

Before reaching Perth I was informed of the dates of the close of nominations and the General Election which had been picked up by ship's radio. This early date confirmed my decision to do everything possible *en route*, and whilst on board I prepared an agenda of items for discussion with 2 N.Z.E.F. authorities and therein listed my anticipated requirements in minute detail. This proved very valuable, and I was able to initiate many items immediately after arrival.

The trip, which commenced on 22nd July, the day I boarded the transport, lasted until the evening of the 18th August, at which time I arrived at Maadi Camp.

CO-OPERATION

It was apparent immediately after arrival in the Middle East that all authorities were determined to give every assistance.

In my first meeting with General Freyberg, who at all times took a keen interest in the election arrangements, he made it clear that every assistance and whatever staff or materials requested would be supplied, and at the same time instructed that any difficulties met should be referred for his personal attention.

This latter instruction was completely unnecessary, for at all times the officers of 2 N.Z.E.F. were extremely kind and helpful, and I consider myself exceedingly fortunate to have worked in such pleasant circumstances. The efficiency of the organization of 2 N.Z.E.F. was very impressive.

The Middle East Naval and Air Force authorities, with whom numerous contacts were made, gave every assistance and co-operation at all times. Personnel attached to these services, although comparatively few in number, were scattered over a tremendous area.

The British Army Base Post Office, together with the R.A.F. Mail Office and Fleet Mail Office at Cairo, were also helpful in that they arranged priority despatch of parcels of voting material, &c.

OFFICE ORGANIZATION

It was found on arrival that two adjacent rooms sized 10 ft. by 15 ft. each in one of the 2 N.Z.E.F. H.Q. buildings had been made available for electoral use, but this was realized to be inadequate, and additional accommodation was provided by erecting 3 E.P.I.P. tents adjacent thereto. The layout appears in the photographs in Appendix A [*not printed*].

The tent space was used originally for storage and packing of polling supplies and later rearranged to accommodate sorting-boxes and returned voting material and in the final stages for the scrutiny of rolls and official count.

The two rooms were used to accommodate the office and postal booth.

As it is possible that a similar scheme may be found necessary at some future date a plan of the office layout for the sorting of votes is included in Appendix A [*not printed*]. Consideration of this in conjunction with the photographs should provide a good idea of the arrangements made; these proved very satisfactory.

STAFF

When it was learned that the election would be early I realized that it would be almost impossible for me to conduct the election alone in the Middle East, and that, further, there was always the remote possibility of my falling ill, with consequent serious repercussions.

On the boat I introduced myself to Captain R. A. Bolland, the ship's Records Officer, whom I knew would be free at the end of the trip. This gentleman expressed a keen desire to stay in the Middle East to assist with the election, and a cable was therefore despatched from Perth requesting that, if possible, his services be made available. Captain Bolland was, of course, fully employed on the transport, and on arrival at H.Q., 2 N.Z.E.F., I learned that he was freed for duty, and he reported two days later. Thereafter Captain Bolland assisted in taking charge of the staff as they arrived and organizing their duties. On the transport some time was also spent in arranging the nucleus of a staff and training them together with Captain Bolland. In this I was very fortunate in contacting Sergeant K. M. Sleight, Secretary to the Hon. D. G. Sullivan, Minister for Supply and Munitions, &c., who was one of the Tenth Reinforcement. I had never met Sergeant Sleight before, but had been told he was on board, and he proved eager to help. In addition, I selected and instructed four other clerks—namely, Private D. R. E. Hammond, Signaller N. S. B. Wright, Privates G. E. Taylor, and R. S. Lowe. Two clerks—namely, Sapper G. M. U. Caldwell and Private J. H. Clague—had already been arranged by H.Q., 2 N.Z.E.F., and these reported for duty on 19th August, 1943. Immediate request was made for the release of the personnel selected on board the transport, and this was approved.

Sergeant Sleight I appointed my personal assistant, and his services were extremely valuable. He was, on arrival in the Middle East, reverted to the rank of Corporal, and I was unfortunately able to obtain for him only the rank of Temporary Staff Sergeant. This was very poor recompense for the service he rendered.

Application was also made for the release of Staff Sergeant J. W. Norling, formerly of the office of the Registrar of Electors, Auckland, but he could not be released.

Successful application was made for the release of Lance Sergeant A. C. O'Connor, formerly of the Supreme Court, Wellington, and he reported about eight days after my arrival. He performed very useful duties until I released him on 24th September, 1943, to fill a vacancy on the staff of the Legal Staff Office, 2 N.Z. Div.

For typing, the services of Private J. J. Johnston, formerly of the Registrar-General's Office, which was until recent times under the control of the late Mr. G. G. Hodgkins, Chief Electoral Officer, were secured. By reason of his duties there Private Johnston had a good idea of electoral requirements.

On account of the delay in voting, with the consequent need for rapid handling to enable an early advice of the preliminary count, it was necessary to arrange additional staff of twelve men—namely, Private B. A. Barrer, Private A. G. Donohue, Private D. G. Edwards, Private G. French, Private B. R. Hawkins, Private M. E. Haymes, Private R. Henderson, Private W. McLaren, Private E. L. Manning, Private E. B. Rout, Private W. H. Stirling, Private J. A. Wright, who were carefully chosen for clerical experience. These were trained in requirements and aided in the sort and preliminary count and were released on 25th September with the exception of Private D. G. Edwards, who was retained to fill the vacancy caused by the release of Sergeant A. C. O'Connor.