

JAMAICA

Date of Elections: February 29, 1972

Reason for Elections

Elections were held to renew all the members of the House of Representatives on the normal expiration of their mandate.

Characteristics of Parliament

The Jamaican Parliament is bicameral.

The Senate consists of 21 Senators appointed by the Governor-General: 13 in accordance with the advice of the Prime Minister and 8 in accordance with the advice of the Leader of the Opposition.

The House of Representatives consists of 53 members.

Each Parliament lasts for 5 years from the first sitting of the first session.

Electoral System

To be able to vote in the election of members of Parliament, a person must be a citizen of Jamaica resident in Jamaica at the date of registration or must be another Commonwealth citizen at the said date and for 12 months immediately preceding it, must have attained the prescribed age (of 21 years) and must be registered as an elector. Persons under a death sentence or who serve or are under a sentence of imprisonment of or exceeding 6 months, persons convicted of electoral fraud and persons holding certain offices connected with the election itself may not be registered as electors.

Electoral lists are revised before all legislative elections. Voting is not compulsory.

To qualify as Senator or as Representative, a person must be a Commonwealth citizen, must have been ordinarily resident in Jamaica for the 12 months immediately preceding his appointment or his nomination, and must be at least 21 years old. Public officers, judges of the highest courts, members of the defense force (unless excepted) and persons owing allegiance to a foreign State or connected with certain government contracts are ineligible, as are also the insane, the bankrupt, and persons under a death sentence or who serve or are under a sentence of imprisonment of or exceeding 6 months. As far as any candidate for election as Representative is concerned, he is disqualified also if he is a Senator, holds an office connected with the election itself or has been convicted for electoral fraud. The Speaker and the Deputy Speaker of the

House of Representatives may not be a Minister or Parliamentary Secretary. The same applies to the President and Deputy President of the Senate.

For the purpose of electing Representatives, their number and the boundaries of each constituency are fixed by the House of Representatives. The present number of constituencies is 53.

Representatives are elected in single-member constituencies by simple plurality of vote.

Vacant seats in the House of Representatives are filled by by-election. Vacant seats in the Senate are filled by appointment made by the Governor-General in accordance with the advice of the Prime Minister or the Leader of the Opposition, depending on whose advice the seat, before it became vacant, had been filled.

General Political Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

The 1972 elections were essentially a contest between the Jamaica Labour Party (JLP), winner of the 1962 and 1967 elections, and the People's National Party (PNP). The two parties nominated candidates in each of the 53 constituencies. Five of the 111 candidates did not belong to either of the 2 parties, but none of these candidates was elected. One of the elected members defected from the JLP after the elections and became independent.

The JLP, principally supported in rural areas, conducted its campaign on the basis of its record of 10 years in office, during which Jamaica's gross national product, spurred by booms in the country's two principal industries — bauxite and tourism — nearly doubled. The PNP, with a platform slightly further to the left, attacked the high unemployment (20 %-25 %) and rising crime rate; it moreover called for a " restructuring " of the economy, notably, greater local participation in the foreign aluminum companies exploiting Jamaica's chief resource, bauxite.

The campaign was calmer than in 1967, but still marked by disturbances during the counts on election night. The PNP, by taking 37 of the 53 seats in the House of Representatives, won 18 seats previously held by the JLP. Mr. Michael Manley from Kingston, leader of the PNP, was sworn in as Jamaica's new Prime Minister on March 2, 1972.

Statistics

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

Valid votes 475,118

Political Group	Number of Candidates	Votes obtained	%	Number of Seats in the House of Representatives
People's National Party . . .	53	267,655	56.57	17
Jamaica Labour Party . . .	53	204,483	43.22	15
Christian Democratic Party	1	47	.01	—
Independents	4	933	.20	1
				53

2. *Distribution of Representatives according to Sex*

Men . . .	51
Women	2
	53