

SAINT LUCIA

Date of Elections: 2 July 1979

Purpose of Elections

Elections were held for all the members of the House of Assembly in the first such poll since attainment of independence in February 1979*.

Characteristics of Parliament

The bicameral Parliament of Saint Lucia consists of a Senate and a House of Assembly.

The Senate is composed of 11 members appointed by the Governor-General: 6 on the advice of the Prime Minister, 3 on the advice of the Leader of the Opposition, and 2 on the basis of the Governor-General's "own deliberate judgement" after undertaking various consultations.

The House of Assembly comprises 17 elected members. All parliamentarians have 5-year terms of office.

Electoral System

Every citizen of the Commonwealth who is at least 21 years old and possesses the required qualifications relating to residence or domicile in Saint Lucia is, unless otherwise disqualified, entitled to vote.

All citizens of at least 21 years of age who were born in Saint Lucia and are domiciled and resident there at the date of their nomination (or having been born elsewhere, have resided there for a period of 12 months immediately before that date), as well as able to speak and—unless incapacitated by blindness or other physical cause—to read the English language with a degree of proficiency sufficient to enable them to take an active part in the proceedings of the House are qualified to be elected as members of the House of Assembly; the age and residence requirements for Senate candidates are 30 and five years, respectively.

No person may be a member of Parliament if he is under allegiance to a foreign State, a minister of religion, an undischarged bankrupt, a person certified to be insane, or one under sentence of death or serving a term of imprisonment exceeding 12 months.

For House of Assembly elections, each constituency returns one member.

Assembly seats which fall vacant between general elections are filled through by-elections, whereas Senate vacancies are filled by appointment. Both are effected within three months of the occurrence of the vacancy.

* See *Chronicle of Parliamentary Elections and Developments XIII* (1978-1979), p. 25.

General Political Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

In Saint Lucia's first elections as an independent nation, the opposition left-wing Labour Party (SLP) won a decisive victory, capturing 12 of the 17 seats in the House of Assembly. The United Workers' Party, headed by Prime Minister John Compton and in power since 1964, was restricted to five Assembly seats.

The election campaign, which came shortly after an eight-week strike by teachers and civil servants, was held in a tense atmosphere. Economic questions were in the forefront of the SLP's election manifesto.

SLP leader Allan Louisy became the new Prime Minister.

Statistics

1. Results of the Elections and Distribution of Seats in the House of Assembly

Number of registered electors.69,966
Voters.61%

Political Group	Number of Seats
Saint Lucia Labour Party.	12(+ 5)
United Workers' Party	<u>5 (-5)</u>
	17