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Colonial Department, December 16, 1825.

A DISPATCH, of which the following is a copy, has been received from Major-General Sir Howard Douglas, Bart. Lieutenant-Governor of the province of New Brunswick, addressed to the Earl Bathurst, K. G. one of His Majesty's Principal Secretaries of State:

MY LORD, *Fredericton, October 17, 1825.*

IT becomes my painful duty to report to your Lordship, that very extensive ravages, attended by circumstances of the most afflicting description, have been occasioned in several parts of the province, by the conflagrations which for some time have been raging in the woods; and the destruction of my Government-house, which I reported in my dispatch of the 3d instant, has been followed by calamities and visitations the most awful.

For some days previous to the 7th instant, the temperature of the air and the state of the atmosphere, much charged with smoke, indicated that fires of vast extent were raging in the woods; but no previous apprehension seems to have been entertained from the prevalence of conflagrations, which are so commonly put in action to commence clearances in the wilderness. On the day I have named, however, at about eleven o'clock in the forenoon, an alarm was conveyed to the town, that the residence of the Commissioner of Crown Lands, about a mile and a half distant, was on fire. The garrison; and the greater part of the population, ran immediately thither, and succeeded in saving Mr. Baillie's house from the flames, which were running through the adjoining woods with tremendous fury.

Whilst these accounts were brought to me, that the town was on fire, and before I could reach it, though mounted on a fleet horse, whole streets were in a blaze.

At that time it blew a gale of wind from the

north west, and however incredible it may then have appeared, that the fire should have been communicated to the town from the woods in the vicinity, the sequel of this dispatch will shew, from what has occurred elsewhere, that there is every reason to believe such was the case.

The fire raged with a degree of fury which no exertions (and those used were very great) could for a moment check; and the whole population abandoned their houses, making what efforts they could to save their effects.

When the fire had consumed all that part of the town which lay in the direction of the wind, the conflagration took a lateral course, threatening the barracks and other buildings, which, had they taken fire, must have conducted it to the total destruction of what has remained of the town of Fredericton.

To these points every effort was directed, and when I acquaint your Lordship that the barracks and houses (adjoining to others in violent combustion, and to the yard containing the winter fuel of the garrison, in a prodigious blaze of fire which threw its embers over all the yet standing habitations) were saved by the joint exertions of the people and the military, your Lordship will be able to estimate the conduct which I would applaud.

As evening advanced, the woods, which had continued to burn throughout the day, were now more distinctly seen to be every where on fire, and vast clouds of smoke rising in the distance, accompanied by extraordinary noises, as of furious explosions of flame, and the fire reflected on the distant sky, portended other calamities which I have now the pain to report.

On the very same day, and about the hour when this place suffered most, the town of Newcastle, one hundred and twenty miles distant, together with all the mercantile establishments on that bank of the Miramichi River, and some on the opposite side, were consumed by a violent torrent of fire, which issued from the woods in the rear, at about