

Section 3 – The Poll

Commencement of poll

3.1 Polling started at 7.30 am on 10 December 2000 and ended at 10.30 pm on the same day. All of the 94 polling stations were opened for operation. The chop with the “√” sign was used again for marking the ballot paper.

Logistics

3.2 A command post was set up in the REO to oversee the operation throughout the poll and to provide the polling stations with logistical support whenever necessary. The Police and the Civil Aid Service (“CAS”) rendered assistance in maintaining order in the polling stations, the no canvassing zones (“NCZs”) and the no staying zones (“NSZs”). A Statistical Information Centre (“SIC”), manned by a team of REO staff and operating throughout the polling hours, was set up in the REO office in the Kai Tak Government Building to collate election-related

information. The information included the hourly turnout rates and the number of complaints received by the REO's Complaints Centre, the RO and the Presiding Officers ("PROs").

Turnout rate

3.3 About 209,000 electors turned up to cast their votes at the polling stations, representing 33.27% of the electorate of the GC. While this was lower than the 42.03% rate for this GC in the general election, it was generally considered as higher than expected, bearing in mind that by-elections usually attract less public attention and interest than general elections. A breakdown of the hourly turnout rates is at **Appendix I**.

EAC visits

3.4 As in previous elections the three EAC Members visited some of the polling stations to get first-hand information on how the poll was proceeding. They met the media before they embarked on their separate itineraries. The visit programme started at about 10 am and ended at noon.

They found the polling arrangements effective and were satisfied with the smooth conduct of the election.

3.5 The Chairman of the Commission visited the SIC at about 5.15 pm to see how it operated. He thereafter met the media on the spot.