

LIBERIA

Date of Elections: October 7, 1975

Purpose of Elections

Elections were held for all the members of the House of Representatives on the normal expiry of their term of office.

Characteristics of Parliament

The bicameral Congress of Liberia comprises a House of Representatives and a Senate.

The House of Representatives is composed of 71 members elected for 4 years. The Senate consists of 18 members elected for 6 years, two being chosen in each of the country's nine counties.

Electoral System

All Liberian citizens who are at least 18 years of age, owners of real estate of at least L\$2000 value and registered on the electoral rolls are eligible to vote for members of Congress. Disqualified, however, are the insane and persons convicted of crime or owing allegiance to a foreign State. Voting is not compulsory.

Every qualified elector may be nominated by a political party as a candidate for the House of Representatives if he is at least 23 years of age and possesses real estate in the county where running. Candidates must moreover have resided in their constituency for two years immediately prior to their election. The minimum requirements for candidates for the Senate are 25 years of age, ownership of real estate and three years' continuous residence. The parliamentary mandate is incompatible with membership of the armed forces or party to a contract with the Government.

Representatives are elected in single-member constituencies by simple majority vote. Senators are also chosen by simple plurality.

Vacancies in the Congress are filled through by-elections.

General Political Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

The legislative elections were combined with those for President of the Republic and local government officials, and were the first to be held since the reduction of the voting age to 18 in 1972.

Shortly before the poll, outgoing President William Tolbert of the ruling True Whig Party called for a massive voter turnout and promised that, if re-elected, his Administration would pursue its programme of manpower development and integrated rural development, marked especially by the construction of roads, schools and other public buildings. On election day, President Tolbert and all 74 of the candidates for Congress of the True Whig Party, the country's sole political group, were returned unopposed. Over 80% of the electorate, an unprecedented number, cast more than 750,000 votes.