

Date of Elections: 1 May 1981

Purpose of Elections

Elections were held for all the seats in Parliament on the normal expiry of the members' term of office.

Characteristics of Parliament

The unicameral Parliament of Tonga, the Legislative Assembly, comprises 25 members: the King, the Privy Council (eight Ministers and two Governors), 7 hereditary nobles elected by their peers and 7 representatives who are popularly elected. Elected members hold office for 3 years.

Electoral System

All literate citizens of Tonga who are at least 21 years of age are entitled to vote for popularly-chosen members. Male electors must in addition not be nobles. Disqualified from voting are the insane and persons under summons for debt.

Qualified electors who are not in debt for a larger amount than is allowed by law may be chosen as representatives of the people. The parliamentary mandate is incompatible with all offices of emolument under the Crown except those of Minister, Chief Justice, Governor and Mayor.

As mentioned above, parliamentarians include seven nobles chosen by the nobles of the Kingdom and seven representatives of the people. The Legislative Assembly determines how both classes of representatives are apportioned amongst the various districts.

The Speaker of the Assembly is appointed by the King.

Upon the death or resignation of any representative of the nobles or the people, the Speaker commands that the nobles or electors of the district which he represented elect a representative in his place.

General Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

Tonga, a constitutional monarchy, achieved full independence within the British Commonwealth in June 1970. Elections to the Assembly were previously held in April 1978.

There are no political parties in the country. A unique feature of the legislative system is that the Privy Council, or Cabinet, members sit *ex-officio* in Parliament. The Prime Minister is Prince Fatafehi Tu'ipelehake, the brother of King Taufa'ahau Tupou IV.

PUBLICATIONS OF THE CIDP

Unless otherwise indicated, the publications listed below are obtainable from the Secretariat of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, Place du Petit-Saconnex, 1209 Geneva (Switzerland).

PARLIAMENTS OF THE WORLD: A Reference Compendium. A comparative study of 56 Parliaments in a series of 70 tables preceded by explanatory texts. Pp. 985. (London, The Macmillian Press Ltd., 1976). French edition of 881 pages published by Presses universitaires de France, Paris. On sale in bookshops and, for members of the Union, at the Inter-Parliamentary Secretariat, at the reduced price of Sw. Fr. 105.—. English version out of print.

SERIES "REPORTS AND DOCUMENTS"

Nos. 1, 2 and 3 out of print

No. 4 The Member of Parliament: His Requirements for Information in the Modern World

Volume I: Bilingual verbatim record of debates of the 3rd Inter-Parliamentary Symposium, held in Geneva from 18 to 20 January 1973. Pp. 329.

Volume II: *Synthesis of the Inquiry on the MP's Means of Information.* Geneva, 1973. Pp. 128*.

Both volumes. Sw. Fr. 25.—

No. 5 Who Legislates in the Modern World?

Bilingual verbatim record of debates of the 4th Inter-Parliamentary Symposium, held in Geneva from 29 to 31 January 1976. Pp. 281. » 22 —

No. 6 Provisions for the Information of Members of Parliament concerning the Activities of the United Nations and Specialized Agencies

Findings of an Inquiry. Geneva, 1977. Pp. 45*. » 7.—

No. 7 World-Wide Bibliography on Parliaments

Bilingual. Geneva, 1978. Pp. 440. » 35.—

No. 8 Parliaments and the United Nations

Bilingual verbatim record of debates of the 5th Inter-Parliamentary Symposium, held in Geneva from 27 to 29 April 1978. Pp. 252. » 23 —

No. 9 World-Wide Bibliography on Parliaments - Volume II (1977-1979)

Bilingual. Geneva, 1980. Pp. 290. » 27 —

CHRONICLE OF PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS AND DEVELOPMENTS**

I. / July 1966 - 30 June 1967.

Bilingual edition (French-English). » 7.—

II. / July 1967 - 30 June 1968*.

. » 10 —

III. / July 1968 - 30 June 1969*.

. » 15.—

IV. (1 July 1969 - 30 June 1970) to XVI (1 July 1981 - 30 June 1982)*.

. » 30 —

* French edition also available.

** Prior to volume XII (1977-1978), this work was entitled "Chronicle of Parliamentary Elections".