for a meeting she has called for political action by women. This cry of 2,400 years ago has been echoing and reechoing through the ages. Even now, when political equality among the sexes has been formally achieved in most countries, and men and women have the right to vote for, and become members of, the legislatures without constitutional discrimination, one look at the predominantly male parliamentary bodies will inevitably lead to a repetition of the ancient question, "Where are the women?"

Political equality among the sexes is a twentieth-century phenomenon. Before World War I, there were a few isolated cases where women had been given the right to vote; New Zealand had done so in 1893, Finland in 1906, and Norway in 1913. In the United States, Kentucky let women vote in school elections in 1838, and Kansas, in 1861. Similar steps were taken by 15 other states before the turn of the century. Full political participation for women was achieved in Wyoming in 1869 and in Colorado, Utah, and Idaho within the next few decades. After a few more western states had also passed woman suffrage legislation, the concept of sexual equality eventually crossed the Mississippi in 1913, when Illinois allowed women to vote for president. Four years later. New York State amended its constitution in a referendum to give women full political rights. Congress was now ready to write female suffrage into the federal Constitution, and the Nineteenth Amendment was duly ratified and became part of the law of the land in August 1920.<sup>2</sup>

The war also brought the franchise to women in Denmark and the Netherlands and, at its end, to Britain and the new republics of Germany and Austria. In Canada, woman suffrage was very much a local affair, as it had been in the United States. The western provinces took the lead; Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta preceded the all-dominion franchise for women by two years,\* with Quebec the last to enfranchise, in 1940. Even so, Quebec led the French-speaking world because it was 1944 when France and 1948 when Belgium enfranchised women. Switzerland, despite pride in its democratic tradition and practices, waited until 1971 before its female population was able to participate in the determination of the country's political destiny. It was left to some of the smallest countries in Europe to hold out the longest. San Marino failed to let the women vote before 1960, and Liechtenstein's male electorate has thus far steadfastly refused in several plebiscites to extend the franchise to its wives and daughters, despite urgent pleas by a variety of government leaders, parliamentarians, politicians, newspaper editors, and members of the reigning royal family.

Nevertheless, great strides have indeed been made in most nations, especially as a result of wartime upheavals. Just as returning soldiers could not be kept "down on the farm after they had seen Paree," so women were not willing to remain confined to their traditional realms of <u>Kinder</u>, <u>Küche</u>, <u>Kirche</u> after so many had played an active part in the war effort. They realized that there was more to life than looking after the children, working in the kitchen, and going to church. Politics, after all, determines, as Harold Lasswell says, "who gets what, when, and how" and is consequently a matter of vital concern to women as well as men.

Women soon learned to exercise their newly acquired right to participate in voting. Although the voter turnout of women as compared with men naturally varies from election to election and from country to country, by and large women have come to regard voting as an exercise in citizenship that they do not hesitate to perform. Maurice Duverger points this out in his UNESCO study.

So far as elections are concerned, the proportion of women taking part in the political life is large, and does not differ materially from that of men, as regards either number or composition. It is true that there

<sup>\*</sup>In Canadian national elections, relatives of members of the armed forces were enfranchised on September 20, 1917, and all other women on May 24, 1918 (Catherine L. Cleverdon, <u>The Woman Suffrage Movement in Canada</u> [Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974], p. 2).

are generally slightly more non-voters among women than among men, and that the woman's vote is generally slightly more conservative and more subject to religious influences. But these differences are small and apply only to a tiny fraction of the female electorate.<sup>3</sup>

Thus, having discovered the political weapon that the ballot represents, women are utilizing it in roughly the same way and manner as their male counterparts.

However, the active political role that women are playing is very one-sided. The franchise for women was usually either accompanied or quickly followed by the right to be elected to public office. It is in this connection that the picture is far from bright. As members of elected political bodies, women have remained conspicuous by their absence.

In the present volume, an attempt will be made to give an account of the female members of the national legislatures in several countries, specifically, the United States, Britain, Canada, Germany, \* Austria, † and Switzerland. All these claim to be democracies in the Western sense; they have parliamentary bodies whose membership in at least one house is determined through direct, popular elections. Eliminated from consideration in this study are nonelective chambers that coexist with elected ones, namely, the British House of Lords, the Canadian Senate, and the Bundesrat (the federal council in both Austria and the Federal Republic of Germany). ‡

Although the selected countries have a common commitment to elected legislatures based on the principle of representative democracy, they are also sufficiently different in their particular democratic procedures and practices to provide interesting contrasts (see Table 1.1). Three of the countries are part of the English-speaking world and its Anglo-Saxon tradition (with due apologies to Canada's French-speaking Quebec) and are located

<sup>\*</sup>Included are the Reichstag, the parliament of the Weimar Republic from 1919 to 1933, and the present Bundestag of the Federal Republic.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>†</sup>The Nationalrat of the two Austrian republics will be considered.

<sup>‡</sup>It should be noted that in Switzerland the Bundesrat is the seven-member executive body. Naturally, this does not concern us here, though we might mention in passing that as of the summer of 1979 no woman has attained membership in that body.