

## SINGAPORE

Date of Elections: April 13, 1968

Characteristics of Parliament:

The electorate in Singapore was called upon to elect the 58 members of its unicameral Parliament. The previous Assembly, which was dissolved eight months before expiry of the normal five-year mandate of the Legislature, comprised only 51 deputies: seven new seats have since been created. It should be noted that the deputies themselves are virtually allowed to co-opt two additional members since the Constitution provides for the possibility of choosing the Speaker and Vice-Speaker from outside the parliamentary ranks.

Electoral System:

All resident Singapore citizens at least 21 years of age are entitled to vote, provided they are not nationals of another State and are on the electoral register which is revised annually. Under the same conditions, any elector is eligible if he is in a position to participate actively in the work of Parliament and is able to speak at least one of the following languages: English, Malay, Mandarin Chinese or Tamil.

In each constituency, a group of at least six voters may submit a candidate, who is required to put down, or have put down for him, a deposit of \$500 which is turned over to the State if he obtains less than one-eighth of the votes cast.

Participation in the poll is obligatory and abstention is punishable by law. A single uninominal ballot is held, in which a simple majority is required for election. Voters mark a cross on their ballot paper opposite the symbol and name of their candidate.

**General Political Considerations and Conduct of the Elections:**

The announcement by Great Britain of its intention completely to withdraw its army, navy and air force units from its Asian bases by 1972 had a two-fold significance for Singapore. On the one hand, a new system of defence had to be found for the island to replace the provisions under which Great Britain assumed chief responsibility for the military protection of Singapore. On the other hand, the economic activity of the numerous inhabitants working in British military bases, or dependent on them indirectly, had to be converted and new employment found.

These problems, combined with the complexity of interracial relations in the island and the instability of the political situation in South-East Asia, sparked off an attack by the Opposition on the Prime Minister, Mr. Lee Kuan Yen, who had tried in vain to persuade London to reconsider its decision and delay the evacuation of the bases. The Government, itself divided over the action to be taken, therefore decided to advance the date of the general elections. The House was dissolved on February 9.

During the electoral campaign, the Opposition accused the Government of neglecting, out of sympathy for the British Labour Party, the basic interests of Singapore which, according to them, required the outright severance of financial ties with the United Kingdom and a search for new protectors, such as Japan.

However, on February 17 — the date fixed for the submission of candidatures — only a single candidate was put forward in 51 constituencies. In each case, this candidate was a member of Mr. Lee's People's Action Party. In accordance with the parliamentary elections ordinance and with the provisions governing tacit elections, all 51 candidates were declared elected.

Only seven seats were contested. In two constituencies, representatives of the People's Action Party were up against candidates of the Workers' Party, while in five others independent candidates contested the election of members of Mr. Lee's party. The People's Action Party won throughout and, as in the past,

remains in possession of all the seats in the new House. The effect of the general elections was thus to confirm the policy followed by Mr. Lee.

#### Statistics:

(The figures which appear below apply to the seven contested seats only.)

Number of registered voters . . . . .	82,883
Voters . . . . .	77,984
Blank or void ballot papers . . . . .	2,090
Valid votes . . . . .	75,894

Political Group	Votes obtained	%	Number elected in the Contested Consti- tuencies	Number of Seats in the Assembly
People's Action Party. . . . .	65,812	86.7	7	58 ( 7) *
Workers' Party. . . . .	3,049	4.0	0	0 ( = )
Independents. . . . .	7,033	9.3	0	<b><u>0J=</u></b>
				58

\* The new Parliament comprises 58 seats as opposed to 51 in the previous Legislature.