

54. We have directed our attention to the present laws relating to the registration of votes, the issue of writs, and the conduct of elections, both General and Provincial, and we are of opinion that the present system is, in many respects, inconvenient and expensive, and also objectionable on constitutional grounds. Electoral laws.

55. Our inquiries into the expenditure incurred under the present system, have induced us to view the matter in its constitutional aspect, but we feel convinced that on grounds of economy alone an alteration in the direction which we propose should be made.

56. It is an axiom in constitutional liberty that the Executive Government should be excluded as much as possible from the exercise of any influence over the conduct of elections of Members of a Legislature, and this principle is strictly observed in the United Kingdom. The law there jealously protects the formation of electoral rolls, the appointment of polling places and Returning Officers, and the issue of writs, except only, with respect to the latter, in case of a dissolution of Parliament, from the action of the Crown.

57. It is impossible in a young Colony to adopt this system in its entirety, as in an old and settled country, but we submit the following recommendations with a view to assimilating, as far as practicable, the law relating to elections in this Colony, to that in the United Kingdom, or at least to basing it on the same principles.

Clerks of District Courts, of Resident Magistrate's Courts, and of Petty Sessions, to act as Registration Officers.

Resident Magistrates at specified places to be *ex officio* Revising Officers.

Mayors, Chairmen of Town Boards, or other honorary elected functionaries, to be *ex officio* Returning Officers and only to be allowed actual expenses.

Polling places to be appointed originally by law, and electoral districts to be formed into separate divisions, one for each polling place, with a separate roll for each division. Applications for additional polling places and alterations, when required, should be made to the Returning Officer of the district, with a description, showing the boundaries of the division for which the applications are made, and after due publicity, if recommended by the Returning Officer, to be granted by the Governor.

The issue of writs for elections to the House of Representatives to be by the Hon. the Speaker of that House, except upon the dissolution of Parliament, when the writs should be issued by the Governor, or by an officer of the Supreme Court (in England it is the Clerk of Chancery) upon precept addressed to him by the Governor.

58. The same principles should be applied, as far as practicable, to Provincial elections, the conduct of which now mainly devolves on the General Government. Provincial elections.

59. We think that all electoral lists should be printed at the Government Printing Office, and that new lists of electoral claims should, instead of being advertised as at present in newspapers, be printed at the same office upon large notices, which should be posted conspicuously in the districts to which such claims relate. The expense of printing electoral rolls and advertising electoral claims, &c., during the year 1865 amounted to at least £4000, while under the arrangement which we propose the expense would be trifling. Printing and advertising Electoral Lists.

60. We recommend that an Accountant should be appointed to the Government Printing Office, who should also be a storekeeper and have charge of, and issue, and account for all Government stores of stationery, forms (which for the Customs and for magistrates are now very voluminous) and office furniture, &c. Also he should distribute and sell Acts, Gazettes, Statistics, &c. He should also receive and account for all charges for private advertisements in the Gazette. As this work is now spread over a variety of offices, it occupies the time of clerks, and is costly and inefficient. Accountant to Government Printing Office recommended.

61. A small lithographic press in the Government Printing Office, and the introduction of copying machines into the other offices, would also be the means of saving much clerical labour now engaged in copying circulars, and entering letters in letter books. Lithographic press, &c.

62. We have now concluded the treatment of the subjects which we propose to discuss in this Report, and we shall lose no time in the preparation of those further Reports which are still required to fulfil the terms of our Commission.

We have the honor to submit to your Excellency this our first Report.

CHARLES KNIGHT, *Chairman*,
W. GISBORNE,
WILLIAM SEED,
J. M. SPENCE.

Wellington, 30th June, 1866.

[DRAFT CIVIL SERVICE BILL.]

AN ACT TO ORGANIZE AND REGULATE THE CIVIL SERVICE OF NEW ZEALAND. Title.

WHEREAS it is expedient to organize and classify the Civil Service of New Zealand according to the duties the officers thereof perform and to regulate the salaries therein and to establish therein an equitable and uniform system of appointment promotion and dismissal and to grant officers leave of absence and to provide retiring and other allowances in certain cases Preamble.

Be it therefore enacted by the General Assembly of New Zealand in Parliament assembled and by the authority of the same as follows—

1. The Short Title of this Act shall be "The Civil Service Act 1866." Short Title.

2. Nothing in this Act shall apply except as hereinafter provided to any Responsible Minister or to any Judge of the Supreme Court or to the Speaker and Clerk of either House of Parliament or to the Auditor or Comptroller of Public Accounts or to any officer the right to appoint whom is not vested in the Governor or to any officer of or member of a Colonial Military or Volunteer Force or to any person paid by fees or commission nor to any officer appointed by the Governor to whose office salary Persons excepted from operation of Act.