

DOMINICA

Date of Elections: 1 July 1985

Purpose of Elections

Elections were held for the 21 Representatives of the House of Assembly on the normal expiry of their term of office.

Characteristics of Parliament

The unicameral Parliament of Dominica, the House of Assembly, is composed of 21 elected Representatives, 9 Senators and the Speaker. Senators are appointed by the President of the Republic - 5 on the advice of the Prime Minister and 4 on the advice of the Leader of the Opposition. The normal duration of the legislature is 5 years.

Electoral System

Every citizen of the British Commonwealth who is at least 18 years of age and possesses such qualifications relating to residence or domicile as Parliament may prescribe is entitled to vote.

Citizens of Dominica aged 21 years or over who have resided in the country for 12 months immediately before the date of nomination, or are domiciled and resident in Dominica at that date, and who are able to speak and read the English language with sufficient proficiency to enable them to take an active part in House proceedings are qualified to be elected as Representatives. This last condition also applies to Senate candidates, who must moreover be Commonwealth citizens, 21 years old, and domiciled and resident in Dominica at the time of their appointment or nomination for election.

Disqualified for election or appointment as a Representative or Senator are persons under allegiance to a foreign State, ministers of religion, undischarged bankrupts, the insane, certain government contractors, and persons under sentence of death or serving a sentence of imprisonment exceeding 12 months.

Each candidate for election to the House must deposit a sum equivalent to US\$46.-, which is reimbursed if he obtains at least one-eighth of the valid votes cast.

Representatives are elected in 21 single-member constituencies by simple majority vote.

By-elections are held to fill vacant Representatives seats, while vacant Senate seats are filled through appointment. All these actions are to be undertaken within three months of the occurrence of the vacancy.

General Characteristics and Conduct of the Elections

Primary contenders in the 1985 general elections were the ruling Dominica Freedom Party (DFP), led by Prime Minister Mary Eugenia Charles, and the Labour Party of Dominica (LPD), headed by Mr. Michael Douglas; the LPD had been formed earlier in the year through a merger of the former Dominica Labour Party (DLP) and the United Dominica Labour Party (UDLP). During the campaign, Miss Charles pointed to her Government's record of having improved the economy (especially reductions in the unemployment and inflation rates) and virtually achieved food self-sufficiency in the country. In foreign affairs, the DFP was regarded as pro-West.

A total of 49 candidates vied for the 21 seats at stake. On polling day, the conservative DFP emerged with a slightly-reduced but still dominant majority of Representatives. Prime Minister Charles was sworn in for a second five-year term on 3 July and, the next day, announced the formation of a reshuffled Cabinet.

Statistics

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

Number of registered electors.	45,018	
Voters.	33,565	(74.56%)
Blank or void ballot papers.	284	
Valid votes.	33,281	

Political Group	..	%	Seats
	obtained		
Dominica Freedom Party (DFP).	18,865	56.2	15 (-2)
Labour Party of Dominica (LDP)**.	13,014	38.77	5 (+3)
Other parties.	636	1.89	1 (-1)
Independents.	766	2.28	<u>- (=)</u>
			21

• Excluding Senators.
** Formed in 1985.

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

Men.	27
Women.	<u>4</u>

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