Collector's Office,
Boston, July, 17, 1844.

Sir,

I am under the necessity to inform you that a most calamitous fire took place at Nantucket, on the 14th inst., consuming an immense amount of property, including all the Oil stored by Messrs. R. Mitchell & Sons, under the contract made on the 10th of March last, with Messrs Henry Lincoln & Co., of this city.

By the terms of the Contract, you will notice that 10,665 gallons Spring, and 5340 gallons of Winter oil, were to be delivered on or about the 15th. of last month, that date being about the time the vessel has heretofore returned from the first voyage on the Atlantic coast. But, in consequence of adverse winds and fogs, the vessel was detained nearly two weeks longer than usual, and the 15,925 gallons of oil was inspected, gauged, and carefully secured to await her arrival. The money stipulated in the contract was paid to Mess. Lincoln &c., on their depo-

iting with me a guaranty that the oil was fully insured and at their risk until delivered on board the Government vessel. In consequence of this sad calamity, they now assert that they are unable to furnish an equal quantity to that consumed, and now demanded for immediate delivery for the Lights on the Coast of Maine; but they stand ready to furnish the quantity stipulated to be delivered on or about the 20th of this month, if they can be assured that the payment therefor will be made to them, when laden on board the Sch. Gazelle. As they have received pay for the oil already deliverable, I doubt the propriety of making any further payments, till the price of the oil, actually received on board an vessel, shall exceed the amount paid to them.

Under these circumstances, I respectfully ask your instructions as to the course to be pursued in relation to this contract. I have made a regular demand for the oil due, a copy of which is enclosed. The pressing necessity for an immediate supply of oil for the Maine Light-Houses, is so great, that I am induced

to ask your earliest consideration of the subject; and to authorize me either to accede to their proposition, and despatch the Gazelle, or to go into the market and purchase the required quantity without regard to their agreement.

Mr. Wellman left for Nantucket, with Mr. Congdon, the gauger, the day before we heard of the fire; and the Schooner was in the harbor ready to receive the oil; and every possible exertion was made after the arrival of the vessel, to expedite her departure, which could have been in two or three days, but for this sad calamity.

I send you a copy of the contract, and a copy of the note of Messrs Lincoln & Co, of the 20th. of last month. In addition to which a Bond was taken in the usual form, for the fulfilment of the agreement.

I am, very respectfully,
Yr. obdt. Servant

Marcus Morton
Superintendent of Light Houses

Wm. S. Pleasanton,
Fifth Auditor &c.

Dup. July 20/46