

Ballot-boxes were received from units until 1800 hours on 24th September, and sorting continued until 1915 hours, at which time the preliminary count was commenced.

This was performed by eight groups of two men, each of which would count the contents of a box recording the results on a counting-slip provided to it, and return the papers to the sorting-box. Two men supervised the issue of boxes and the reailing thereof. Cable forms had been prepared in advance and required only the insertion of figures.

Sheets of cable were taken to the Cipher Officer, 2 N.Z.E.F., as completed. This office, by arrangement, had retained its staff all night and borrowed an extra cipher machine. They also had a despatch-rider standing by to deliver the enciphered cable to the Marconi Co. I had already been in touch with this company to arrange immediate despatch of the cable and found that a request was also received from New Zealand. My rank of Major enabled me to send the cable with the Priority "Immediate" as arranged, under my own signature, thus saving delay.

I was assured, therefore, of immediate despatch all through, and was content that everything had been done to facilitate this object.

OFFICIAL COUNT AND SCRUTINY OF THE ROLLS

For the purpose of the preliminary count completed voting-papers had in many cases been forwarded in advance of unused material, &c., and in addition a small number of votes were still to be received.

Immediately after completion of the preliminary count action was taken to ensure the return of all outstanding material, and cables were despatched to ascertain whether outlying booths in India, South Africa, and the Mediterranean had recorded votes. In addition, investigation into delivery of air mails was made in an endeavour to establish whether voting-papers sent under the postal scheme had been delivered in time for personnel to vote.

On 16th October, when I was satisfied that all possible votes had been received, a start was made with the official count.

I discussed in the early stages of the election the question of witnesses to the official count with General Freyberg and Brigadier Weir, and it was decided that the 2 N.Z.E.F. would nominate two officers, and that I would appoint them as required by the regulations.

About 1st October Lieut. J. H. Blair and Lieut. R. J. Thomas reported to me and were in attendance at the office until 24th October, when the count was completed. The certificate completed by these officers appears with the result of the official count in Appendix C [*not printed*].

On the arrival of these officers a start was made with the scrutiny of rolls, and to cover all possible avenues of dual voting the declarations completed by personnel not on rolls were sorted alphabetically, checked for duplicates, and then compared with the master roll resulting from the scrutiny of the rolls.

As the result of the scrutiny two cases of dual voting were discovered and the necessary disciplinary action was taken. All votes by these two persons were, of course, disallowed.

After the scrutiny all butts and unused ballot-papers were checked with the statements made by Polling Officers.

On 16th October the official count, which could not be undertaken for any electorate until the whole scrutiny was complete, was commenced, each paper being examined and numbered as in New Zealand.

The results were cabled to New Zealand daily, the cables being checked by the official witnesses before despatch.

As each electorate was completed the papers were wrapped in sealed parcels and set aside for disposal.

A copy of the official count result is attached hereto as Appendix C [*not printed*].

DISPOSAL OF MATERIAL

There was, of course, a considerable amount of stationery and other material awaiting disposal after completion of the official count. The scarcity of shipping to New Zealand rendered it desirable to cut down space requirements to a minimum, and the following action was taken:—

(1) *Used Ballot-papers, Butts, Rolls, &c.*—It was considered undesirable to send this material back to New Zealand on account of shipping, and on account of a possible move of the base organization of 2 N.Z.E.F. from Egypt it was considered undesirable to leave such material stored there. In discussion, Brigadier Weir agreed with me that in view of conditions it was desirable to burn all such material, and accordingly all the sealed parcels were destroyed by fire under supervision of the Military Police.

(2) *Stationery.*—2 N.Z.E.F. was eager to accept surplus stationery, as this is difficult to obtain in the Middle East, and I therefore followed the example of Mr. A. G. Harper in 1941 and passed over all pencils, paper, &c. Sealing-wax was returned to New Zealand, as there is no use for it in the Middle East on account of the heat.

(3) *Unused Electoral Material:*—

(a) It was considered that there was not likely to be another licensing election for some time, and therefore all unused Licensing and Local Option voting-papers were destroyed by fire.

(b) In view of the likelihood of by-elections, materials sufficient for 5,000 votes were packed into two cases together with all necessary instructions, rolls, and references. These cases were stored with the Base Kit Store of 2 N.Z.E.F. A schedule of this material is attached to this report as Appendix E [*not printed*].

(c) *Rolls.*—The members of the Forces' roll is a very valuable reference for certain base units, and accordingly H.Q., 2 N.Z.E.F., were handed fifteen sets of the army roll and one set of the Air Force and Navy rolls for controlled distribution.

(d) All surplus material I thought likely to be of use in New Zealand I cased for return. A schedule of this material has been submitted to the Chief Electoral Officer.

(e) Files of correspondence built up in the Middle East were purged to the minimum bulk and all secret matter expunged therefrom. These files were cased with the material referred to in para. (d) above for reference by the Chief Electoral Officer.