

## **BOTSWANA**

**Date of Elections:** October 18, 1969

### **Characteristics of Parliament**

The unicameral Parliament of the Republic of Botswana, the National Assembly, comprises 31 deputies elected for 5 years on a ratio of 1 deputy for approximately 20,000 inhabitants, 4 parliamentarians co-opted to represent particular interests, and the Attorney-General who sits *ex-officio* without the right to vote.

The general legislative elections were held following the premature dissolution of the Parliament on August 23, 1969. The legislature would normally have expired in March, 1970.

### **Electoral System**

All citizens of Botswana of either sex and aged 21 or over, of sane mind, have the right to vote, provided they are registered on the electoral list of their place of residence and have not been under sentence of imprisonment exceeding 6 months. Voting is not compulsory.

Electoral lists are set up in the voting offices of the wards once the constituencies have been divided up. An elector may only vote in the constituency in which he is registered.

Every elector with a sufficient command of spoken and written English is eligible for the National Assembly, with the exception of members of the Chiefs' Council and civil servants.

Each candidature must be presented by 2 electors in the constituency and supported by at least 7 others. A candidate may not stand for more than one constituency.

The 31 deputies are elected in single-member constituencies by simple plurality of vote. The division of constituencies is effected at least every 5 years by a 5-member committee.

By-elections are held to fill seats which become vacant during a legislature.

### **General Political Considerations and Conduct of the Elections**

On August 23, 1969, the National Assembly was dissolved by the President of Botswana, Sir Seretse Khama, 6 months before the end of the legislature and 6 months before the expiry of his own mandate. The Head of State is elected at the same time as the Deputies by indirect vote in the following

manner. Each candidate to the National Assembly declares his support for one of the presidential candidates. The candidate with the greatest number of supporters in the National Assembly is elected President.

The elections of October 1969 were contested by the Democratic Party, led by Sir Seretse Khama, and three other parties: the People's Party, led by Mr. Philip Batante; the Independence Party, under Mr. Motsamai Mpho; and the National Front, a new Party formed by the former Chief Bathoen.

The electoral campaign, characterized initially by the division of Botswana into two ethnic groups with different languages, Kalanga (minority) and Setswana (majority), rapidly centred on the problem of the development of the nation's economy and education. In this respect, the National Front's manifesto was based on relatively advanced social ideas, specifying, in particular, the nationalization of many sectors, free and compulsory primary education and the establishment of a federal-type Constitution.

The manifesto of the majority party, the Democratic Party, of liberal-conservative tendencies, proposed, a "national philosophy" based on the 4 principles of democracy, development, autonomy and unity, and laid particular emphasis on economic matters.

The People's Party proposed a short 10-point programme, and the Independence Party only outlined its projects during election meetings.

The President of the Democratic Party, Sir Seretse Khama, campaigned throughout the country stressing his intention to maintain good relations with South Africa — where a great many Botswana citizens worked — without, however, making any political ties with that country.

The elections resulted in a victory for the Democratic Party which, although losing 4 seats compared with the number won in the 1965 elections, still has a two-thirds majority in the National Assembly.

## Statistics

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

Number of registered voters. . . . .	140,428
Valid votes. . . . .	77,061 (54.9 %)

Political Group	Number of Candidates	Votes obtained	%	Number of Seats in the National Assembly
Democratic Party . . .	31	52,859	68.5	24 (—4)
National Front . . . .	21	10,362	13.5	3 (+3)
People's Party . . . . .	15	9,239	12	3 (=)
Independence Party . .	<b>9</b>	4,601	6	<b>M+1</b>
				31

*2. Distribution of Parliamentarians according to Sex*

Men . . . . .	36
Women . . . . .	
	<b>35</b>