

## **FIJI**

**Dates of Elections:** 10 to 17 July 1982

### **Purpose of Elections**

Elections were held for all the seats in the House of Representatives on the normal expiry of the members' term of office.

### **Characteristics of Parliament**

The bicameral Parliament of Fiji is composed of a Senate and a House of Representatives.

The Senate consists of 22 members appointed by the Governor-General, of whom:

- 8 nominated by the Great Council of Chiefs;
- 7 nominated by the Prime Minister;
- 6 nominated by the Leader of the Opposition;
- 1 nominated by the Council of the Island of Rotuma.

Appointments are for 6 years, 11 members retiring every 3 years.

The House of Representatives consists of 52 members elected for 5 years on the following basis;

- *Fijian*: 12 members elected by voters on the Fijian Communal Roll;  
10 members elected by voters on the National Roll.
- *Indian*: 12 members elected by voters on the Indian Communal Roll;  
10 members elected by voters on the National Roll.
- *General* (persons neither Fijian nor Indian): 3 members elected by voters on the General Communal Roll; 5 members elected by voters on the National Roll.

The "National Roll" consists of all registered electors on the three Communal Rolls.

### **Electoral System**

Any person may be registered as elector on a Roll if he is a citizen of Fiji and has attained the age of 21 years. The insane, persons owing allegiance to a State outside the British Commonwealth, those under sentence of death or imprisonment for a term exceeding 12 months and those convicted of electoral offences may not be registered.

Rolls are revised both on fixed dates and before general and by-elections. Voting is not compulsory. Postal voting is permitted for certain categories of electors.

Any qualified voter is eligible to be elected as a member of the House of Representatives. Disqualified, however, are undischarged bankrupts, persons holding public office, persons who held certain Government posts in the preceding three years, Government contractors and election officials.

Candidatures must be submitted on a nomination paper signed by six to eight voters of the subject constituency, and be accompanied by a deposit of F\$ 100, which is forfeited if the candidate is not elected and the number of votes polled by him does not exceed 10% of the total number of valid votes cast in the constituency.

To be qualified to be appointed to the Senate one must be registered as a voter on one of the three Communal Rolls. The same disqualifications apply as for candidates to the House, except that of interest in Government contracts.

For election purposes, Fiji is divided into 12 constituencies, each returning one communally-elected Fijian member; into ^constituencies, each returning one communally-elected Indian member; and into three constituencies, each returning one communally-elected General member. For the National Roll elections there are 10 constituencies, each returning one Fijian and one Indian member, and these are combined into five pairs for the purpose of each returning one General member.

Candidates are elected by simple majority. Each voter is entitled to cast four votes: one in respect of the Communal Roll constituency in which he is registered and three in respect of the National Roll constituencies in which he is registered.

A by-election is held to fill a House seat which becomes vacant between general elections. Senate vacancies are filled by appointment.

#### General Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

Subsequent to the September 1977 general elections, at which the Alliance Party (AP) gained a large victory, Prime Minister Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara proposed, in 1980, that a Government of national unity having multi-racial backing be formed. This, however, was frustrated by renewed political disagreement between the AP and its main rival, the National Federation Party (NFP), over land ownership. Predictably, the 1982 election campaign was largely dominated by racial issues.

On polling day, the Alliance Party retained power by winning 28 House of Representatives seats, but its overall majority was reduced from 20 to four. The NFP, led by Mr. Jai Ram Reddy, won 22 seats and the Western United Front, a new party professing a multi-racial outlook and in coalition with the NFP, captured the remaining two. Voting was divided on ethnic lines, AP drawing support from the indigenous Fijian population and NFP from Fiji's Indian population.

On 20 July, Sir Kamisese Mara was sworn in for his fourth term as Prime Minister; he then formed a new Cabinet.

*Note:* Subsequent to the July general elections, the Governor-General appointed the 11 members of the Senate in accordance with the Constitution.

Statistics

1. Results of the Elections and Distribution of Seats  
in the House of Representatives

Number of registered electors . . . . . 292,713  
 Voters . . . . . 86% (approx.)

Political Group	Number of Candidates	Votes obtained		Number of Seats*
Alliance Party . . . . .	51	507,207	51.80	28 (-8)
National Federation Party	44	402,965	41.15	22 (+7)
Western United Front . . .	X	37,794	3.86	2 (+2)
Fijian Nationalist Party. . .	27	27,583	2.82	- (=)
Independents . . . . .	7	3,674	0.37	- (-D)
				52

\* The election results by type of constituency were as follows:

	\>	Ml	WUF	FNP	Ind.
Fijian Communal Seats . . .	12	-			
Indian Communal Seats . . .	-	12			
General Communal Seats.	3	-			
Fijian National Seats . . .	5	3			
Indian National Seats . . .	5	5			
General National Seats	3	:			

*2. Distribution of Representatives  
according to Professional Category*

Administrators .	12
	10
Businessmen . .	10
	7
Teachers. . . .	6
Trade unionists.....	6
	1
	52

*3. Distribution of Members of Parliament according to Sex*

	House of Representatives	Senate
Men . .	51	22
Women.	1	
	52	22