

Although the average percentage of voting for the Dominion was 83·54 per cent. of those on the roll (many electorates obtained over 90 per cent.), the percentage of voting in Auckland Central, Wellington North, and Wellington Central was only 72·18, 74·15, and 74·46 respectively.

Nevertheless, the percentage of voters to those on the roll for the Dominion was higher than at any previous election, and considerably higher than was attained in any of the Australian States; but I am strongly of opinion that but for the indiscriminate restoration of over 41,000 names to the roll the average percentage of voting would have been 4 or 5 per cent. higher.

The reports of Registrars bear unmistakable testimony to the general utility and success of the electoral census as a means of compiling and amending the rolls.

Section 50 of the Legislature Act, 1908, provides that "*it shall be the duty of the Registrar . . . to assure himself of the right of every person enrolled to have his name retained on the roll*"; and I submit that a Registrar of Electors is not carrying out this provision of the statute unless he takes definite and active steps to thus assure himself that all those on his roll are entitled to remain thereon, and that this can only be done by some systematic method of inquiry or enumeration. In the city electorates especially, where there is a continual movement of population, the rolls become imperfect to the extent, probably, of 40 or 50 per cent. of the names thereon during the triennial interval; and, although the statute provides facilities for electors to object to the retention of names upon the roll on the grounds of non-residence, experience has shown that the parties interested in the condition of the rolls confine their attentions more to the placing of names on the roll than to inquiries as to the right of those already appearing on the roll to remain thereon.

The Department has always been faced with the difficulty of keeping the rolls in a reasonably clean condition, as overloaded rolls are a standing invitation to irregularities in connection with elections, and a menace to clean and proper polling. It was in the interests, therefore, of a good election conducted with clean rolls that the electoral census of 1911 was carried out, and, although its general results were most satisfactory, and, to my mind, fully justified the expenditure, much greater benefit might have been obtained had the fullest advantage been taken of the information obtained for the purposes of roll-purging, as originally proposed by the Department.

The cost of the electoral census was £7,296. At a later date I intend to submit proposals for the compilation and purging of the rolls by means of an enumeration carried out largely with the assistance and co-operation of the Police and Postal Departments at a comparatively small cost to the country. In Australia, Registrars avail themselves largely of the assistance of the police in connection with the compilation and purging of the rolls.

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