

GAMBIA

Date of Elections: March 28 and 29, 1972

Reason for Elections

Elections were held to renew all the members of the House of Representatives on the normal expiration of their mandate.

Characteristics of Parliament

The unicameral Parliament of Gambia, the House of Representatives, consists of:

- 32 " elected members ";
- 4 " Chiefs' representative members ";
- 3 " nominated members " appointed by the President of the Republic;
- the Speaker, elected by the House, who may either have been a member of it or not, but may not be a Minister;
- the Attorney-General, who sits *ex-officio*.

Only the elected members, Chiefs' representative members, and the Attorney-General have the right to vote.

All members of the House have 5-year terms of office.

Electoral System

Requirements applicable to electors:

— Of elected members: To qualify, any citizen of Gambia of either sex must be registered on the electoral rolls, must be at least 21 years of age, and must be a resident for at least 6 months of the constituency in which he is registered. Any person under allegiance to a foreign State, insane, or serving a sentence of imprisonment is not qualified, as are Head Chiefs.

— Of Chiefs' representative members: These are elected exclusively by the Head Chiefs.

The electoral registers of each constituency are revised in each " general registration year ", i.e., every fifth year after 1968; a supplemental registration is carried out in each of the intervening years. Voting is not compulsory.

Requirements applicable to candidates:

— As elected members: Any citizen of Gambia who is at least 21 years of age, who can speak English well enough to take an active part in the proceed-

ings of the House and who is qualified as an elector may be a candidate for election as an elected member. Undischarged bankrupts, the insane, those owing allegiance to a foreign State, those under a sentence of death, those serving, or having in the preceding 5 years served a sentence of imprisonment of at least 6 months and those interested in certain government contracts are ineligible. Chiefs' representative members and candidates for election as such members do not qualify for election as elected members.

— As Chiefs' representative members: The same qualifications and disqualifications apply as for elected members, except that candidates for election as Chiefs' representative members need not qualify as electors. Elected members and candidates to be elected members do not qualify for election as Chiefs' representative members.

Gambia is divided into 32 electoral constituencies, the boundaries of which are fixed by a presidential commission. In each of these, a single Deputy is elected by simple plurality of vote.

Chiefs' representative members must be approved unanimously by the Head Chiefs from a list proposed by them; if they are not so approved, they are selected on the basis of simple plurality.

A by-election is held to fill any seat of an elected member or a Chiefs' representative member which becomes vacant between general elections.

General Political Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

During the electoral campaign, the ruling People's Progressive Party (PPP), contesting all 32 seats, emphasized its role as the party of National Unity, which led the people out of colonial bondage and gave them 10 years of stable government and economic progress. The United Party (UP), contesting 14 seats, and the 19 independent candidates questioned some of the policies of the ruling party; other policies it approved, but accused the Government of failing to implement. The relatively youthful independent candidates focused, among other things, on the question of closer ties with Senegal and the unemployment problem in Bathurst, the capital.

Following the PPP's handsome victory in the elections, President Sir Dawda Jawara reconstituted his Cabinet on April 6, increasing its membership by one.

Statistics

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

Number of registered voters.	136,521
Valid votes.	103,851

Political Group	Number of Candidates	Votes obtained	%	Number of Seats of Elected Members in the House of Representatives
People's Progressive Party (PPP)	32	65,388	63.1	28 (+4)
United Party (UP)	14	17,161	16.4	3 (=)
Independents	19	21,302	20.5	1 (-4)
				~32

* Results in the 25 constituencies where elections actually took place, since in 7 the PPP's candidates were unopposed.

2. Distribution of Elected Members of the House of Representatives
according to Sex

Men.	32
Women.	—
	32

3. Average Age of Parliamentarians: 35 years (approx.)