

BARBADOS

Date of Elections: 18 June 1981

Purpose of Elections

Elections were held for all the members of the House of Assembly on the normal expiry of their term of office.

Characteristics of Parliament

The bicameral Parliament of Barbados consists of the House of Assembly and the Senate.

The House of Assembly is composed of 27 members* elected for a maximum of 5 years.

The Senate has 21 members: 12 appointed by the Governor-General on the advice of the Prime Minister, 2 on the advice of the Leader of the Opposition, and 7 to represent religious, economic or social interests or such other interests as the Governor-General considers appropriate.

Electoral System

Any citizen of Barbados who is at least 18 years old and who has resided in a particular constituency for a minimum of three months is entitled to vote in that same constituency. Also entitled are Commonwealth citizens of the required age who have resided in Barbados for at least three years immediately preceding the qualifying date (as elector). Disqualified from registration as electors are the insane, persons undergoing any sentence of imprisonment and persons under sentence of death or imprisonment exceeding 12 months.

Electoral registers are revised annually and prior to elections. Voting is not compulsory.

Citizens of Barbados at least 21 years of age who have resided in the country for at least seven years preceding the election are qualified to be elected as members of the House of Assembly. Candidates for appointment to the Senate must have been ordinarily resident in Barbados for the 12 months immediately preceding appointment. Ineligible, for both the House and the Senate, are undischarged bankrupts, the insane, persons owing allegiance to a foreign State, persons under sentence of death or imprisonment exceeding six months, persons convicted of a felony or of any other criminal offence involving dishonesty in the preceding ten years, and persons convicted of electoral fraud. The parliamentary mandate is incompatible with the office of judge, Director of Public Prosecutions, Auditor-General and (for the House of Assembly) minister of religion.

Candidates for the House must be nominated by two electors and make a deposit of BS250, which is forfeited if the candidate is not elected and does not obtain more than one-sixth of the total votes polled in his constituency. The Electoral Law sets strict limits on the amount of expenses a candidate may incur during his election campaign.

* See section *Parliamentary Developments*, p. 8.

For election purposes, Barbados is divided into 27 constituencies. One member of the House of Assembly is elected in each by simple majority vote.

House of Assembly seats which become vacant between general elections are filled through by-elections. Vacant Senate seats are filled by appointment made according to how the seat was originally filled.

General Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

Parliament was dissolved on 29 May 1981 pursuant to a proclamation issued by Sir Deighton Ward, the island's Governor-General. The 1981 elections were the third since Barbados attained independence from Britain in 1966.

Major contestants for the 27 seats of the newly-enlarged House of Assembly were, as in the past, the ruling Barbados Labour Party (BLP), led by Prime Minister J.M.G.M. ("Tom") Adams, and the Democratic Labour Party (DLP), headed by Mr. Errol Barrow, a former Prime Minister. Both were regarded as moderate parties. The BLP underlined its recent record in office, during which unemployment declined and per capita income rose, both to a considerable degree.

On polling day, Mr. Adams won a second term of office as his party won the same number of seats (17) as before but had its parliamentary majority reduced because of the intervening expansion of the Assembly.

Statistics

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

Number of registered electors.	167,029
Voters.	119,566 (71.58%)
Blank or void ballot papers.	1,065
Valid votes.	118,501

Political Group	Number of Candidates	Votes obtained	%	Number of Seats
Barbados Labour Party (BLP)	27	61,883	52.2	17(=)
Democratic Labour Party (DLP)	27	55,845	47.1	10(+3)
Independents	6	773	0.7	

27*

* Three seats added since last elections.

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

	House of Assembly	Senate
Lawyers.	13	4
Teachers.	3	4
Doctors.	1	1
Businessmen and other professions.	10	12
	17	21

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

	House of Assembly	Senate
Men.	26	17
Women	1	4
	27	21

4. *Distribution of Members of the House of Assembly according to Age Group*

30-39 years.	5
40-49 years.	15
50-59 years.	5
60-69 years.	2
	27