

SESSION II.
1912.
NEW ZEALAND.

ELECTORAL CENSUS

(REPORT ON THE) CARRIED OUT IN 1911 IN CONNECTION WITH THE COMPILATION AND
PURGING OF THE ROLLS.

Laid on the Table by Leave of the House.

The Hon. the Minister in Charge of Electoral Department.

I HAVE the honour to report upon the electoral census which was carried out in August and September of last year for the purpose of compiling and purging the rolls.

I desire to preface my report by pointing out that between the general elections of 1908 and 1911 there was evidence of considerable movement in population in various parts of the country, in consequence of which the rolls, by the middle of 1911, were known by Registrars to be in an exceedingly imperfect condition.

In 1910 the Postal Department advised that the number of alterations in addresses recorded at each of the four centres—viz., Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, and Dunedin—was upwards of 1,400 per month, and, as there had been during the triennial period a renaming of many of the streets and a renumbering of the houses in these centres, it became very evident that the rolls required considerable correction, and it was considered that only by a complete and effective method of enumeration could this be satisfactorily done.

An electoral census was therefore carried out in terms of section 6 of the Legislature Amendment Act, 1910, on the lines of the methods adopted in Victoria and Western Australia, for the purpose of—(a) Correcting the existing rolls; (b) obtaining fresh enrolments; (c) disclosing non-residence, to enable the Registrar to take the usual steps to purge from the roll the names of all those who had left the district since the previous compilation.

In twenty-two city and adjoining electorates the census was taken by means of a householder's schedule, which was left at every household in the electorate by an enrolment officer, and afterwards collected. The names on these schedules were carefully compared with the existing roll, and all names on the roll which did not appear on the schedules were objected to by registered letter on the grounds that the electors had apparently left the district. *As a safeguard, however, against possible wrongful removal, a form of appeal, with free addressed envelope for reply, was enclosed with the objection notice to the elector, so that should he still be residing within the electorate, he could notify the Registrar accordingly and have his name retained upon the roll.*

In country electorates the householder's schedule was not used, but a house-to-house canvass by enrolment officers was carried out, and where, in consequence of the reports of these officers, as well as of the Postmasters and police, the Registrar had good reason to believe that certain electors had ceased to reside in the electorate, the retention of their names upon the roll was objected to by registered letter in the manner already referred to in the previous paragraph.

That the rolls were sadly in need of a thorough revision was completely borne out by the electoral census.

Altogether there were upwards of 169,000 fresh enrolments effected, 118,000 corrections in addresses, &c., obtained, and over 75,000 cases of non-residence in the various districts disclosed. In many instances there were over 4,000 fresh enrolments effected and upwards of 3,000 cases of non-residence disclosed, as well as over 4,000 alterations in addresses recorded in a single electorate.