

## **BARBADOS**

**Date of Elections:** 28 May 1986

### **Purpose of Elections**

Elections were held for all the seats in the House of Assembly following premature dissolution of this body. General elections had previously been held in June 1981.

### **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.

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

The date of the general elections held three months before they were due under the Constitution - was set in early May 1986.

As in the past, primary contenders in the 1986 poll were the ruling Barbados Labour Party (BLP), headed by outgoing Prime Minister Bernard St. John, and the opposition Democratic Labour Party (DLP), led by Mr. Errol Barrow. The two parties differed slightly on domestic policies, but shared similar pro-Western foreign policies. The DLP had pledged to reduce government spending, income tax and utility and petrol prices.

On polling day, the socialist DLP won a landslide victory, gaining 24 of the 27 House of Assembly seats. The win ended a decade of rule by the more conservative BLP and marked the return to power of Mr. Barrow, who had previously been Prime Minister from 1961 to 1976; he was sworn in on 29 May and announced his Cabinet on 3 June.

## Statistics

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

Voters. . . . . 83% (approx.)  
Valid votes. . . . . 134,730

Political Group	Votes obtained	%	Number of Seats
Democratic Labour Party (DLP). . . . .	80,147	59.5	24 (+14)
Barbados Labour Party (BLP). . . . .	54,364	40.4	3 (-14)
Independents . . . . .	179		
Workers' Party of Barbados	40	—	
			"27

2. *Distribution of Members of the House of Assembly  
according to Sex*

Men . . . . . 26  
Women . . . . . 1  
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