

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Date of Elections: May 16, 1970

Characteristics of Parliament

The Dominican Parliament, the National Congress, is bicameral. It comprises:

— The Chamber of Deputies, consisting of 74 members elected for 4 years, on the basis of 1 Deputy for every 50,000 inhabitants or fraction thereof above 25,000;

— The Senate, consisting of 27 members, whose mandate is also for 4 years.

Under the terms of the Constitution, elections were held simultaneously for both Chambers, the mandate of their members having expired in May 1970.

Electoral System

All Dominican citizens, of either sex and over 18 years of age, with the following exceptions, have the right to vote: those who have lost their citizenship rights or have been under criminal sentence, and members of the armed forces and the police. Voting is compulsory but abstentionists are not punishable by law.

An electoral register is under preparation and should be ready for use at the next elections.

To be eligible for either Chamber, electors must be at least 25 years of age and must have either been born in, or lived for a minimum of 5 years in, the constituency in which they stand for election. Naturalized citizens may only be elected 5 years after acquiring such status. Moreover, candidates (male or female) must be put forward by a party recognized by the Central Electoral Committee. The parliamentary mandate is incompatible with any other public office.

Candidates to elections are chosen by a convention of the party which they will represent. The parties then submit these names to the competent Electoral Committee. Independent candidates may only stand if they are backed by a political group which has an organization and a programme comparable to those of a political party.

One Senator is elected from each of the 27 provinces by simple plurality system. Deputies are elected in the 27 provinces and the National District by

closed party-list system with proportional distribution of seats according to the d'Hondt method.

Each Senator and Deputy is elected with an alternate who replaces him in the event of his death, resignation or loss of mandate during a legislature.

General Political Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

The campaign preceding the presidential and legislative elections of May 16, 1970, opened during the spring.

In addition to the Government party, the Reformist Party (PR), led by Mr. Joaquim Balaguer, the retiring President of the Republic, and its ally, the National Youth Movement (MNJ), 4 other parties put up candidates. The election was not contested by 3 left-wing non-Communist parties, the National Civic Union (UCN), the Social Democratic Alliance (ASD) and, particularly, the Dominican Revolutionary Party (PRD) of former President Juan Bosch, the most influential and best organized of all the opposition parties. The pro-Castro Communist Party (PC) is outlawed and was therefore unable to present any candidates.

The 4 opposition parties in the electoral campaign were: the Revolutionary Social Christian Party (PRSC) of Mr. Alfonso Moreno Martinez; the Democratic Movement of Integration (MIDA), led by Mr. Francisco Lora; the Democratic Quisqueyan Party (PDQ) of General Wessin y Wessin; and the National Conciliation Movement (MCN) whose leaders are former President Hector Garcia Godoy and Dr. Jaime Manuel Fernandes.

After the non-Communist parties' threat to boycott the elections if the retiring President continued to hold office throughout the campaign, Mr. Joaquim Balaguer relinquished his duties, on April 16, 1970, to the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court for the duration of the campaign.

The Government party made clear its intention to present a draft constitutional amendment which would increase the President's term of office from 4 to 6 years, and drew attention to the distribution of State land carried out while it had been in power. In addition, it laid particular emphasis on the country's political stability.

The elections took place in a relatively calm atmosphere, but many persons lost their life in outbreaks of violence during the final days of the campaign. The return to Santo Domingo, on April 16, of the former President, Mr. Juan Bosch, after more than 3 years in exile, sparked off disturbances that increased throughout the campaign.

The success of the Reformist Party over its opponents on polling day ensured it of a large majority in the Congress.

When the results were announced, the opposition candidates, in particular General Wessin y Wessin and Mr. Francisco Lora, expressed some reservations as to the conduct of the elections. But the most violent accusations came from

Mr. Juan Bosch who, although he had announced that he was not a candidate, had undertaken a vast " explanation campaign " on economic and social realities.

Statistics

1. Results of the Elections and Distribution of Seats in the Congress

Number of registered voters	1,500,000 approx.
Valid votes	1,238,205

Political Group	Votes obtained	°	Number of Seats in the Chamber of Deputies	Number of Seats in the Senate
Reformist Party (PR)	653,565	52.8	45	21
National Youth Movement (MNJ).	53,571	4.3	15	
Democratic Movement of Integration (MIDA).	252,760	20.4	11	
Democratic Quisqueyan Party (PDQ).	168,751	13.7	3	
Revolutionary Social Christian Party (PRSC).	63,697	5.2		
National Conciliation Movement (MCN).	45,861	3.6		
			74	27

2. Distribution of Parliamentarians according to Sex

	Chamber of Deputies	Senate
Men .	71	23
Women	3	4
	74	27