

nine o'clock P.M. Thus the destructive element, which was causing such devastations in other parts of the province, appears to have been driven thither by the gale which was experienced here, but which the mighty action of such extensive and rapid conflagration dilated as it proceeded to the most impetuous hurricane, and the very wide range it has taken leads me to fear, that we have much yet to learn of its dreadful effects, when reports shall come in from the numerous gangs of woodsmen dispersed in the various parts of the wilderness.

At the same time that the flames and showers of burning embers poured upon Newcastle, they reached the establishment similarly placed upon the bank of the river, and others in the rear, and in fifteen minutes all were consumed.

I wish I could report that life had been spared; but so violently driven were the flames and embers from the blazing woods, well prepared for the most active combustion by the longest season of heat and drought ever known, that men, women, and children, in great numbers, have perished in the houses and in the woods in exertions to save property, or in attempts to save life; and when driven in terror to seek safety on another element, greater numbers still appear to have suffered in attempts to cross the river in boats or in canoes, on rafts or on logs of timber, which were alike incapable of resisting the fury of the storm. Many vessels were at the same time cast on shore, several set on fire, and three entirely consumed by the drift of embers from the land.

The total effects of the awful calamity cannot yet be estimated. Fredericton has lost about eighty habitations or stores, and property to the value of at least thirty-three thousand pounds. On the Rivers Oronoctoo and Roperjonish, tributaries of the St. John, several lives and many habitations have been lost and destroyed, and some of these ravages accompanied by terrific circumstances. On the Miramichi River, the loss of life cannot, I fear, be estimated under three hundred souls. Great numbers of the destitute survivors had collected in the village of Chatham for relief, and as so many of the provision stores of the merchants had been consumed (the settlement depending almost entirely upon imported food), serious apprehensions were entertained of approaching famine. So soon as I learnt this, I assembled His Majesty's Council to consider what measures it would be expedient to adopt, and an agent has been sent to Quebec to purchase supplies, and to proceed with them to Miramichi.

In a calamity so extraordinary and extensive, I feel that I am called upon to depart from that brevity with which the momentous operations of my own profession are commonly reported, and if I have trespassed too much at length in doing so, it is to shew amply the grounds upon which I ought to apply and appeal for succour.

I have done all in my power to afford and extend relief upon this melancholy occasion, and I have been most nobly supported by the liberality of the country.

For the benefit of the sufferers in the fire which has taken place at Fredericton, a subscription has been raised which will be sufficient for the supply of its immediate wants. The subscription in Mi-

ramichi has been most liberal, the city of St. John has come forward with a great degree of liberality, and I have just learnt by a dispatch from his Excellency Sir James Kempt, that our sister colony was about to send prompt and considerable succours from Halifax, but effectual relief beyond averting the horrors of want in the approaching long winter of seven months' duration, is not within such means.

In promoting subscriptions, I have on my own responsibility paid two hundred pounds from the King's funds for the benefit of each of the two suffering places, I know well enough His Gracious Majesty's benevolent disposition, and your Lordship's, to doubt of receiving sanction for this appropriation.

The succours to which the people here naturally look are those which the abundant charity and benevolence of the mother countries, usually contribute on such calamitous occasions, and should any funds be so raised at home, they would be effectually and properly applied by Committees here, to many cases of very great distress, which is brought upon those who will endure it silently, but severely, and to re-establish in business many persons who have entirely lost their little capitals invested in the beginnings of a productive trade, in the prosperity of which the mother countries participate, and to aid others who are reduced more partially to difficulty. Should funds so considerable be contributed as to be applied further to restore buildings, that would be carefully regulated by measures to render the recurrence of such dangers less likely, in a way which could not be effected, if the sufferers are constrained, from insufficiency of funds, to rebuild in the cheaper, but more perilous manner and material of the country. Means for immediate subsistence and succour being thus provided, I shall to-morrow open a subscription here for those latter important purposes, and to this fund, instead of that for rebuilding the Government-House, I crave your Lordship's grant in aid from the King's revenue. To this too I invoke the benevolence of the mother countries, and I trust some measures may be adopted to excite it. The subscription for this purpose will be commenced to-morrow, and immediately afterwards I shall proceed to the site of the greater calamity, leaving my family in their difficulty here, to a continuance of those kindnesses and protection which they experienced, when driven from their own residence.

I have, &c.

(Signed) HOWARD DOUGLAS

War-Office, 16th. December 1825.

- 5th Regiment of Foot, Ensign James Byron to be Lieutenant, by purchase, vice Dirom, promoted. Dated 17th December 1825.
- 15th Ditto, Lieutenant Charles Drury, from half-pay 21st Light Dragoons, to be Lieutenant, paying the difference, vice Clinton, appointed to the 23d Foot. Dated 1st December 1825.
- 23d Ditto, Lieutenant Henry Clinton, from 15th Foot, to be Lieutenant, vice Henry Johnson Cotter, who retires upon half-pay 21st Light