

headquarters as soon as possible thereafter. This action enabled nearly all votes to appear in the preliminary count.

These two booths recorded only the votes of those personnel who could not vote with units. They were inspected during the voting period by the Special Returning Officer.

POSTAL SCHEME

After studying the location statement of 2 N.Z.E.F. and the strengths of its component units, it became apparent that there were many New Zealand personnel in isolated localities for whom it would be impossible to establish polling-places. In addition, a number of officers and men were attending courses or instructing at various Schools of Instruction throughout the Middle East, while others were on loan to other formation headquarters.

In addition, I obtained from the R.N.Z.A.F. Liaison Officer a list of R.N.Z.A.F. personnel attached to R.A.F. formations in the Middle East and India. These were widely scattered and numbered approximately 841.

A list showing isolated personnel, Army, Navy, and Air Force, to whom his organization sent patriotic gifts was obtained from Lieutenant-Colonel F. Waite, New Zealand Patriotic Funds Commissioner. This list also forms the distribution list of *N.Z.E.F. Times*, and, as far as R.A.F. is concerned, is based on the list referred to above.

The Royal Navy in both Cairo and Alexandria was contacted in regard to New-Zealanders serving in the Royal Navy and a list showing names of personnel serving in the Levant Fleet obtained. These totalled 147. As mentioned elsewhere in this report, polling-places were established at certain naval stations, but there were other personnel whom it was impossible to cover by a polling-place.

In view of these factors and the fact that divisional manœuvres were taking place and certain personnel were already probably in Sicily, I decided to institute a postal-voting scheme, and established a polling-place in the office for this purpose. Sergeant A. C. O'Connor was placed in charge of this work, and I delegated to him my powers of delegation under the regulations. This allowed him to perform most of the duties of a polling officer such as the issuing of voting-papers and to delegate his powers to Commanding Officers of units for them to complete the action.

The system of sending out voting and ballot papers was as follows :—

- (1) Names were obtained from the Army, Navy, and Air Force and patriotic lists supplied, and rolls were searched for the electorates in which they were entitled to vote.
- (2) Ballot and voting papers (and Local Option where applicable) were prepared in respect to each man, showing the electorate.
- (3) A certificate for signature by the Commanding Officer of the voter's unit was prepared certifying—
 - (a) That the man was entitled to vote.
 - (b) That the vote was cast before 1900 hours on 24th September, 1943.
- (4) A list of candidates, showing the parties they represented; and
- (5) Declaration Form and envelopes were enclosed.
- (6) Where a man's electorate was not known, a slip was sent asking his Commanding Officer to take a declaration from the voter.

All the above papers were then sent to the Commanding Officer of the man's unit under cover of a printed letter giving complete details as to the procedure to be followed and asking for his co-operation in the taking of the vote and the return of the papers. Copies of this letter and the certificate referred to in (3) may be seen in Appendix B hereto [*not printed*].

All the above forms were prepared in full and placed in addressed envelopes. As soon as the list of nominated candidates was printed, a copy was placed in each envelope, which was then sealed. These were then rushed by car to the Fleet Mail Office and R.A.F. Post-office, with whom arrangements had already been made for immediate despatch.

A total of 1,098 postal voting-papers was sent out to isolated personnel, as follows :—

52 Army.
205 Navy.
841 Air Force.

Returned voting-papers were checked off the list of postal voting-papers issued, and after that the papers were placed in a ballot-box and dealt with as for any normal booth.

Up to the time of the official count, 396 valid votes had been received by me, and papers had been returned for a considerable number who had become casualties or had been transferred to other localities. In this connection I would point out the impossibility of obtaining accurate lists of isolated personnel. Furthermore, the Sicilian and Italian campaigns immediately affected movements, and this was especially so in respect of Air Force and Navy. Thus, apart from casualties, many personnel had moved to other spheres and their papers up to the time of the official count had not been returned to me. In addition, a number of personnel to whom papers were sent voted at Cairo or Alexandria in one of the permanent booths and returned their postal votes unused.

The most disappointing feature of the postal-voting scheme was the failure to receive papers from some 250 Air Force personnel in India. This is inexplicable, and I can only refer to the letter from Staff Sergeant Sleight (Appendix E [*not printed*]) wherein he outlines the manner in which the letters were posted and the steps taken to locate them. It became apparent after receipt of mails from India that the Air Force authorities had inadvertently despatched Indian mails by surface.

The postal-voting scheme was, I consider, well worth while, as it resulted in the receipt of 396 votes from as widely-scattered places as follows :—

Navy.—Gibraltar, Levant station, Canal area, Suez, Alexandria, Malta, Algiers, Port Said, Durban, India, and various naval vessels of whose location I have no knowledge.
Air Force.—South Africa, East Africa, North Africa, Pantellaria, Sicily, Italy, Aden, Syria, Iraq, Iran.
Army and Miscellaneous.—Persia, Nairobi, Iraq, Tripolitania, Tunisia, Sicily, Italy, and various isolated places in North Africa.