

HAITI

Date of Elections: February 11, 1973

Purpose of Elections

The first general elections since 1967 were held to elect the totality of the membership of Parliament.

Characteristics of Parliament

According to the Constitution revised in 1971, the unicameral Parliament of Haiti, variously called the Legislative Chamber, the *Corps Legislatif* or the National Assembly (this last upon meetings held for certain specified purposes, such as the amendment of the Constitution), consists of 58 members (*Membres du Corps Legislatif*) elected for 6 years.

Electoral System

All citizens of either sex over 18 years of age have the right to vote, provided they have full political and civil rights and are registered on the electoral lists, which are permanent and revised annually.

Voting is a civic duty, although abstention is not subject to punishment.

Persons meeting the same requirements as electors are eligible for Parliament provided they have resided for at least 5 years in the constituency they wish to represent. Neither contractors of the State nor representatives or agents of individuals or companies who are contractors of the State may become Deputies. The office of Deputy, furthermore, is incompatible with all employment paid by the State, except for the office of Secretary of State, Under Secretary of State and diplomatic officer.

Candidatures to Parliament must be submitted at least 8 days before elections.

Deputies are elected on the basis of simple majority by the electors of each constituency, grouped into Primary Assemblies (*Assemblies Primaires*).

By-elections are held to fill parliamentary vacancies arising between general elections, unless these vacancies occur during or following the last ordinary session of the legislature. The by-elections take place within 30 days of the convocation of the Primary Assembly concerned, which is effected by the President of the Republic.

General Political Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

The elections were the first since President Francois Duvalier, who had been in power from 1957 to 1971, died and his son Jean-Claude in turn became President for life.

Over 300 candidates — all supporters of President Duvalier and members of the official political group *Parti de Vniti Nationale* — contested the 58 seats at stake during a rather troubled campaign. They discussed mostly local issues at the constituency level, with some controversy developing between the " old guard " and the younger candidates.