

**REPORT ON THE
1998 LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ELECTIONS
BY THE
ELECTORAL AFFAIRS COMMISSION**

CHAPTER 8 THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL GENERAL ELECTION

Section 10: The Count

8.30 The count was conducted in a CCS at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre. The ballot boxes returned from the four EC polling stations consisted of ballot papers cast for the EC, for the five GCs and also for some FCs. The ballot boxes sent in from the 492 GC polling stations contained ballot papers from the five GCs and the 18 contested FCs. The ballot papers from each polling station had, therefore, to be sorted. The separation and assortment of ballot papers, by each constituency, would have to be under the charge of the relevant RO. The RO would make a verification of ballot paper account, comparing the number of ballot papers sorted according to constituency with the ballot paper account prepared and returned by the PRO of the polling station. When the ballot papers for a constituency had been collected to a large number, the RO would decide to have a segment-count of the votes marked on the ballot papers. The result of the segment-count would then be recorded. The final result of the election of the constituency would be reached by the addition of the numbers from all the relevant segment-counts. In order to make all these assortment and counting processes easily followed by the candidates and their agents, notices of the verifications of ballot paper accounts and records of the segment-counts were posted on a notice board in each of the five GC counting zones. They could copy from the notices if they wished. During the count, the Chairman found a number of counting agents checking the notices and copying from them. No doubt, this step

ensured the transparency of the count and enabled the candidates to track and trace the ballot papers from each polling station. It apparently operated satisfactorily.

8.31 Everything went on smoothly in the CCS. The ballot boxes arrived from all the polling stations over the HKSAR and they were queuing for being received by the counting staff. They were then deposited in the deposit or “parking” area for ballot boxes designated for the GC to which the polling station belonged. The ROs and AROs were busily at work, bringing ballot boxes to their respective counting zones. The boxes were then emptied on counting tables and the ballot papers poured out were counted for number for the purpose of verification of ballot paper account. Assortment of ballot papers for each constituency was also done. The first ballot box was opened at about 11:30 pm. The first election result was known at 4:45 am on 25 May 1998, and that was of the EC. The declarations of results of each constituency were then made intermittently, starting with the FCs, until 5 pm on 25 May when the last election result (in respect of the New Territories West GC) was announced.

CHAPTER 10 REVIEW FOR IMPROVEMENT

Section 3 : Review : Matters at, during and after the Poll

(O) Counting Arrangements

10.75 Some delays in the receiving of ballot boxes and in the allocation of ballot boxes to counting zones were experienced during the subsector elections held on 2 April 1998. Consequent upon a review, the counting arrangements for the LegCo elections held on 24 May 1998 in respect of receiving of ballot boxes, delivering of ballot boxes to counting zones, allocating them to counting tables, opening of boxes, posting of various notices, segment-count records and counting results, public seating capacity, audio-visual equipment for public viewing, both inside and outside the CCS, and public announcement system were satisfactory and these arrangements should be adopted for future use.