In order to acquaint the electors with the new method of voting a mock election for members of a supposed Imperial Cabinet had previously been held by two of the local newspapers, and by the courtesy of the proprietors and editors of the newspapers the voting-papers so obtained (over six thousand in number) were placed at our disposal for the purpose of holding a trial count, and thus giving the staff concerned a thorough acquaintance with their duties. This trial count achieved its purpose to a remarkable degree; indeed, it is probable that the few small mistakes that actually occurred were due to members of the staff who were not present right through this practice. Moreover, the trial count was useful to the Returning Officer and the Assistant Returning Officer, inasmuch as it revealed possible points of weakness, suggested means of avoiding them, and enabled these officers to make necessary rearrangements of the staff and furniture. I would suggest that in future elections two trial counts should be held (not necessarily *both* of long duration or with large numbers of papers), and that the attendance of every member of the staff should be insisted upon on both occasions.

The official counts were held in the Caledonian Hall, Worcester Street, that of the Council, and, afterwards, that of the Hospital Board, being taken in the main hall, and those for the Mayor and the Harbour Board in a smaller hall adjacent. The large hall has a spacious platform, which was used for the Returning Officer, Assistant Returning Officer, and two computers, the two former being at a large central table with boxes in front of them for the informal and doubtful papers, mis-sorts, and exhausted papers brought up by the supervisors. The computers were placed at a table near and to the left of the large table, and on the right was a large set of pigeonholes to take the bundles of voting-papers after they had been dealt with by the computers. Behind the Returning Officers' table were four blackboards, on two of which were written the names of all the candidates elected and excluded at any stage, the other two boards giving the number of the count in progress and the nature of it (*e.g.*, "Count 4—next available choice after Smith at count 2"). Down the middle of the hall were four large sorting-tables, and on them were placed the sets of pigeonholes for the use of the sorters. There were thirty candidates for the sixteen seats on the City Council; accordingly, each set of pigeonholes had thirty-two compartments, one for each candidate, one for doubtful and informal papers, and one for exhausted papers. The compartments measured 6 in. by 6 in. at the face, and were 14 in. deep. (The voting-papers were, by inadvertence, made somewhat wider than had been intended; the pigeonholes should be $\frac{3}{4}$ in. to 1 in. wider than the papers.) If the number of candidates be large (as, for instance, thirty in the case of the City Council), the papers and the boxes for holding them are long, and consequently the work of sorting the papers into thirty-two such boxes causes so much physical effort that the method becomes impracticable; whereas if pigeonholes are used a sorter can with the aid of a suitable office-stool adopt any one of three positions and yet reach all the pigeonholes without moving from his position, and can go on sorting briskly for nine hours a day for several days. At the sides of the sorting-tables were the counting-tables, one for each candidate, labelled with his or her name.

In elections held on this system in other parts of the world it appears to have been found that the sorters were able to go through papers more quickly than the counters. This may be so where the number of candidates is small, and the next available choices easy to find; but it is certainly not the case where the number of candidates is as many as thirty, and the latter choices are not so easily ascertained by inspection. It would have been better, for instance, in the election of Christchurch City Councillors, to have eight sorting-tables instead of four, and also, for the heavy counts at least, to have two sorters at each sorting-table. This was done, after the first count, at Christchurch, by putting four of the most skilful counters to assist the four sorters; the assistant sorter took up each voting-paper, found the next available choice, passed the paper to the sorter, who checked it and put it into the proper pigeonhole. This was found to be the most accurate and expeditious way of sorting.

The staff in the body of the hall consisted of two supervisors, one on each side of the hall, four sorters, and ten counters (eight of whom were women). The business of the supervisors was to take the sorted papers from the pigeonholes and put them on the several counting-tables; and, after they had been counted and made up into bundles, properly labelled, to take the bundles of papers for the several candidates up to the computers' table, and also to help the Assistant Returning Officer to see that all the arrangements were working smoothly. When a counter with a small number of papers to count had completed his first bundle he was sent to count the papers on another table. The first few counts (especially the first count) afforded a means of judging, within fairly narrow limits, the amount of work likely to be required at the several counting-tables, so that the work for any particular count might end almost simultaneously for all the counters. When the number of papers in any count was very small (as toward the end of the process) all the sorting was done at one sorting-table; if very small indeed, both sorting and counting could be done at the one sorting-table, and in such a case two or three counts (as of transfers from the same excluded candidate) could be going on at the same time: this requires slight additional care, of course, on the part of the supervisors, computers, and Assistant Returning Officer.

In general the sorting of the papers at the sorting-tables was done by one examination; but as it was highly important that all informal and doubtful papers should be separated and placed before the Returning Officer at the first count, each paper was examined twice by the sorters at this count. There is very little difficulty in doing this, especially if the method of sorting by two people is adopted, as described above, as for the purpose of sorting—properly so-called—it is necessary only to note the candidate opposite whose name the figure 1 appears. For all counts the sorting of the papers was checked by the counters before counting began. Each bundle of papers was counted twice, and card labels (of which samples are given below) were attached to the completed bundles. The use of these card labels was found to facilitate the work of the computers and the Assistant Returning Officer—in fact, they are almost essential.