

ology was inserted at the earliest opportunity. To this there can be no possible objection on the part of any one.

And the important advantage is the one which prevents the plaintiff from recovering more than the actual damages he can prove. This privilege is very carefully hedged in, and rightly so, to prevent abuse by irresponsible publishers. To take advantage of it the newspaper must satisfy the court, (1) that the article was published in good faith; (2) that there was reasonable ground to believe that the same was for the public benefit, (3) that it did not involve a criminal charge; (4) that the publication took place in mistake or misapprehension of the facts, and (5) that a full and a fair retraction of any statement therein, alleged to be erroneous, was published at the earliest opportunity. These provisions effectually safeguard against any abuse of privilege.

It is also wisely provided that the provision shall not apply to the case of any libel against any candidate for public office unless the retraction of the charge was made editorially in a prominent manner five days before the election. This is calculated to do away with a lot of the filth that is thrown about at election time by excited editors and will tend to produce a more polished plane of editorial discussion.

Reports of public meetings are privileged on certain conditions: (1) that it was fair and accurate; (2) published without malice; (3) publication was for the public benefit; (4) the editor has not refused to insert a reasonable letter of explanation or contradiction from the person complaining. No one can take exception to these provisions, which secure to the person aggrieved all that he has the right to expect, and grant to the newspaper what it has a just claim to and no more.

Another section of considerable importance is that: "All reports of proceedings in any court of justice published in a

newspaper shall be privileged, provided that they are fair and authentic and without comment, unless the defendant has refused or neglected to insert, in the newspaper in which the report complained of appeared, a reasonable letter or statement of explanation or contradiction, by or on behalf of the plaintiff."

The only other section that calls for comment is the following: "In any action for libel contained in a newspaper, the defendant may plead, as an absolute defence to such action, that the defamatory matter published by him was true, and that it was for the public benefit that the matters charged should be published in the manner and at the time when they were published.

"2. Every such plea must set forth the particular fact or facts by reason whereof it was for the public good that such matters should be published.

"3. If, when justification is so pleaded, the defendant is condemned, the court or jury, as the case may be, in pronouncing judgment or giving a verdict, should consider whether the injury done to the plaintiff is aggravated or mitigated by the plea."

The rules regarding justification are rather hard and fast in the above, but, on the whole, the bill is a highly commendable one, and even allowing that the provisions regarding costs have been erased, the chances of actions for libel as a source of profit are greatly reduced. As it stands, it will be welcomed by newspaper men as a measure of justice, and a step in the right direction.

[N.B.—Since the above was in type, a despatch says that the bill was killed in the Legislative Council by Mr. Gilman, who expressed the intention, if necessary, of discussing every clause of it separately.—EDITOR.]

TWO DISASTROUS FIRES IN TORONTO.



ALTHOUGH protected by what was thought to be the finest fire-extinguishing service in Canada, Toronto has suffered severely by two fires which occurred last week. These fires proved that a waterworks system in a large city should be supplemented by steam engines; that every warehouse four stories in height, or over, should be fitted up with water

pipes and hose on every flat; that elevator shafts should be made fireproof; and that newspaper offices should have duplicate mailing and subscription lists deposited in fireproof vaults.

The first fire broke out about 3 a.m. on the morning of Sunday, the 6th inst., in The Globe building, on the corner of Melinda and Yonge street. The Globe stated, in its account of the fire, that this was the first in the fifty years of its existence. This is not the case. Mr. E. Holmes, of St. Catharines, says he was engaged in the composing room of The Globe about the year 1855-6, when a fire broke out in the press room just after the forms were put on the press. Some damage was done to the forms, and someone remarked to Mr. George Brown that he supposed The Globe could not be issued that day. Mr. Brown replied that, "Fire or no fire, The Globe

has got to come out every day." Fortunately, only a small portion of the forms were injured, and they were soon repaired and the paper issued.

It was the same on this occasion. The managing editor Mr. Willison, and his able staff turned out a paper on Monday morning containing two extra pages, a number of illustrations, and an amount of news which was not surpassed by any other paper in the city. It was enabled to do this partly by the kindness of The Empire management, which placed its offices and presses at The Globe's disposal.

The building, a picture of which is given in this issue, was built between four and five years ago, and consisted of five stories and a basement, surmounted by a high, round tower. It was heated by two boilers of 75 to 100 horse power respectively, and the machinery driven by a 75 horse-power engine. Two Bullock presses, with a combined capacity of 30,000 per hour, were used. Two No. 3 Gordons and a large flat bed Campbell were also used. Although they had a big engine, electrical power was generally used. Eight Linotype machines were destroyed, along with all the valuable machinery mentioned.

FORMER NEWSPAPER FIRES.

The history of newspapers in Toronto is comparatively free from fires of a disastrous character, the present one being the