

1878.
NEW ZEALAND.

CHARITABLE AID

(CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE CHAIRMAN OF THE VINCENT COUNTY COUNCIL RELATIVE TO).

Laid on the Table by the Hon. Mr. Ballance, with the leave of the House.

No. 1.

MR. C. T. BATKIN to the CHAIRMAN of the COUNTY COUNCIL of VINCENT.

(Circular.)

SIR,—

Treasury, Wellington, 14th March, 1878.

Referring to section 13 of "The Financial Arrangements Act, 1876," requiring that all subsidies payable to counties and boroughs shall be subject to *pro rata* deductions for the maintenance of hospitals and charitable institutions, and to the Hon. the Colonial Secretary's circular of the 5th instant, No. 4, in which it is proposed that, in cases where the maintenance and control of these institutions is taken over by the municipalities or counties, a grant of pound for pound on the amount of all paid-up subscriptions will be made, and no deductions on account of these services will be made from subsidies: I have the honor, by direction of the Hon. the Colonial Treasurer, to inform you that, as it is held that the Treasury is bound by law to make these deductions, it is proposed, in paying the remaining moiety of the subsidies payable under the Financial Arrangements Act for the current year, to continue the practice of deductions as heretofore, on the understanding that, in all cases where the county or borough shall, before the 30th June next, assent to the proposals of the Government and take upon itself the control and maintenance of its hospitals and charitable institutions, an amount equivalent to the sum deducted from the subsidy paid for the half-year ending on the above date shall be repaid to the county or borough, together with the special grant of pound for pound above referred to.

I have, &c.,

C. T. BATKIN,
Secretary to the Treasury.

To the Chairman of the County Council of Vincent.

No. 2.

The Hon. Mr. BALLANCE to the CHAIRMAN of the COUNTY COUNCIL of VINCENT.

SIR,—

Colonial Secretary's Office, Wellington, 15th March, 1878.

The Government on taking office found that the hospitals and charitable institutions throughout the colony were being managed upon no fixed principle or system, and that it was absolutely necessary to place them on a more satisfactory footing.

Up to the end of December, and till the new Financial Arrangements Bill took effect, it was impossible to change the existing state of things, but from that date the principle Government have endeavoured to bring into operation is one which is at once comprehensible, uniform, and practical.

In the larger towns Government have hitherto maintained a most unsatisfactory control, and paid the expenditure; recovering it, however, from the subsidies payable to the boroughs and adjacent counties. In the outlying localities and at Hokitika a grant in aid, differing in some instances, but commonly 20s. for 20s. of subscriptions, has been given, the hospital being managed by a committee appointed by the subscribers.

A proposal has been made to the Municipalities of the larger towns to place the hospitals and charitable aid under the direct control and management of the Borough Councils, and to subsidize them to the extent of 20s. for every 20s. of paid-up subscriptions and of moneys contributed from the borough fund, and to make no deductions whatever from the subsidies; and the Government propose to offer similar terms to County Councils, if they will undertake to manage hospitals in country districts, many of the patients admitted being resident outside the boroughs.

One question would remain for adjustment between the County and Borough Councils, namely, that of their respective shares of the cost of managing hospitals in boroughs. This might probably be adjusted by a charge being made by Corporations upon the counties of a *pro rata* sum per head for county patients and paupers; and if this or any other mode which shall be found satisfactory of removing what appears to be an unfair charge upon the borough funds can be arranged between the Councils, a more equitable system of contribution would be established than the present one of deductions from the subsidies payable to each local body.

It will be necessary, of course, to satisfy the Colonial Secretary, as hitherto, as to the amount of the voluntary subscriptions, but Government do not desire to interfere in any way with the local management of these institutions.

I have, &c.,

J. BALLANCE.

The Chairman of the Council, County of Vincent.

No. 3.

Mr. VINCENT PYKE to the Hon. the COLONIAL SECRETARY.

SIR,—

Vincent County Council, Clyde, 24th June, 1878.

Referring to your circular letter No. 7, dated 15th March, and also to the circular of the Hon. Colonial Treasurer, No. 378, dated 14th March, respecting the future management of hospitals, &c., I have now the honor to inform you that the matter having been very carefully considered by the Vincent County Council, and conferences thereupon held with the Borough Councils of Clyde and Cromwell, and the Municipal Corporation of Alexandra, the whole of the local governing bodies above-mentioned have jointly and mutually agreed to the following propositions:—

“1. That the County Council shall undertake the control and management of the Dunstan and Cromwell Hospitals in accordance with the terms set forth in the Colonial Secretary's letter of 15th March.

“2. That the existing local Committees shall continue to collect voluntary subscriptions, and to manage the affairs of the said hospitals as at present.

“3. That in the event of such voluntary subscriptions being (with the Government subsidy thereupon) insufficient to defray the cost and expenses of the hospitals, the deficit shall be contributed by the county and boroughs *pro rata* in proportion to the values of rateable properties (as shown by the next previous valuation of such properties) in the county and boroughs.”

It has also been agreed to subdivide the county into two hospital districts, but as this is a matter of internal arrangement it is unnecessary to trouble the Government with details.

It must be understood very distinctly by the Government that this offer on the part of the county and boroughs there-within is made in good faith that all counties and boroughs in New Zealand will be placed on the same footing, and that the hospitals in the larger and more wealthy cities will not be maintained entirely by public revenues.

With regard to patients from this county or the boroughs who may find their way to any other district hospital—and equally with regard to patients from other districts who may find their way to our hospitals—I would suggest that a period of time should be fixed as a test of residence, and that the actual charge of maintaining such patients should be borne by the district to which they belong. This would be a matter of account between the various hospitals, and if the whole country were formed into hospital districts for these purposes it would greatly tend to simplify matters.

I have, &c.,

VINCENT PYKE,

Chairman.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Wellington.

No. 4.

Mr. G. S. COOPER to Mr. VINCENT PYKE.

SIR,—

Colonial Secretary's Office, Wellington, 11th July, 1878.

I have the honor, by direction of the Colonial Secretary, to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, A. 65-688, of the 24th ultimo, informing him that the Vincent County Council have, in conjunction with the Borough Councils of Clyde and Cromwell and the Municipal Corporation of Alexandra, agreed to undertake the control and management of the Dunstan and Cromwell Hospitals, upon the distinct understanding that “this offer is made in good faith that all counties and boroughs in New Zealand will be placed on the same footing, and that the hospitals in the larger and more wealthy cities will not be maintained entirely by public revenues.”

With regard to the undertaking asked for, Colonel Whitmore instructs me to say that, in the present transition state of matters relating to charitable institutions generally, it is impossible for the Government to give a positive pledge as asked for. The policy you have indicated is that of the Government, and everything will be done to bring about an uniform system throughout the colony as early as possible.

It is the general tendency of the policy of the Government to decentralize the administration of the institutions in question as far as possible, leaving the localities to determine the regulations under which they will carry it out.

That being so, the Government must leave to the local bodies concerned to decide as to the proportion of contributions from each, in the event of the subsidies and subscriptions proving insufficient, as well as the question of residence.

Should it become necessary to have recourse to legislation for the purpose of laying down principles of the kind just alluded to, your valuable suggestions shall receive from the Government the consideration which they seem to merit.

I have, &c.,

The Chairman of the Council, County of Vincent, Clyde.

G. S. COOPER.