

The Huron and Erie Loan and Savings Company.

The Thirty-fourth General Annual Meeting of the Company was held at its office, in London, Ont., on Wednesday, February 9th, 1898.

Present: Edmund Beltz, F. P. Betts, T. A. Browne, P. W. D. Brodrick, Thos. Caldwell, Hume Cronyn, Verschoyle Cronyn, H. E. Gates, Geo. F. Jewell, John Labatt, F. E. Leonard, J. W. Little, Chas. Morton, Philip Mackenzie, J. M. McWhinney, the Manager, and others.

The President, Mr. J. W. Little, took the chair, and the Manager, Mr. G. A. Somerville, acted as Secretary. The minutes of the last annual meeting were read and approved; and the annual report and financial statement were submitted.

The President, in moving the adoption of the report, said:

"I am sure that the report which has just been read will prove satisfactory to all who are interested in the Huron and Erie. Notwithstanding the increased competition for good loans, the reduced rates of interest prevailing, and the low prices obtainable for Real Estate, the earning power of the Company has been well maintained, the usual dividends have been paid and the sum of \$20,000 added to the "Reserve Fund."

"During the year seven hundred and fifty-two applications for loans were considered, of which only two hundred and ninety-nine were accepted. The policy of the Board to confine investments strictly to Western Ontario remains unchanged, so that all the loans are within a comparatively short distance of the Company's office.

"The Real Estate held as security for advances has practically all been re-inspected by competent valuers specially selected for the purpose, and their reports are a source of great satisfaction to the Board, and will prove most valuable to the Company.

"The Real Estate on hand amounts to \$20,350, or about \$16,000 less than at the close of last year. It consists entirely of farm property, part of which has been sold since the books were closed, and it is expected that the remainder will be quickly disposed of, especially in view of the improved demand for farms at somewhat higher prices, due to the abundant crop of last year and the better returns for farm produce generally.

"No part of the Company's business receives more careful attention than the Arrears on Mortgages. Not only are they closely watched by the management under a most efficient system, but they are brought before the Board at regular intervals, and each case is carefully considered.

"At the end of the year the total arrears of principal and interest amounted to only \$70,605, being less than at any time for the past twenty years, with one exception. No doubt this satisfactory result is largely due to the excellent system adopted.

"Since the limit of our borrowing powers was reached a few years ago, no increase in the total amount of Debentures issued by the Company has been possible, but the dividend and net profits have been maintained chiefly in consequence of the more favorable terms on which money has been borrowed on debenture. Last summer the Manager visited Great Britain and arranged to renew or replace by new money a large amount of maturing debentures at much lower rates than were formerly paid. Arrangements for further supplies of capital on very satisfactory terms were also made, and the saving thus effected, together with reduced rates on deposits and Canadian Debentures, should have a very noticeable effect on the coming year's profits.

"I may state that since the first of January I have personally examined every account in the Company's ledgers, except those in the Savings Department, and, as a result of that examination, I am in a position to say that in my opinion the Company is not carrying at its face value a single account which does not appear to be healthy and active, or where the valuations do not indicate that the security is perfectly safe. In all cases where the margin, as disclosed by recent inspections, appears to be close, even where interest payments have been promptly met, an allowance has been made, apparently ample to meet any possible contingency, and no property has been withheld from sale waiting for better times.

"The Manager and staff have, as in the past, performed their duties with energy and zeal, and no small share of the Company's prosperity is due to their efforts.

"I have much pleasure in moving the adoption of the Report."

Mr. Philip Mackenzie, Vice-President, seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

The usual votes of thanks were tendered the President, Directors, Manager and other Officers of the Company.

Mr. V. Cronyn, in acknowledging the vote of thanks to the Directors, referred to the fact that the Canadian Debentures were almost equal in amount to those held in Great Britain. This he regarded as a very favorable feature and a source of strength to the Company, as any crisis arising would not likely affect debenture holders in both countries at the same time. Reports had occasionally been heard of Companies finding it necessary to give very full explanations to bond holders in Scotland to allay suspicions aroused by the difficulties of financial institutions carrying on operations apparently similar, but in reality perhaps quite different from the legitimate business of a Loan Company. Fortunately we had been free from any trouble of that sort, but it was intended that the Company should always be maintained in a position sufficiently strong to meet any demands that might be made upon its resources.

Messrs. Geo. F. Jewell and Thos. A. Browne, having been appointed scrutineers, reported the following gentlemen elected as Directors for the ensuing year: Messrs. J. W. Little, Philip Mackenzie, Prof. Wm. Saunders, F. E. Leonard, V. Cronyn, and John Labatt.

At a subsequent meeting of the Board Mr. J. W. Little was elected President, and Mr. Philip Mackenzie Vice-President.

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