

CEYLON

Date of Elections: May 27, 1970

Characteristics of Parliament

The bicameral Parliament of Ceylon consists of the Senate and House of Representatives. Of the 30 Senators, 15 are elected by the House of Representatives and 15 are nominated by the island's Governor-General. The House of Representatives is made up of **151** members elected for a 5-year term on the basis of 1 deputy to 75,000 inhabitants.

In May 1970, legislative elections were held to renew all the deputies, their mandates having expired.

Electoral System

All Ceylonese citizens of either sex and over the age of 18 may take part in the voting, provided they can read and write English, Cingalese or Tamil and are registered on the electoral lists which are drawn up for each constituency and revised annually in June.

In order to be eligible for Parliament, a candidate must be a British subject, of sound mind and must not have been sentenced, during the period of 7 years immediately preceding, to more than 3 months' imprisonment, not be an undischarged bankrupt nor have been convicted of corrupt or illegal practices.

Senators, who must be at least 35 years of age, cannot be elected to the House of Representatives. The mandate of deputy is incompatible with the tenure of public office.

Every candidate for the legislative elections must be proposed by 2 persons. If he is put forward by a political party, he must pay a deposit of 500 rupees (or 1,000 rupees if he stands as an Independent) which will be refunded to him by the Treasury if he obtains more than 1/8 of the votes at the elections.

Elections are held by simple plurality system in 145 constituencies, of which **141** elect one single deputy, and the others 2 or 3. Electors have 1 vote when there is 1 candidate to be returned, otherwise they have as many votes as there are seats to be filled.

Within one month of a vacancy occurring in the House of Representatives, the Governor-General organizes a by-election to fill the vacant seat.

General Political Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

The House of Representatives was dissolved on March 25, 1970, and candidatures had to be deposited before April 27.

The two main political forces in evidence were: the United National Party, a Conservative party that had been in the majority in the outgoing House; and a coalition made up of 3 left-wing parties, the *Sri Lanka* Freedom Party, the *Lanka Sama Samaja* Party (Trotskyist) and the pro-Moscow Communist Party. In fact, the campaign revealed the opposition of the 2 big parties, the United National Party and the *Sri Lanka* Freedom Party and their respective leaders, Mr. Dudley Senanayake, the outgoing Prime Minister, and Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike, former Prime Minister.

The left-wing coalition campaign centred on unemployment, the reduction of free distributions of rice, inflation and the Conservative Government's dependence on the World Bank. Against these arguments, Mr. Senanayake's party stressed the stability of the country brought about by the Government, the rise in rice production and the threat of a Communist take-over.

The election results revealed the victory of the left-wing coalition and particularly the *Sri Lanka* Freedom Party which won 50 seats more than it had held in the previous Legislature, thus obtaining a majority in the House.

The United National Party, which had put up 128 candidates, lost 49 seats and Mr. Senanayake himself was returned by a very narrow majority in his constituency. Similarly, the right-wing parties lost a number of seats to the left-wing coalition.

The new House met on June 7, 1970.

Statistics

1. *Results of the Elections and Distribution of Seats
in the House of Representatives*

Number of registered voters	5,500,000 (approx.)
Valid votes	4,953,789

Political Group	Number of Candidates	Votes obtained*	%	Number of Seats in the House of Representatives	Number of Seats in the previous Legislature
United Left Front					
<i>Sri Lanka</i> Freedom Party	106	1,817,349		01	41
<i>Lanka Sama Samaja</i> Party	23	433,244	77	19	10
Communist Party	9	169,149		6	4
United National Party	128	1,879,996		17	11
United Federal Party.	19	245,747	23	13	14
Tamil Congress Party.	12	115,557		3	3
Independents	86	292,747		2	6
				151	144

* The number of votes concerns the 149 contested seats for which there were elections. One *Sri Lanka* Freedom Party candidate was elected uncontested, and another member of the same Party was elected later, the elections for the seat having been deferred on account of the death of a candidate shortly before the day of the general elections.

2. Distribution of Representatives according to Sex

Men	145
Women	6
	151