

COSTA RICA

Date of Elections: February 3, 1974

Purpose of Elections

Elections were held for all the members of Parliament upon the normal expiry of their term of office.

Characteristics of Parliament

The unicameral Parliament of Costa Rica, the Legislative Assembly, consists of 57 Deputies who are elected for a 4-year term and are not immediately re-eligible.

Electoral System

Every citizen of Costa Rica, of either sex, who has reached the age of 18 and who is a registered elector within his constituency is entitled to vote. Persons who cannot vote are those under judicial interdiction and those whose political rights have been suspended. Naturalized citizens can only vote 12 months after acquiring such status.

While electoral registers are drawn up at the national level, electors are listed under the district to which they belong and in which they may exercise their right to vote. The Civil Register prepares the lists 2 months and 15 days before an election, on the basis of revisions which had been made continuously. Voting is made compulsory by the Constitution.

Every member of the electorate who is Costa Rican by birth or who has resided in the country for at least 10 years after naturalization is eligible for the Legislative Assembly provided he is 21 years old, can read and write and is in possession of his civil rights. The President of the Republic (or his close relatives), Ministers, certain high magistrates, military personnel on active duty and high officials in the provincial government or of autonomous institutions cannot be elected to Parliament while in office or for 6 months after leaving these positions. Public contractors are likewise barred.

The number of Deputies elected from the country's 7 provinces is determined by the Supreme Tribunal of Elections in proportion to the population of each.

In accordance with the Electoral Code, elections are conducted in conformity with the " quotient and sub-quotient " party-list system of proportional

representation, under which electors vote for party lists without being permitted to combine different lists. The quotient is the number obtained by dividing the total of valid votes cast in a particular election by the number of seats to be filled by the same; the sub-quotient is the total of valid votes cast for a party which, while not attaining the quotient, obtains or exceeds 50 % of it.

Successful parties are those having attained the required quotient. Seats remaining unfilled pursuant to the quotient system are distributed among parties in the order of their residual votes; for this distribution, those parties which did not attain the sub-quotient are also taken into account, their votes being treated as residual votes.

Should a parliamentary vacancy arise between general elections, the Supreme Tribunal of Elections assigns the seat to the next-in-line of the party list to which belonged the former member.

General Political Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

The elections for the Legislative Assembly — held the same day as those for President of the Republic — resulted in the moderate reformist National Liberation Party (PLN) losing its congressional majority although it maintained its position as the largest party, with 27 seats.

Major political groups in opposition included the National Unification Party (PUN), the anti-Communist National Independent Party (PNI) and the Democratic Renewal (RD). Among principal campaign issues inflation was widely discussed. The Supreme Tribunal of Elections had forbidden the use of the words " Communist " and " Marxist " during the campaign, following right-wing forces' accusations of such influences penetrating the country.

Mr. Daniel Oduber Quiros (PLN) was elected President.

Statistics

1. *Distribution of Seats in the Legislative Assembly*

Political Group	Number of Seats
National Liberation Party (PLN)	27 (—5)
National Unification Party (PUN).	16 (—6)
National Independent Party (PNI).	6 (+6)
Others.	8 (+5)