

## BOTSWANA

**Date of Elections:** October 26, 1974

### **Purpose of Elections**

Elections were held for all the popularly chosen members of Parliament on the normal expiry of their term of office.

### **Characteristics of Parliament**

In Botswana, the legislative power is vested in a National Assembly, acting after consultation in certain cases with a 15-member House of Chiefs.

The National Assembly is composed of 32 (up from 31 since the previous elections) popularly Elected Members; 4 specially Elected Members who are co-opted, at the Assembly's first meeting after the elections, by the Elected Members of the Assembly in order to represent special interests; the Attorney-General, who sits *ex-officio* without the right to vote; and the Speaker, who is elected by the members of the Assembly from among persons who either are or are not members of the Assembly. The life of the Assembly is 5 years.

### **Electoral System**

All citizens of Botswana, of either sex, who are at least 21 years of age have the right to vote provided they are registered as electors at their place of residence. No person, on the other hand, is qualified to be registered as a voter if he is insane, owes allegiance to a foreign State, is under sentence of death or imprisonment of or exceeding 6 months, or is disqualified under any law relating to offences connected with the elections.

Electoral registers for each constituency are updated every 3 months by " supplementary rolls "; an amalgated " election roll " is in turn prepared, within each constituency, prior to each election. Voting is not compulsory. An elector's vote may only be recorded if he attends his polling station in person.

Any qualified elector who is able to speak and read English well enough to take an active part in the proceedings of the National Assembly is qualified to be elected as a member of this House. No person, however, is so qualified who is insane, an undischarged bankrupt, owes allegiance to a foreign State or is under sentence of death or imprisonment exceeding 6 months. The parliamentary mandate is considered to be incompatible with membership of the

House of Chiefs, certain public offices, and an office connected with the elections.

Within his constituency, each candidate to the National Assembly must be nominated by 2 electors and supported by at least 7 others. He must furthermore make a cash deposit of 50 *rand*, which is returned to the candidate if he obtains 1/20 of the total number of votes cast in his constituency. No candidate may incur more than 1,000 *rand* in campaign expenses.

For election purposes, Botswana is divided into 32 single-member constituencies. In each, that candidate who obtains the simple majority of the vote is declared elected.

By-elections are held to fill parliamentary seats which become vacant between general elections.

### General Political Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

On the day of Botswana's second post-independence general election, the President of the Republic, Sir Seretse Khama, was returned to power for another five-year term. In the elections for the enlarged National Assembly, President Khama's Botswana Democratic Party, which had since the preceding (1969) elections held a two-thirds majority in the Assembly, was once again opposed by the Botswana People's Party, the Botswana Independence Party and the Botswana National Front. Campaigning centered around social welfare questions, particularly housing and education.

As compared to the previous elections, the participating electorate decreased by over 20 %, to 33 %. By increasing its majority in the National Assembly, the Democratic Party gained an overwhelming parliamentary position.

### Statistics

#### 1. *Distribution of Seats in the National Assembly*

Political Group	Number of Seats
Botswana Democratic Party . . . . .	27 (+3)
Botswana People's Party . . . . .	2 (—1)
Botswana National Front . . . . .	2 (—1)
Botswana Independence Party . . . . .	.1 (=)
	32*

\* One seat added since last elections.