
I. FINLAND

The Country

Finland is bounded in the west by Sweden, in the north by Norway and in the east by the U.S.S.R. It has a total area of 337,000 square kilometres (130,000 square miles), which includes some 30,000 islands off the Finnish coast, mainly in the south and southwest. There are approximately 60,000 lakes and these comprise 9 per cent of the total area; another 57 per cent is forest and 8 per cent cultivated land. About one third of Finland's total length lies above the Arctic Circle.

The Government

Finland is a republic with a unicameral Parliament and is a democracy in the Western context. The 200 members of Parliament are elected by universal suffrage every four years. Legislative power lies with Parliament, whose confidence the Government must enjoy. The President is elected for a 6-year period. The present Head of State, Dr. Mauno Koivisto has held office since 1982.

The People

Finland's population of 4.8 million people has been relatively static for many years. The Finnish language is not an Indo-European language but together with Hungarian and Estonian belongs to the Fenno-Ugrian group. There is a Swedish-speaking minority of 6.3 per cent. Most businessmen speak English. The population density is 16 inhabitants per square kilometre. About 40 per cent of the population lives in rural areas and 60 per cent in towns and urban districts.

There is complete freedom of worship in Finland. Some 90 per cent of the population belongs to the Evangelical Lutheran denomination, 1.3 per cent to the Orthodox Church, and 6 per cent does not belong to any established church but is on the civil register. The balance are members of other denominations.

Helsinki has 483,000 inhabitants and is the capital of Finland. An important port, it is the administrative, cultural and business centre of Finland and has