

GHANA

Date of Elections: August 29, and September 2 and 3, 1969

Characteristics of Parliament

The Parliament of Ghana consists of one House, the National Assembly, whose 140 members are elected for a period of 5 years. The Speaker, elected by the Assembly, can be one of its members or someone from outside the Parliament who fulfils the necessary conditions for eligibility.

The citizens were called to the polls to elect the members of the Parliament instituted by the new Constitution which was promulgated by a Constituent Assembly on August 23. This election marked the country's return to the normal process of representative institutions following 3 years of military rule.

Electoral System

Every Ghanaian citizen of either sex who is at least 21 years old and of sound mind has the right to register on the electoral lists which are revised annually and prepared anew every 10 years. Every elector, with the exception of officials of international organizations or those stationed abroad, must, moreover, have resided for 12 months in his constituency or possess immovable property there. Voting is not compulsory.

Each Ghanaian citizen, man or woman, is eligible for the National Assembly, provided he is at least 21 years old and resident in the constituency for which he is a candidate, or has resided there for an aggregate of at least 5 years. The candidate or his wife must belong to the ethnic community of the constituency; he must be able to speak and write English proficiently and be sufficiently qualified to participate actively in the Assembly's debates. The following are ineligible for the National Assembly: those who hold foreign allegiance, are declared bankrupt or not competent to hold public office (on the decision of a Court of Enquiry), those recognized as capable of treason, fraud or other crimes, contractors, officers of the police service and armed forces, judicial or prison authorities and civil servants. Certain individuals who had belonged to the Nkrumah regime and whose names are mentioned in a decree of February 17, 1969, are also ineligible.

The 140 deputies are elected by simple majority system in as many constituencies.

Should a seat fall vacant during a legislature, a by-election is held within 30 days.

General Political Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

The legislative elections of August 29, 1970, crowned the process of Ghana's return to constitutional order, the country having been under martial law since the overthrow of President Nkrumah in 1966.

Initially, a draft Constitution had been prepared in 1968 by a constitutional Commission appointed by the National Liberation Council which had assumed power. This draft was then examined by a Constituent Assembly convened in the spring of 1969, and was promulgated by that body on August 23 of the same year.

During this time, party political activity, banned since the putsch, had been authorized by the National Liberation Council, and new political parties were formed.

Apart from a few independent candidates, there were 5 parties contesting the elections: the National Alliance of Liberals (NAL), the Progress Party (PP), the People's Action Party (PAP), the United Nationalist Party (UNP), and the All People's Republican Party (APRP). Two of these, however, dominated their rivals: the NAL, led by Mr. K.A. Gbedemah, of Ewe origin, a former minister under Nkrumah from whom he had split in 1961; and the PP, led by Dr. K.A. Busia, an eminent sociologist and former Oxford professor who had been leader of the Opposition under the previous regime and who belongs to the powerful Akan ethnic community.

These two leaders conducted a careful campaign which aroused the Ghanaian people and was extremely lively throughout the whole country, but never the cause of violence.

The elections, held on August 29 in nearly all the country, on September 2 in Chiana-Paga and on September 3 in Tumu, resulted in a victory for the Progress Party of Dr. Busia who, from his first official declaration, announced that Ghana would establish new relations with its French-speaking neighbours, Ivory Coast, Upper Volta and Togo, but that immediate priority would be given to the country's economic and financial situation. It should, however, be noted that political differences tended to follow closely the divisions of the various ethnic communities. In fact, the great majority of successful Progress Party candidates were elected in constituencies with Akan populations, only two in predominantly Ewe constituencies; and the seats won by the PAP and UNP were in regions with Nzima and Ga populations respectively.

Statistics

1. *Results of the Elections and Distribution of Seats in the National Assembly*

Number of registered voters	2,361,462
Valid votes	1,504,032

Political Group	Number of Candidates	Votes obtained	%	Number of Seats in the National Assembly
Progress Party (PP)	138	877,310	58.4	105
National Alliance of Liberals (NAL)	138	463,401	30.8	21)
All People's Republican Party (APRP)	45	27,328	1.8	1
People's Action Party (PAP)	51	51,125	3.4	2
United Nationalist Party (UNP)	87	57,652	3.8	2
Independents	20	27,216	1.8	1
	480			140

2. Distribution of Parliamentarians according to Professional Category

Lawyers	34
Teachers	23
Businessmen/industrialists	18
Farmers	11
Research workers	5
Civil servants	5
Economists	4
Councillors/treasurers	3
Engineers	3
Journalists	3
Medical practitioners	2
Pharmacists/chemists	2
Contractors	2
Secretaries	2
Public relations officer	
Agricultural assistant	
Social worker	
Accountant	
Company director	
Sociologist	
Printer	
Ex-policeman	
Others	13

140

3. *Distribution of Parliamentarians according to Sex*

Men	138
Women	2
	140

4. *Average Age: 41*