

NAURU

Date of Elections: November 12,1977

Purpose of Elections

Elections were held for all the members of Parliament following the premature dissolution of this body in October 1977. Previous general elections had been held in December 1976*.

Characteristics of Parliament

The unicameral Parliament of Nauru comprises 18 members elected for 3 years.

Electoral System

All citizens who have attained the age of 20 years and are resident in the country may vote in general elections unless they are insane or have been convicted and are under sentence for an offence punishable by imprisonment for one year or longer. Voting is compulsory except in certain specified instances.

Any citizen who has attained the age of 20 years is qualified to be elected as a member of Parliament unless he is insane, an undischarged bankrupt, under sentence for an offence punishable by death or imprisonment for at least one year, does not possess the required residence or domicile qualifications, or holds an office of profit in the service of Nauru or of a statutory corporation.

A written nomination of a candidate must be submitted at least 14 days prior to polling day, signed by the candidate and two or more electors of his district.

For election purposes, Nauru is divided into eight constituencies; two members are returned in seven of these, four in the eighth, according to a system of preferential vote. In each constituency, the candidate who has received the largest number of first preference votes is, if that number constitutes an absolute majority of these votes cast, declared elected.

• See *Chronicle of Parliamentary Elections XI (1976-1977)*, p. 129.

General Political Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

Parliament was dissolved by President Dowiyogo in October 1977 — two years before the expiry of the legislature's normal term.

This dissolution had been preceded by a sustained campaign against the Government on the part of former President DeRoburt, ousted in 1976. Controversy especially surrounded the passage of a Supply Act in June. President Dowiyogo explained that he was resorting to the polls in order to seek a mandate from the people.

Following a lively campaign in which more than 50 candidates took part, the President and his ruling Nauru Party scored a narrow victory, obtaining nine seats to eight for Mr. DeRoburt and his allies; the remaining seat went to an independent Nauru Party supporter (who was later elected Speaker). Parliament re-elected Mr. Dowiyogo as President on November 15.

Statistics

1. Results of the Elections

Votes cast 1,599