

1900.

NEW ZEALAND.

INDIAN FAMINE

(PROPOSED CONTRIBUTION FROM CONSOLIDATED FUND TOWARDS THE RELIEF OF SUFFERERS BY).

Laid upon the Table of both Houses of the General Assembly by Leave.

TELEGRAM from the PREMIER to all the MEMBERS of the GENERAL ASSEMBLY, dated 5th May, 1900, relative to granting Aid to the Sufferers by Famine in India.

SOME little time ago the Viceroy of India appealed to this colony for practical sympathy for the four millions and a half famine-stricken people in India.

In asking for the opinion of members of the Legislature in respect to granting aid to the sufferers by the conflagration at Ottawa, several members suggested that aid should be sent from the Consolidated Fund to the famine-stricken in India. The Government have therefore determined to ascertain the views of honourable members as to whether or not such assistance should be given. Will you kindly reply, and state your views on the question. Reply by memo.

R. J. SEDDON.

REPLIES from MEMBERS of the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

The Right Hon. the Premier, Wellington.

Port Chalmers, 8th May, 1900.

Re Indian famine: If Government decide to contribute, I shall support the vote, although it is rather late. Many colonists have already subscribed to that object, and a large sum has been raised. The principle of assisting from consolidated revenue distress of a public character has the merit of compelling all to contribute according to their means, and saves a vast amount of trouble in collecting subscriptions privately.

E. G. ALLEN.

The Right Hon. the Premier, Wellington.

Dunedin North, 7th May, 1900.

Re Indian famine: Two thousand three hundred pounds is already subscribed in Dunedin, and this method, in my opinion, is better and nobler than the easier plan of Government grant. I would therefore urge you to encourage local subscriptions, inasmuch as this has been begun, and needs only an effort to finish and make successful.

JAMES ALLEN.

The Right Hon. the Premier, Wellington.

Dunedin, 7th May, 1900.

THE fact that already about sixteen times the population of New Zealand are already affected by the famine, and that that number is likely to be greatly increased, is sufficient proof that the cause is worthy of help. The people of our colony have shown by their ready and liberal subscriptions to the patriotic and other funds that they are in sympathy with any movement for the purpose of alleviating the sufferings of their fellows. Great numbers, however, have given to the full extent that their resources will permit, while some, who could better afford, have not responded to appeals made, and are not likely to for this object. These can only be reached by taxation. I think for above reasons that a sum should be sent from Consolidated Fund for this object, as well as for the sufferers by fire at Ottawa.

J. F. ARNOLD.

SIR,—

Wellington, 7th May, 1900.

In reply to your telegraphed memorandum, which reached me to-day, I fully share the opinion of the Government that the terrible calamity which has overtaken our fellow-subjects in India makes an urgent call upon our benevolence, and, in my opinion, the urgency is far greater than in the Canadian case; but I regret to be unable in the one case, as in the other, to approve of the relief being granted out of the Consolidated Fund. It seems to me that Parliament, as trustees for the colony, cannot use the public money for extra colonial benevolence without being guilty of a breach of trust. I would therefore again urge that the Government do its utmost to stimulate private generosity, instead of resorting to the public funds. It is unfortunately certain that private subscriptions which have already realised almost as much for the Indian famine as the Government has allocated for the Ottawa fire will be not stimulated, but checked, if the very laudable object which the Government has in view, is carried out in the manner you suggest.

I have, &c.,

The Right Hon. the Premier, Wellington.

A. R. ATKINSON.