

RETURNS, SCRUTINY OF ROLLS, ETC.

10. In order to preserve the secrecy of the ballot, voting in all places where the numbers were small was by declaration vote, and I required all ballot-papers to be sent to Ottawa for counting.

On 24th September, when I sent preliminary returns to New Zealand, I had received all but 65 ballot-papers, which came to hand the following week.

Immediately after the preliminary count, the scrutiny of the roll was commenced. By the time this was completed the position in connection with those places from which papers had not been received had been ascertained, and the final count was then made and the returns sent to New Zealand.

There were approximately 1,900 men entitled to vote in or near North America, and, of these, 1,443 voted.

ASSISTANCE RECEIVED

11. In travelling to and from Ottawa I received great assistance from the American Naval Air Transport authority at Honolulu and also from the British Consuls-General at Honolulu, New Orleans, and Los Angeles.

I received great assistance also from the British Admiralty Maintenance representative in Washington.

I am mentioning these matters in a separate memorandum to the Secretary, Department of External Affairs.

In the performance of the task allotted to me I received the greatest assistance and help from Mr. R. M. Firth, the Acting High Commissioner for New Zealand in Ottawa, and from Mr. Middlemass and the other members of the staff of the office of the High Commissioner.

Great assistance was also rendered by Group Captain White and the members of the staff of the New Zealand Air Mission in Ottawa.

The co-operation of the Royal Canadian Air Force authorities and the officers commanding the various stations to which New Zealand personnel were attached was of the utmost help to me. Without it the taking of the votes would not have been possible.

D. J. DALGLISH,
Special Returning Officer for America.

Wellington, 26th January, 1944.

MIDDLE EAST

REPORT TO THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER, NEW ZEALAND, ON THE CONDUCT OF THE GENERAL ELECTION, 1943, IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Prepared by Major W. A. Bryan, 232195, Special Returning Officer

(NOTE.—The appendices mentioned in this report contain matters which cannot be conveniently printed or reproduced. They are included in a separate paper to be laid on the Table of the House where they will be available for inspection by members.)

THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER,
WELLINGTON,
NEW ZEALAND.

I REPORT that the task of conducting the general election in the Middle East was performed to the best of my ability with the minimum of inconvenience to the fighting Services. I trust that this report will justify in their choice those who had confidence in my ability and entrusted me with the responsibility involved.

I wish here to record my appreciation of the willing and unstinted aid I received from the G.O.C., Lieutenant-General Sir Bernard Freyberg, V.C., &c., and the administrative officers of 2 N.Z.E.F. Without their assistance and kindly interest it would have been impossible to conduct the election satisfactorily, especially in the limited time available.

In submitting this report I desire to point out that I was in the Middle East only twenty-three days before the commencement of the voting period on 10th September and that all arrangements, including distribution of supplies, had to be completed in this time.

For convenience all aspects of the election have been discussed separately. It will be appreciated, however, that some repetition and cross-reference is unavoidable in discussing items mutually interdependent.

TRIP OVER

Before leaving New Zealand it was apparent that there was a possibility of an early election, in which case I would be strained to the utmost after arrival to make satisfactory arrangements for the conduct of a poll. Until my departure I had been largely occupied in assisting the Chief Electoral Officer in co-ordinating arrangements for recording votes of New Zealand personnel all over the world and had done little specifically for the Middle East.

I decided, therefore, to do as much as possible on the transport in the way of preparation and planning for any likely situation, and this later proved very valuable.

Colonel J. H. Whyte, G.O. transport, kindly permitted me to use the ship's office accommodation and orderly-room typists. I drafted several forms and a booklet of instructions which were printed *en route*, and, in addition, I sorted out the nucleus of a staff from members of the reinforcement and spent considerable time instructing them in the scheme and my probable requirements.