

The following Report of the Commissioners for ascertaining the losses occasioned by the late destructive Fires, is Published by order of His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor.

To His Excellency Major General Sir HOWARD DOUGLAS Bart. Lieutenant-Governor and Commander in Chief of the Province of New-Brunswick &c. &c. &c.

The Report of the Commissioners appointed to enquire into the losses sustained by means of the destructive Fires in this Province in the month of October 1825, under the Act of Assembly 7th George IV Chapter 1.

A competent number of the Commissioners in pursuance of your Excellency's directions, have made the examinations required by the Act in the immediate neighbourhood of the Fires in three different parts of the Province, where the greatest destruction occurred, namely at Miramichi, at Fredericton, and on the River Oromocto.

In conducting these examinations the Commissioners required the party who had sustained the loss, or the agent of such party, to specify under oath the losses actually sustained, and this statement to be corroborated by two credible persons, neighbours of the party or otherwise possessing means of information on the subject, who were required to declare, under oath, their belief of the losses having been actually sustained as stated by the applicant—and in order to facilitate and expedite their proceedings, the Commissioners caused Blank forms of examinations to be printed, one of which is hereunto annexed for your Excellency's information—This form has been pursued with but very few exceptions, which will appear in a list of Special Cases, hereinafter referred to.

The Commissioners being anxious to give full effect to all the safeguards against imposition, provided by the Legislature, were careful during the examinations to promulgate the clauses of the Act which render false swearing in any of these examinations liable to the pains of perjury, and which exclude from any share in the charitable Funds, any claim which shall appear, to have been intentionally made, for the purpose of obtaining more than a just compensation; and they have the satisfaction to state that but one instance has occurred in which they have found it necessary to exclude a claim on this ground.

The Commissioners thought it proper to fix the sum of twenty pounds as the limit below which they would receive no proof of loss—on the principle that where the loss did not amount to this sum, the applicant would in all cases have received full relief from the distributions already made.

No proof of loss was admitted arising from the destruction of Timber or Wood standing in the Forest from the obvious impracticability of ascertaining it with precision, although such losses were sustained to an immense amount.

The examinations having been completed the Commissioners all repaired to Fredericton, in pursuance of Your Excellency's requisition, and according to the directions of the Act, H. G. Clopper Esq. having been, in the latter state of the examinations, appointed by your Excellency a Commissioner in the room of the Honorable George Shore who had been compelled to resign in consequence of the pressure of the other Public duties, rendering him unable to continue his attention to the business of the Commission.

The result of these examinations appear in the several lists of cases in the respective Districts, annexed to this report in which are detailed the names and occupations, of the

sufferers, and the loss sustained by each as proved before the Commissioners.

From the Miramichi lists it appears that the losses proved in the District were as follows:

50 Merchants & Traders	£71,203	0	7½
117 Mechanics	20,478	10	8
6 Professional Men	4,978	2	8
244 Farmers	68,058	17	5½
30 Lumberers	6,034	6	2
63 Labourers	7,014	3	5
21 Tavern Keepers	10,423	9	3
28 Widows & Single Women	5,358	8	6
	£193,339	1	8

From the Fredericton list it appears that the losses proved there being principally from the Conflagration within the Town (with some cases from the Country) were as follows:

16 Merchants & Traders	£12,302	16	11
22 Merchants & Traders	6,634	10	11
2 Professional Men	1,402	15	2
3 Farmers	610	2	6
8 Lumberers	1,329	18	10
11 Labourers	1,263	7	0
2 Tavern Keepers	2,858	11	6
3 Widows & Single Women	551	18	6
	£26,794	1	4

From the Oromocto list it appears that the losses proved in that District, were

24 Farmers	£5,491	14	3
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There is also annexed to this Report a list of special cases not proved in the regular form, which the Commissioners nevertheless recommended as proper, to be included in the distribution of the Funds at the disposal of your Excellency.

This list contains the following cases from the County of Charlotte.

6 Farmers	£1,187	4	0
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It not having been thought necessary for the Commissioners to repair to that part of the Country these cases are substantiated to their satisfaction, by the certificates of Magistrates, and other well known respectable individuals, acquainted with the circumstances of the respective cases.

There are also on this list, the following cases from Miramichi which from circumstances explained, to the satisfaction of the Commissioners, the parties did not prove in the usual manner, but which they are satisfied are entitled to relief, viz.

1 Widow	£21	15	0
1 Lumberer	70	0	0
2 Farmers	975	0	0

Total special cases	£1,066	15	0
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It is proper to add that the foregoing statements do not include all the losses sustained, some individuals who suffered did not come forward to prove their loss, several Public buildings were also destroyed, and three Ships, in the River Miramichi, which are not included in the above amount, besides the very great destruction of private property in the Forests.

