

SINGAPORE

Date of Elections: September 2, 1972

Purpose of Elections

Elections were held to renew all the members of Parliament, which was prematurely dissolved on August 16, 1972, at the request of the Government. As previous legislative elections had been held in April 1968, normal expiry of the Parliament's term was not due until May 5, 1973.

Characteristics of Parliament

The unicameral Parliament of Singapore consists of 65 members elected for 5 years, plus the Speaker and/or Deputy Speaker, chosen by the Parliament and who may be elected either from among members of Parliament who are neither Ministers nor Parliamentary Secretaries, or from among persons who are not members of Parliament but qualified for election as such. This total rose from 58 at the last general elections*.

Electoral System

All resident Singapore citizens at least 21 years of age and listed on the electoral registers are entitled to vote. No person may have his name entered or retained on any register of electors, however, if he is under allegiance to a foreign State, insane, guilty of offenses connected with the elections or under sentence of death or imprisonment exceeding 12 months.

Electoral registers are revised annually**. While on failure to vote an elector is expunged from the register, he may be restored either by establishing that he had good reason for not voting or by paying a penalty of S\$5.

Any registered elector is eligible for election to Parliament if he is able to read and write at least one of the following languages: English, Malay, Mandarin Chinese or Tamil. Not qualified to be members of Parliament, however, are the insane, undischarged bankrupts, those holding an office of profit, those owing allegiance to a foreign State, those guilty of offenses connected with elections, and persons convicted and under a sentence of imprisonment of not less than one year or a fine of S\$2,000. Candidates or election

* See *Chronicle of Parliamentary Elections VI* (1971-1972), p. 9.

** As the revision of electoral registers for the year 1971 was completed in May 1972, the scheduled 1972 revision was dispensed with.

agents thereto further may not be elected if they have not declared their election expenses as required by law.

In each constituency, candidatures can be presented when subscribed by at least 6 voters. Candidates must further make a deposit of \$S500, which is forfeited if they are neither elected nor obtain one-eighth of the total number of votes polled.

Each electoral division returns one member. Voters mark a cross on their ballot paper opposite the name of their candidate or, where there is more than one candidate in the division, opposite the approved symbol printed opposite each candidate's name. A simple majority is sufficient for election.

By-elections are held to fill parliamentary vacancies occurring between general elections. The President of the Republic issues writs specifying the date of the election, which is to take place not less than 5 days nor more than one month after the date of the writ.

General Political Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

For the election of September 2 — the second since Singapore's secession from Malaysia in 1965 — Nomination Day was fixed for August 23. The election campaign therefore lasted the statutory minimum 9 working days.

The ruling People's Action Party (PAP), which had been in power since 1959, was opposed in 57 of the 65 constituencies by 79 candidates of 5 Opposition parties and 2 Independents. This Opposition generally questioned the excessive defense expenditure, high cost of living and national service, and demanded the release of political prisoners. More particularly, the Chinese-oriented socialist *Barisan Sosialis*, a break-away group from the PAP which boycotted the previous elections, also called for the revocation of labour laws, such as the Employment Act, and advocated the creation of an independent, democratically unified Malaya, including Singapore island; the Workers' Party campaigned for constitutional reforms; the People's Front, a leftist party having contacts with the Malaysian Chinese Association, encouraged freedom of the press; the United National Front offered free education and medical facilities, ownership of houses for certain tenants and lower public utility charges.

The PAP, which had considered that — with the increase of foreign assets and wealth at home since 1968 — it had successfully tackled the problems brought about as a result of the run-down of British bases on its territory, now sought a new aim: to raise standards of skills and technical competence and to improve professional, management and technological expertise. Only higher standards, it argued, could enable Singapore to enlarge its role as

an international banking and financial centre, providing a home for the Asian dollar. These new objectives required a change in policy emphasis, with the accent on quality. The PAP slogan was summarized as honest and efficient government for jobs, housing, multi-racial harmony and prosperity.

The failure of a pre-election pact among the 4 main Opposition parties split the anti-PAP vote in several constituencies, and a total of 81 candidates lost their election deposits. The total PAP victory was the second of its 14-year rule under Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew. Although the Opposition gained more than 30 % of the total vote, 95,456 voters in 8 constituencies did not cast ballots, as PAP candidates (including 3 Ministers) were returned unopposed in them.

Following the elections, Mr. Lee Kuan Yew exclaimed that he remained open to a broader parliamentary representation through creation of seats for universities and the professions.

Statistics

1. Results of the Elections and Distribution of Seats in the Parliament

Number of registered voters	908,382 (65 constituencies)
« « « «	812,926 (57 constituencies)
Voters	746,219 (91.8%)
Blank or void ballot papers.	15,218
Valid votes.	731,001

Political Group	Number of Candidates	Votes obtained	◇ %	Number of Seats in Parliament
People's Action Party (PAP)	65	525,882	69.0	◇%,
Workers' Party.	27	90,875	11.9	—
United National Front.	33	55,001	7.2	—
<i>Barisan Sosialis</i>	10	34,483	4.5	—
People's Front	7	22,462	3.0	—
<i>Pekemas</i>	2	10,054	1.3	—
Independents	2	7,462	1.0	—
				65*

The new Parliament comprises 65 seats as opposed to the previous 58.

2. *Distribution of Members of Parliament according to Professional Category*

University lecturing and teaching	10
Lower school teaching	8
Journalism	6
Law.	6
Medicine.	2
Chemistry.	1
Architecture and town planning	1
Others (including business managers or executives, ex-civil servants and technicians).	31
	4

3. *Distribution of Members of Parliament according to Sex*

Men	65
Women.	—
	65"

4. *Average Age: 41 years and 5 months*