

which follows, they think it due to themselves to state, with reference to a note appended to a despatch of Sir John Harvey to Earl Grey, under date the 18th August, intimating the appointment of a commission, and the reason assigned for that appointment, that they stand in no way chargeable with the imputation laid upon them by Sir John, unconscious, as they totally are, of the smallest dereliction in the discharge of the duties assigned them.

Referring to the public proceedings which have taken place, and in the order in which they have occurred, since the period of the awful calamity which has given birth to them, the attention of the Committee is first drawn to the fact that on the 3d day of July, 1846, the House of Assembly, then in session, presented an address to Sir John Harvey, requesting His Excellency to represent to the Home Government the importance of ordering the erection of public buildings, for the purpose of allaying the apprehensions of the population as to the diffusion of employment. The object was to solicit a grant from the Imperial Government towards the erection of such buildings.—See pages 29, 30, of the *Correspondence*.

And by a despatch dated 18th August, Earl Grey states to Sir John Harvey that it has been suggested to him that as the whole amount of subscriptions at home and in the colonies will be considerable, it would be desirable to apply a part of the grant already at the Governor's disposal to the re-erection of the official buildings, which must otherwise be replaced by taxation. Sir John is therefore instructed, unless it would interfere with his previous arrangements, to reserve a portion of the Parliamentary grant until the expediency of the application just mentioned can be further considered.—P. 31.

Here, then, it is, that the Committee observe the first oblique tendency—the first attempt to diverge from the original and straight-forward intention of appropriating the whole public contributions towards the relief of the sufferers by the fire. They acquit the House of Assembly, in their appeal through Sir John Harvey to the Home Government for an imperial grant in aid of the public buildings, from any attempt to mislead the Government; but they perceive that the application itself, coupled with the prospect of a very large amount of contributions, suggested the idea that in the erection of the public works the labouring classes and the mechanics would find ample employment and a sufficient recompense for their labour.

On the 6th September Colonel Law replied to the foregoing despatch by stating that Sir John had reserved £5,000 out of the government grant of £30,000, to meet unforeseen demands;—that of the remaining £25,000, a considerable sum had already been, or was in course of distribution; but the Colonel hoped to be enabled to add some portion of it to the £5,000 already reserved, to be made available in the manner contemplated by his Excellency.—P. 36.

On the 23d September, Earl Grey communicated his views as to the mode of distribution, and recommends that the middle classes should