

MESSAGE No. 14.

His Excellency the Officer administering the Government transmits to the House of Representatives, a copy of a correspondence which has taken place on the subject of a special allowance being granted to the Officers and Men, of Her Majesty's Regiments, serving in New Zealand, in consequence of the present high price of the necessaries of life.

His Excellency has been requested, by the Military Authorities, to forward this to the House, for its favourable consideration when the Estimates of the Public Expenditure are under discussion ; accompanied with an intimation that the issue of 5s. per diem to the Officers, and a free ration to the non-Commissioned Officers, Drummers, and Privates, has as yet been a charge against the Imperial Chest, the former since the 1st of April, and the latter since the 1st of June, and is subject to the confirmation of the Imperial Government.

R. H. WYNYARD.

Government House,
Auckland, 7th September, 1854.

New Zealand.

Auckland, 14th December, 1854.

SIR,—

It having been found from the great rise in the price of provisions, and other articles of Consumption absolutely necessary to increase the Pay or wages of Public Servants in this Province, and as the Pay of the day labourer is now equal to and the Pay of the Mechanic, beyond the Pay of the Subaltern Officer, I feel it my bounden duty to submit for special, and serious consideration, the pecuniary, and particular position in which the Troops under my Command are placed, in the hope your Excellency may be induced to support and recommend the issue of a Colonel Allowance for the Forces in New Zealand, as is sanctioned in neighbouring Colonies, where the prices of the necessaries of life do not exceed in any case, and in some instances are less, than the rates in this Colony.

The Beef and Mutton for instance is 9d. per lb in Auckland, in Sydney 4½d. the wages of a day laborer, are from 5s. to 6s. and those of an ordinary mechanic 8s. to 9s. per diem, a sawyer may earn as much as 12s. or 15s. a day.

So long as I considered the market price was in any way within the range of the pay of the Troops. I abstained from intruding this question on your Excellency's notice, but it has now arrived at such a pitch, that with the strictest economy, the Soldier can barely secure a sufficiency of food on a charge of more than half his daily pay, and the expence of the Officers Mess leaves an Ensign little more than a moiety of his pay for breakfast, washing and wages, and other expenses, irrespective of clothing, or the uniform incidental to his position.

It has been argued and erroneously argued, as a set off that an Officer receives allowances for Fuel and Lodging, but during the late winter extra fuel had to be bought at a cost of 15s. and 18s. a ton, and house rent has risen so much that small cottages formerly letting at 2s. 6d a week, are now readily taken at 14s. with every prospect of a further rise as the population increases, all of which renders it impossible to keep the soldiers messing within the terms of the Warrant, or for a junior Officer to keep his expenses within his means.

Should your Excellency deem the resources of this young, but rising Colony unable to meet such expenditure as I have proposed I trust you will recommend it for the favourable consideration of the Authorities at Home, and have the troops in this Command placed on the same footing the Troops are in Van Dieman's Land, where it appears the allowance of 5s. per day for the Officers, and free Rations for the men, is found by the Imperial Government.

I have, &c.,

(Signed)

R. H. WYNYARD,

Lientenant Colonel, Commanding the Troops in New Zealand.

SIR GEORGE GREY, K.C.B.

Governor, &c., &c., &c.,
New Zealand.

Government House, Auckland, January 6th, 1854.

SIR,—

As pressure of business prevented His Excellency from answering your communication of the 14th ultimo. I have the honour to communicate to you the substance of His Excellency's note made at the time on the correspondence, and to suggest that a reference to the effect be made to the General Officer Commanding at Sydney.

2. The following is a copy of the memorandum to which I allude.

"I recommend Colonel Wynyard to refer this to the General—the Colonial funds will not at present admit of a Colonial allowance being paid from the revenue, but I will do my best to support any steps the military authorities may be compelled to take to meet such an emergency."

(Signed)

GEORGE GREY, December 31st, 1854.

I have, &c.,

R. H. WYNYARD,

Officer Administering the Government.

The Honorable

The Officer Commanding the Forces, &c., &c., &c.,
New Zealand.

Auckland, 22nd May, 1854.

SIR,—

In submitting for the information of the Colonial Government the enclosed copy of a correspondence with Governor Sir George Grey, and the Major General Commanding in Australia respecting the pecuniary position of the Officers and men in this Command; I have the honor of enclosing for special consideration a subsequent appeal from the Officers composing the Garrison of Auckland together with a copy of the proceedings of a Board assembled by my orders in consequence thereof, and in doing so beg to be favored as Officer Commanding the Forces in New Zealand, with the opinion and decision of the Executive Government of the Colony upon a case that has now assumed an aspect calling for immediate action.

As His Excellency Sir George Grey has stated the colony to be unequal to bear a charge such as is now applied for, and as it appears Major General Sir R. Nickle has no authority to do more than recommend. I propose, provided it meets with the concurrence and approval of the Colonial Government to authorise an issue from the imperial or Commissariat Chest of a grant of 5s. a day to the Officers and a free ration to the Non Commissioned officers and Soldiers, the same as by the authority of Sir W. Denison has been issued to the Troops in Van Dieman's Land, under, it appears, less trying circumstances that they are placed in in New Zealand.

The allowance to the officers I propose to issue subject to confirmation and the free Ration for the soldiers from month to month under the decision of a Board to set periodically for the purpose of ascertaining the Actual market rates and the comparative claim of the soldier for special consideration as well as the information set forth the in the enclosed documents.

I need hardly make a comment, but as Officer Commanding the Troops, I may be justified in drawing special attention to the plain and palpable facts set forth by the Board wherein it is stated that the day labourer is much better paid than the Subaltern and the Clerks than the Captains. If such is the case with respect to the officers placed in the position of Gentlemen and required at all times to maintain his character in the service, it is in another point of view equally trying to the soldier who in the receipt of 1s. per diem sees his discharged comrade earning easily and continually 35s. to 70s. a week, a state of things that shews how much praise is due to the Troops for the cheerfulness and steadiness with which they have endured privations that have long ago been met by special grants in the neighbouring Colonies.

I have, &c.,

(Signed)

R. H. WYNYARD,

Lieutenant Colonel, Commanding the Troops in New Zealand.

His Excellency
The Officer Administering the Government, &c., &c., &c.,
New Zealand.

Government House, Auckland, May 24th, 1854.

SIR,—

Having laid before the Executive Council of New Zealand your letter of yesterday's date with its several enclosures from A to G, the accompanying resolution was passed by the Council, and recorded on the minutes, by which I feel myself supported and authorised in approving as Lieutenant Colonel Commanding of a grant as proposed of five shillings a day to the Officers in this Command subject to confirmation and a free ration to the Soldier, subject to the decision of a monthly board, as it appears is the usage in Van Dieman's Land under similar circumstances.

I have, &c.,

(Signed)

R. H. WYNYARD,

Officer Administering the Government.

His Excellency
The Officer Commanding the Troops, &c., &c., &c.,
New Zealand.

Extracts from the Minutes of the Executive Council of the 23rd of May, 1854.

The Council concurring in opinion with the Members of the Board, as stated in the report of the 22nd of May, 1854, are of opinion that it would be a prudent measure of responsibility on the part of His Excellency the Officer Administering the Government, to sanction the advance recommended by the Board, subject to the confirmation of the Home Authorities.

A. S. RICHMOND,

Acting Clerk of Executive Council.