

BRITISH AMERICA ASSURANCE COMPANY.

The sixty-second annual meeting of the shareholders of this company was held at the company's office, Toronto, on Thursday, 13th February, 1896.
The president, Mr. Geo. A. Cox, occupied the chair, and Mr. P. H. Sims, who was appointed to act as secretary, read the following annual

REPORT.

The directors beg to submit herewith statements showing the results of the business for the past year, and the assets and liabilities of the company at the 31st December last.

In the fire branch there has been a moderate gain in premium income over that of the preceding year, without any corresponding increase in losses, so that a very satisfactory profit is shown on the year's transactions. This result is mainly due to the favorable experience of the company in the United States.

The Marine Branch also shows an increase in premiums, but, in common with all others engaged in lake underwriting, the company has suffered from the unusually heavy losses of the past season, due in part to the unprecedented low water on our inland lakes and rivers during the entire season, and partly to the exceptionally disastrous storms in the closing months of lake navigation.

The earnings from interest, notwithstanding the difficulty in obtaining investments at rates such as have heretofore prevailed, show a slight gain over those of 1894.

The Reserve to cover liability on unexpired policies has been increased to meet the additional amount at risk, and the fund thus set aside is, according to the company's experience of preceding years, more than an ample provision to meet losses that will accrue upon policies which were in force at the end of the year.

GEO. A. COX,
President.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT OF THE BRITISH AMERICA ASSURANCE COMPANY FOR THE YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31ST, 1895.

Revenue Account.

Fire losses, including losses under adjustment at 31st December, 1895.....	\$ 737,771 76
Marine losses, including losses under adjustment at 31st December, 1895.....	243,301 37
Commissions and other charges..	477,656 54
Government and local taxes ...	28,867 76
Taxes and other charges on company's building.....	4,043 02
Balance to credit of Profit and Loss	59,836 05
	\$1,551,476 50

Fire premium	\$1,348,257 63
Marine premium..	276,337 11
	\$1,624,594 74
Less re-insurance..	117,730 78
	\$1,506,863 96
Interest and rent account	44,612 54
	\$1,551,476 50

PROFIT AND LOSS ACCOUNT.

Dividend No. 103.....	\$26,250 00
Dividend No. 104.....	26,250 00
Sundry accounts written off ...	4,348 99
Balance—Reserve at 31st Dec., 1895.....	520,112 05
	\$576,961 04
Reserve at 31st Dec., 1894	\$517,124 99
Balance of Revenue account ...	59,836 05
	\$576,961 04

Assets.

United States and state bonds ..	\$ 363,550 00
Municipal bonds and debentures.	553,811 31
Loan company stocks and bonds.	98,350 00
Real estate (company's building).	150,000 00
Office furniture, business maps, etc.	34,902 94
Agents' balances and other accounts.....	185,850 44
Cash on hand and deposit	37,348 66
Bills receivable	16,376 10
Interest due and accrued	10,348 00
	\$1,450,537 45

Liabilities.

Capital stock.....	\$ 750,000 00
Losses under adjustment—	
Fire	\$124,824 82
Marine	29,350 58
	154,175 40
Dividend No. 104, payable Jan. 6th, 1896	26,250 00
Balance—Reserve fund	520,112 05
	\$1,450,537 45

REINSURANCE AND SURPLUS FUND.

Total Reserve fund.....	\$520,112 05
Reserve to cover liability on outstanding risks	496,905 55
	\$ 23,206 50

J. J. KENNY,

Vice-President and Managing Director.
P. H. SIMS,
Secretary.

To the President and Directors of the British America Assurance Company:

GENTLEMEN,—We, the undersigned, having examined the securities and vouchers, and audited the books of the British America Assurance Company, Toronto, certify that we have found them correct, and that the annexed balance sheet is a statement of the company's affairs to 31st December, 1895.

R. R. CATHRON, } Auditors.
R. F. WALTON, }

Toronto, Ont., 8th Feb., 1896.

The president, in moving the adoption of the report, said:—

"I am pleased to avail myself of this opportunity to supplement the necessarily brief remarks contained in the report by a few words relative to what appear to me as the most noteworthy features of the business of the past year.

"First, let me say in regard to the largest and most important department of the company, the Fire Branch, that it is seldom that companies in Canada have been called upon to face a more unpropitious opening to a year's business than that of the one under review. The two large fires in Toronto in January, which were referred to at the shareholders' meeting in February last, were followed by a third and equally serious one early in March. The aggregate loss by these fires was close upon two and a quarter million dollars, and the amount paid by insurance companies was, in round figures, one million, six hundred thousand dollars, or nearly one-fourth the entire year's Canadian premiums received by all the companies doing business in the Dominion. While our losses, considering the magnitude of these disasters, were not excessive, their effect, nevertheless, combined with rather heavy losses from other quarters during the same period, was to create a very considerable adverse balance on the first three months' operations of 1895, and to present at the end of that term a very doubtful prospect of any profit being realized from the fire business for the year. The experience of each succeeding month, however, was more favorable than might have been anticipated, and the directors had the satisfaction of seeing, as the year progressed, a steady gain of income over expenditure, and an ultimate profit balance of some seventy thousand dollars upon the business of this department at the closing of the books. This result, as intimated in the report, is largely attributable to the favorable experience of the company in the United States, and it affords a forcible illustration of the advantages which a company derives from a widely distributed business in providing for exceptional losses, such as are liable to occur in any of our large business centres.