It being a part of the duty of the Commissioners prescribed by the Act of Assembly to present to your Excellency, together with the losses, a scheme for the distribution of the Funds placed in your hands, for the relief of the sufferers, and remaining undisposed of—there have been laid before the Commissioners, by your Excellency's directions, as data for enabling them to form such a Scheme, a statement of the Funds remaining for distribution, and statements from the principle scenes of distress, of the sums and supplies already received and distributed in the respective Districts. By an Account laid before the Commissioners and annexed to this Report, it would appear that

there is now about £20,000 for distribution as your Excellency shall be pleased to direct. It is to be observed, however, that the precise amount of the Subscriptions in England, has not yet been ascertained, and returns are not yet received from all the Counties in this Province of the Subscriptions made therein.

The Commissioners suppose that your Excellency will think it proper to direct an accurate and complete account of all the various donations and contributions to these charitable funds, and of the manner in which the same have been disposed of, to be published as soon as practicable.

From statements made by the Miramichi Committee, it appears that up to the 1st of June 1826, there had been received as follows:

Amount of supplies from Halifax, exclusive of money per Invoice,	£2567	18	0
Ditto from Quebec, (freight included)	5157	8	11
Ditto from St. John N. B. St. John, N. F. St. Andrews, and other parts of the Colonies, without Invoice,	4600	0	0
	£12,325	6	11

Amt. of Cash from Halifax,	£650	0	0
Do, Central Committee,	250	0	0
Do, Yarmouth,	50	0	0
Do, Liverpool, (Eng.)	2000	0	0
Do, Annan,	33	11	7
Do, Alloa,	93	0	0
Exchange on	2126	11	7, 236
	83412	17	3
	£15,738	4	2

Add this sum received from Glasgow, Bristol, N. Shields, and Sunderland, per letter of Secretary of Miramichi Committee, 1496l. sterling,

1662	4	5	
Amt. of Draft in favor of Mr. Joplin on the Province Treasurer, to enable the Miramichi Committee to purchase Grass Seeds,	400	0	0

They appear to have expended as follows. Relief granted to 3540 Sufferers.

Stock.	Cash.
£12015	1781

Paid balance of Debt contracted by the old Com. after expending the sums subscribed at Miramichi,	175	10	2
Paid Contingent expences	527	0	0
Balance in hand	310	6	11
	928	10	3

£12,325	6	11
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This Committee also state that upwards of six thousand pounds were expended in the relief of that class of sufferers whose distresses arose from the loss of employment and in inability to leave the place, their loss of property by the fire, not exceeding in most cases Twenty Pounds each.

The following statement of the Fredericton Fund is made by the Central Committee:

Total amount of Subscription List,	£632	16	10
Not yet paid,	78	1	4
	£554	15	6

Add Donation from St. John,	309	0	0
Potatoes, &c. from Clare, N. S. exclusive of a quantity sent to the Oromocto	35	12	4
Flour & Fish from St. John	15	16	6
	£906	4	4

Disbursed by the Committee to 20th June 1826, .832 2 4

Balance, £74 2 0

The following statement has been made by the Oromocto Committee:

Subscriptions in the County of Sunbury for the relief of the sufferers on the Oromocto and its branches, the greater part of which has been collected and distributed,	£470	4	2
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Supposed amount received from St. John in Clothing, Provisions, &c.	300	0	0
Cash received from Central Committee,	50	0	0
	£820	4	2

The Commissioners now proceed to make suggestions to your Excellency for the proper distribution of the remainder of these extensive charities, which have excited the most grateful emotions throughout the Province, and tell so much both for British and American Benevolence.

The Commissioners sensibly feel the responsibility, which dwells upon all concerned in this distribution, to dispense the bounty, for the purposes contemplated by the Donors. Although the Law has authorized the Commissioners to ascertain all the losses which were sustained from the calamitous fires that caused such sweeping desolation, it does not follow that every individual who came forward, to prove a loss, is therefore either entitled to, or wished to obtain a portion of the charity.

There can be no doubt indeed that many persons proved their losses principally with a view of showing the amount of loss sustained.

The ruling principle in the distribution of every donation, must be the intention of the donor; and in the present case, it is conceived, that there are many persons whose losses have been proved before the Commissioners, who are not of a description of sufferers that any of the donors intended to relieve by their contributions. The Commissioners think that the actual and individual distribution of the charity can only be made, upon a knowledge of the circumstances and condition of each sufferer, and therefore must be performed by local Committees who possess, or may easily obtain this knowledge, upon such principles, and under such regulations, as your Excellency may think it proper to lay down for their guidance, and that the duty of the Commissioners, in this particular, is obviously and necessarily confined to suggesting general principles of distribution for the consideration of your Excellency, in whose hands and under whose control, the Funds have been placed for disposal.

The Commissioners in the first place recommend that there be reserved from immediate distribution, a sum that will enable your Excellency to make provision for persons who have been made widows, or orphans, or become maimed and disabled by means of the fires, and for other destitute cases that may not be included within the examinations of loss of property, or that may be proper objects, for future and continued relief.

It appears to the Commissioners, under a view of all the circumstances, that 18000l. is a proper sum for immediate distribution, and that the remainder of the Funds on hand, together with any other monies that may