

PHILIPPINES

Date of Elections: November 14, 1967

Characteristics of Parliament:

The Philippine Parliament is bicameral and consists of:

- the Chamber of Representatives, comprising 104 members elected for 4 years;
- the Senate, a third of whose 24 members, elected for 6 years, are renewed every two years.

On November 14, the electorate was called upon to fill 8 vacancies in the Senate upon expiry of their holders' mandate.

Electoral System:

All literate Philippine citizens of both sexes, aged 21 and over, who have been resident in the country for one year and in their constituency for six months, are allowed to participate in the elections provided their name appears in the electoral registers — which are entirely revised every twelve years and completed on the weekend preceding each general election — and provided they are mentally sane, able to fill in their ballot themselves and enjoy full civil and political rights.

To be eligible for election to the Chamber of Representatives, candidates must be native citizens of the Philippines, registered voters, aged at least 25 and residents for one year of the province in which they are contesting a seat. Candidates to the Senate must also be qualified electors and native citizens of the Philippines, but must be at least 35 years of age and resident in the country for two years.

Senatorial elections — for eight seats each time — are held throughout the country, which constitutes a single electoral college, by plurinominal majority ballot with preferential vote. The voter fills in the names of his eight candidates on his ballot paper, in order of preference.

Voting for the 104 members of the Chamber of Representatives, however, is by majority uninominal ballot in the same number of constituencies.

General Political Considerations and Conduct of the Elections:

These partial elections were of no small interest for on them depended whether President Marcos' Nationalist Party obtained an absolute majority in the Senate or not, after winning it in the House of Representatives as a result of by-elections held in February 1967. The results of the poll could therefore influence the conduct of foreign policy since the approval of the Upper House is required both for ratifying international treaties and for the adoption of any legislative measures.

The Nationalist Party was opposed by the Liberal Party, its principal rival, led by former President Macagapal, and the newly-formed Nation's Party. Twenty-nine candidates contested the 8 vacant seats, including 8 from each of the three parties mentioned and 5 independents. The main issue in every case was the acceleration of economic development.

The campaign was fierce and, as usual in the Philippines, was marked by a number of violent incidents. One particular problem on which public interest centred was the controversy over the fact that one of the Liberal candidates, Mr. Benigno Aquino Jr., was only due to reach the age of 35 thirteen days after the elections. The matter was brought up first of all before the Commission on Elections and then in the Supreme Court, but they eventually rejected the petition against Mr. Aquino, who in the meantime had been elected.

The poll resulted in a gain of two seats for the Nationalist Party.

This, however, was only a half success which does not exclude the possibility of further surprises for President Marcos' Party in view of the traditional fluctuations in political divisions within the Philippine Parliament. Since January 1967, for example, working control of the Senate had been exercised by a group consisting of nine Liberals and two representatives of the Party for Philippine Progress, supported by the votes of four Nationalist Party Senators.

Statistics:

1. *Result of the November 24, 1967, Senate Elections*

Number of registered electors	9,427,532
Voters	7,748,900

Political Group	Number elected on November 24 1967
Nationalist Party.	6
Liberal Party.	1
Nation's Party (<i>Partido ng Bansa</i>).	0
Independents.	1

2. *New Distribution of Seats in the Senate*

Political Group	<u>Number of Seats in the Senate</u>
Nationalist Party.	14(2)
Liberal Party.	6 (-3)
Party for Philippine Progress	2(=)
Nationalist Citizens' Party	M =
Independents.	1 (+ 1)
	24