"Passing to the Marine Branch, the business of which is confined chiefly to the insuring of hulls and cargoes on the great lakes, it will be unnecessary to say to anyone who has been sufficiently interested in the lake carrying trade to have noted the casualties recorded during the past season, that we have just passed through a year which has been unprecedented, both in the number and magnitude of its losses. From the opening of navigation till its close, vessels had to contend with the dangers arising from the lowest water ever experienced on our lakes, resulting in almost daily strandings in the river channels; while the fall months were more than usually prolific in storms, which brought disaster upon many of what were regarded as thoroughly seaworthy craft. When I add that within one single period of ten

days in the month of November, underwriters in Canada were called upon to pay ninety-five thousand dollars for losses on Manitoba grain cargoes (independently of the value of the vessels carrying them), it will readily be appreciated that the premiums received in this branch were not sufficient to meet the losses, and that as a consequence we, in common with all others engaged in this line of business, have transacted it at a loss. While this has materially affected the outcome of the past year's business of the company, its effect will, it is believed, also be to place inland marine underwriting upon a more satisfactory basis as to rates for the coming season.

"It will be interesting to shareholders to know that the fire business of the present year has opened favorably, but perhaps the most gratifying feature regarding our present position is the steady growth in our Canadian income—particularly when considered in connection with our loss ratio during the past three years as compared with the average results in Canada—for the best recommendation a company can have abroad is evidence, such as this affords, of the public confidence it enjoys in its own home field. The security which the "British America" offers to policy-holders, namely, the sum of its Reserve Fund (\$520,112.05), and its paid-up capital (\$750,000), making in all \$1,270,112.05 in assets of unquestionable character, is, I feel assured, such as to continue to command for it an increasing share of public patronage.

"In conclusion, I must express the directors' appreciation of the work of our officers and field force during the past year, as well as of the services of our local representatives throughout Canada and the United States, who are so heartily seconding the efforts of the management in building up the business of the company."

The vice-president seconded the adoption of the report, which was carried unanimously, and a vote of thanks was passed to the president, vice-president and directors for their services during the past year.

The following gentlemen were elected to serve as directors for the ensuing year: Geo. A. Cox, J. J. Kenny, Hon. S. C. Wood, S. F. McKinnon, Thos. Long, John Hoskin, Q.C., LL.D., H. M. Pellatt, R. Jaffray, A. Myers.

At a meeting held subsequently, Mr. Geo. A. Cox was elected president and Mr. J. J. Kenny vice-president.

TELEPHONING EXTRAORDINARY.

My attention has been drawn, says a writer in the *Publisher's Circular*, to what is described as the latest form of scientific advertising. In a busy thoroughfare of Birmingham, on Christmas eve, a well-dressed man set up a tripod in the gutter, carrying at its head a complete telephonic apparatus, receiver and transmitter. The wire, stretched just above the heads of pedestrians, extended away in the distance, whilst a loose end was apparently attached to the "trap" or "manhole" by which the postal authorities get at their underground wires. An interested policeman early interviewed the operator, and demanded to know what he was about. "Testing an instrument," was the reply. Hundreds of marketers gathered round to witness the test, and the thoroughfare was soon practically blocked. When the apparatus was duly fitted the following conversation was carried on in a ringing voice by the operator:—

"Hello! Are you there? Yes. Who are you? Miller's? Yes. 31 Broad-street? Oh! Poultry dealers? Yes. What say? I did not catch that—such a noise from the traffic.—Kindly be perfectly quiet [to the auditors] for just one moment.—Now, then, are you there? Yes, go ahead. I can follow you. You've got—yes—absolutely—the—largest—and—best—and—cheapest—stock—of—turkeys—geese—hares—and—pheasants—in Birmingham—3,000—turkeys—My! have you?—3,000—fine—birds—to—sell—out—at—what?—three—and—sixpence—to—seven—and—sixpence—apiece—what? A—twelve-pound—turkey—for—four—and—six—Haven't you made a mistake?—Eh!—No?—A—sixteen-pound—Norfolk—turkey—for—six—shillings! Where's—your—place—d'ye say? Miller's—31—Broad-street, and I'll bring this whole crowd with me."

—In one year an average of 44,002 vessels pass in and out of Liverpool, while the daily average is 120 vessels.