

tabled in Parliament. In case of disagreement between the Assembly and the Senate on the text of a bill, the Assembly does not have the last word, as was the case under the Fourth Republic, unless the Government intervenes to ask the Assembly to vote the definitive text.

Provisions for a vote of confidence and a vote of censure in the Assembly are included. Failure of the former, or success of the latter, automatically brings about the resignation of the Prime Minister. The President retains the power to dissolve the Assembly which, in some form or other, has been a usual feature of French constitutions but which was never used after an unwise and unsuccessful attempt by President MacMahon in the early days of the Third Republic. This power will now be in the hands of the President without any further restriction than the obligation "to consult" the Premier and the President of each Assembly. (Under the terms of the constitution, the National Assembly will be able to bring about the fall of the Government only with considerable difficulty.)

The Overseas Territories

The new constitution also establishes machinery for the association of France with her overseas territories. They may retain their present status. They may also become members of "the Community" where "the states shall enjoy autonomy, they shall administer themselves, and, freely and democratically, shall manage their own affairs." The Community will have a Senate, made up of representatives from the various Assemblies, and an Executive Council, consisting of the Premier of France and the head of government of each member together with each Minister responsible for Community affairs. These bodies will deliberate on the common affairs of the Community—foreign policy, defence, the monetary system, common economic and financial policy, as well as the policy on strategic raw materials.

It is to be noted that independence was not one of the options mentioned in the constitution. This did not mean that France was opposed to the right of the territories to determine their own destiny. Those who wanted immediate and total independence could take it and the way to indicate this desire was to vote against the referendum on the constitution. General de Gaulle made it quite clear, however, that the overseas territories should realize that a decision for independence would probably mean the end of economic assistance from France.

As noted above, only Guinea voted for independence in the referendum, all other territories choosing to retain their links with France.

Electoral Law

The constitution empowered General de Gaulle's Government to establish by decree a new electoral law to govern the elections to the National Assembly. This law was, in fact, made public on October 8 and governed the election on November 23 and 30 of the first legislature under the Fifth Republic. The most important feature of the new law was to establish single-seat in place of multi-seat constituencies and to do away with the arrangement under which several parties were able to pool their votes, an arrangement which was only partly successful in its aim to limit Communist representation vote. The new system places the emphasis upon the candidate, not upon the party or policy, and brought forward a quite different Assembly.