

MALAWI

Dates of Elections: 29 and 30 June 1983.

Purpose of Elections

Elections were held for all the elective seats in Parliament on the normal expiry of its members' term of office.

Characteristics of Parliament

The unicameral Parliament of Malawi, the National Assembly, is composed of 101* members elected for 5 years and any number** of additional members nominated by the President in order to enhance the representative character of the Assembly, or to represent particular minority or other special interests in the Republic.

Electoral System

All citizens at least 21 years of age who have resided in Malawi for a continuous period of two years and who are ordinarily resident in a constituency, or were born, are employed, or carry on a business there, may vote in this same constituency for members of the National Assembly, if registered. The insane, persons convicted of crime, undischarged bankrupts and persons owing allegiance to a foreign State are disqualified from registration as voters.

Electoral registers are drawn up on the constituency level. Voting is not compulsory.

Citizens having attained the age of 25 years who are able to speak and read the English language well enough to take an active part in the proceedings of the National Assembly, are registered electors, and members of the Malawi Congress Party are qualified to be elected as members of the National Assembly. Persons holding public office and members of the armed forces may not stand for election.

To be nominated, a candidate must be supported by at least two voters registered in his constituency. There is a limit of five candidates per constituency. District conferences of the Party prepare the lists of candidates. Whoever receives the largest number of votes in each one of the 101 single-member constituencies is declared elected.

A by-election is held to fill any elective seats of the National Assembly falling vacant between general elections.

General Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

All National Assembly candidates were members of the Malawi Congress Party (MCP), whose motto is "unity, loyalty, obedience and discipline". No campaigning took place. Life

* See section *Parliamentary Developments*, p. 11.

** See *Chronicle of Parliamentary Elections and Developments XV (1980-1981)*, p. 17.

President Hastings Kamuzu Banda approved the candidatures for the Parliament's elective seats, which were increased from 87 to 101 just prior to the poll.

On election day, some 60 seats went to newcomers. In 21 constituencies, the sitting MCP member was returned unopposed and no balloting took place. For the remaining elective seats, the voters had had between two and five candidates from whom to choose. In accordance with the Constitution, President Banda subsequently nominated a number of other members to enhance the representative character of the Assembly; in 1983, these amounted to 11.