

## Dissolution of Parliament.

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Both Houses of the Belgian Parliament were dissolved by a decree of Prince Charles, the Regent, on May 19, and general and provincial elections ordered to be held on June 26.

For some months there had been increasing differences between the two Coalition parties, the Christian Socials (Catholics) and the Socialists, which came to a head over the question of how to finance an increase in unemployment benefits totalling 3,000,000,000 francs (about £17, 000,000) a year to be paid to Belgium's 200,000 unemployed, the Socialists proposing an additional tax on company profits which the Christian Socials refused. The principal point at issue, however, remained the Royal question, the Socialists demanding King Leopold's abdication and the Christian Socials refusing any other solution but his return.

A Bill advancing the date of the coming into force of the women's franchise (which under the law of 1948 would have operated Only as from July 20, 1949), so as to enable women to vote in the forthcoming elections, was passed by the Chamber of Deputies on April 27 by 170 votes to 4 and by the Senate on May 12. At the same time another Bill was passed increasing the number of seat. in the Chamber from 202 to 212, in accordance with the results of the last census.

The Minister of the Interior announced on May 31 that the total electorate would number 2,705,182 men and 2,930,270 women, the latter being in a majority in every province except Limbourg. ( Le Soir, Brussels - Le Monde, Paris) (**Prev. rep. Royal Question, 9990 B; Women's Franchise,. 9175 D.**)