

## CAMEROON

**Date of Elections:** May 18, 1973

### **Purpose of Elections**

Elections were held for all the members of the National Assembly, newly established in accordance with the Constitution of May 1972 \*.

### **Characteristics of Parliament**

The unicameral Parliament of Cameroon, the National Assembly, comprises 120 members elected for 5 years. On the initiative of the President of the Republic, the Assembly may decide by law to extend or shorten its term.

### **Electoral System**

All citizens of Cameroon of either sex who have reached the age of 21 and have not been disqualified by law are entitled to vote. The name of each citizen who is permanently domiciled, or has lived for at least 6 months, in a particular constituency may be entered on the electoral list of that same constituency. Members of the armed forces are registered where based notwithstanding the residence requirement.

Ineligible to vote are convicted criminals, undischarged bankrupts, the insane, and certain persons under personal restraint or warrant for arrest. Moreover, persons convicted of offenses subversive to or against the security of the State may not be registered on an electoral list for a period of 10 years from the date of conviction.

Electoral lists are permanent and are revised annually throughout the country. Voting is not compulsory.

All registered electors at least 23 years old by the date of the election, who are able to read and write English or French, may be candidates to the National Assembly. Ineligible are persons under allegiance to a foreign State and — for 6 months following their leaving their posts — government officials employed by agencies concerned with national defense or security, as well as members of the armed forces. Membership in the National Assembly is incompatible with the office of Minister, Vice-Minister, member of the Economic and Social Council, or senior officer of a national firm, unless a Deputy is named to this last post as member of the board of directors of a public enterprise. No Deputy

\* See *Chronicle of Parliamentary Elections VI* (1971-1972), pp. 5 and 6.

may use his title or allow it to be used in connection with publicity for financial, industrial or commercial firms.

Lists of candidates must be submitted at least 15 days prior to election day, accompanied by a deposit of Francs CFA 50,000, reimbursable if the list obtains at least 25% of the votes cast.

For election purposes, the country as a whole constitutes one constituency. The amount of candidates comprising the list of each legally-existing political party must equal the number of seats to be filled at the national level. Deputies are elected by simple majority, without preferential or limited voting or vote-splitting.

When at least 2 vacancies occur between general elections, by-elections are held within 12 months following the latter vacancy. No such elections are held when vacancies arise less than one year before the end of the National Assembly's term.

### General Political Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

In accordance with the Electoral Law, the election campaign opened 15 days prior to the election date. A total of 2,600 candidates were chosen by the political bureau of the *Union nationale camerounaise*, the country's sole political party.

The turnout of voters — 98.4 % — was a record high and evidenced the electorate's interest in the final phase of introduction of new institutions adopted one year before by the approval of a referendum transforming the nation into a unitary State. The introduction of the National Assembly enhanced the social and economic development which President Ahmadou Ahidjo expected would result through national unification.

The Assembly's 120 Deputies elected represented the following provinces: North (Garoua)~36; Centre-South (Yaounde) 23; West 18; North-West 14; Littoral (Duala) 13; and South-West (Buea) 10.

### Statistics

#### 1. Results of the Elections

Number of registered voters . . . . .	3,318,390	
Voters . . . . .	3,262,064	(98.4%)
Blank or void ballot papers . . . . .	578	
Votes in favor of the <i>Union nationale camerounaise</i> . . . . .	3,261,486	(98.3%)

2. *Distribution of Members of Parliament according to Sex*

Men . . . . .	.113
Women . . . . .	.7
	120

3. *Average Age: 40 years*