

2d.—I have issued a proclamation, laying an embargo, for a limited period, upon the exportation of provisions, other than such as are required for the use of crews, passengers and the fisheries.

3d.—I have issued a proclamation, warning all persons against the reconstruction of wooden buildings upon the burnt district before the intentions of the local Legislature on the subject shall be declared.

4th.—I have addressed a circular letter to the Governor-general and the Lieutenant-governors of all the British American colonies, and to Her Majesty's Consul at New York and Boston, of which copies are enclosed.

5th.—I have authorized the chartering of two vessels, one to Halifax, and the other to New York, for provisions.

6th.—I called a meeting this day in this House (at which I presided) of all the heads of the mercantile establishments, as well as of the principal inhabitants, the clergy, judges and officers of the Government. Copies of the resolutions adopted at this meeting, as well as of other resolutions adopted at a meeting of the inhabitants previously held, are enclosed, the whole of which, it will be perceived, I had anticipated.

Friday, June 12th.

I have now the satisfaction to report that through the operations of the Committee of Relief, appointed at the meeting of Wednesday, all the houseless have been placed under shelter, in aid of which I have placed fifty (all) the tents in the Ordnance store at its disposal; and an adequate supply of provisions, particularly bread, has been and will be continued to be issued to them for the present. They (the recipients) are, however, I understand, gradually dispersing in the colony or emigrating. Fortunately the weather is fine.

For the details of the progress of the fire, and of the measures used for its suppression, I beg permission to refer to the accompanying extract of a report addressed by the Commanding Officer of the Royal Engineers to the head of his department on the subject, and to the General Order which I have issued upon this melancholy occasion, and to express my hope that you will be pleased to receive the details contained in these documents in lieu of a more lengthened despatch at the present hurried moment, until I am enabled to enter more fully into the sadly altered circumstances of this lately prosperous and happy colony, which I shall scarcely be in a position to do until after the meeting of the Legislature.

The Right honourable W. E. Gladstone,
&c. &c. &c.

I have, &c.
(signed) J. Harvey.

P. S.—With the exception of the two soldiers of the Royal Artillery (the injuries of one of whom are not dangerous), I believe very few accidents to have occurred during this awful conflagration. Only one has as yet been made known to me from any authentic source.

The sketches of the town herewith transmitted, though hurriedly prepared, show with sufficient precision the extent of the ravages of this destructive fire.

J. H.

Government House, St. John's, Newfoundland,
11 June 1846.

My Lord,

It is my painful and melancholy duty to acquaint your Lordship that Almighty God has been pleased to visit this town with an awful and devastating conflagration, which has reduced the chief portion of it to ashes.

The fire broke out about half-past eight o'clock in the morning of Tuesday last, the 9th instant, in the western extremity of the town, and the flames, borne onward by a strong wind from the same quarter which prevailed during the whole of that day and the succeeding night, overcame every effort to subdue them, and involved in one common ruin (with scarcely an exception) the whole of the mercantile establishments, with their stores of goods and provisions, very many of the public buildings, and at least three-fourths of the dwelling-houses of the inhabitants.

It has not been possible as yet to obtain a correct return of the number of edifices burnt, but it is estimated that in all about 2,000 have been destroyed, and nearly 12,000 persons rendered houseless.

I beg herewith to enclose for your Lordship's information a copy of certain resolutions yesterday adopted by a meeting of the heads of departments and principal inhabitants of the town, convened by me at the Government House; and in consideration of the state of utter destitution and distress to which many thousands of the poorer inhabitants have been reduced by the suddenness of this awful visitation of Divine Providence, and on their behalf, I have, through your Lordship, to make an earnest appeal to the sympathy and philanthropy of the inhabitants of the province under your Lordship's government for that relief which I cannot doubt will be promptly extended to their fellow-subjects in this colony who have been overwhelmed by so stupendous a calamity.

Lieutenant-general his Excellency
the Earl of Cathcart,
&c. &c. &c.

(signed) J. Harvey.