mortar, a much longer time would be required for them to burn out."

ALDERMANIC OBTUSENESS.

Toronto people are proud of their city, and have many reasons for their pride. The city is physically handsome, intellectually progressive and stands well morally besides, so that the civic motto, "Industry, Integrity, Intelligence," is fairly well deserved by the mass of the citizens. But to say that the city is well governed, that the council is broad-minded, and awake to its responsibilities, would be far from the truth. An example of the aldermen's lack of grasp is easily to be found. Quite recently the city engineer recommended a tunnel across the bay to the lake, for the securing of pure water, and stated that the present wooden pipe was leaky in the bay and unsafe. Then the mayor, in a special message, urged upon the council the vital importance of this measure to overcome what is a menace to the health of the city. It should be clear to any reflecting mind that an impure water supply, tainted by sewage, is a murderous thing in any city, and that no duty is more pressing than that of removing such an infection. The tunnel therefore is a crying want.

But the city council decided that this project of the engineer must be deferred, that there were other matters more pressing, that the city could not afford the tunnel at the moment. Strange stupidity this on the part of a body charged with the administration of matters affecting the health and welfare of the citizens. They cannot take hold of a crying matter such as this tunnel, but they can dally with an illusion like municipal fire insurance, that may land them in a slough of debt. There is no civic time nor civic money for so needful a thing as a supply of pure water, but the aldermanic mind is ready to spend half a day or half a million on a plan for civic electric lighting. Such folly is hard to understand.

Even if civic electric lighting were urgently needed—and we cannot see the present necessity for it—even if the ridiculous proposal of civic fire insurance were a feasible thing, which it is not, the placing of the management of either in the hands of the present city council of Toronto would be a mistake. There is no reason, based on our experience of the administrative power of the aldermen, to expect prompt and businesslike action from our civic body. If they had acted when they should, we might have been saved much of the loss of property in these recent great fires and Chief Ardagh might still have been alive.

THE LAW COURTS ACT.

This bill now before the Ontario Legislature at the instance of the Attorney-General, is aptly named, for while it is a law reform bill, its effect is the reform of the law, largely by reconstitution of the jurisdiction of the courts. Its object avowedly is to minimise the number of appeals. Where now an action is tried before a judge of the High Court, either with or without a jury, an appeal will lie to a Divisional Court, that is to a court of three judges sitting *en banc*, and in nearly every instance from there to the Court of Appeal. It is well to point out that appeals to the Supreme Court are governed by federal machinery, and that the bill under discussion will not in any way prevent the carrying of appeals from any Ontario court before the Supreme Court of Canada. The limitations now proposed to be placed upon appeals are in effect that when an unsuccessful suitor at trial has appealed to a Divisional Court, he has no further right to appeal to the Court of Appeal. If the appellant be successful before the Divisional Court, any other party to the action may appeal from that judgment to the Court of Appeal. Any suitor unsuccessful at the trial may appeal directly to the Court of Appeal, and unsuccessful suitors in the County Courts may appeal either to a Divisional Court of the High Court or to the Court of Appeal. Some provision is made for permitting judges to allow an appeal, even after an unsuccessful decision of the Divisional Court, by the party aggrieved, where the matter in controversy exceeds the value of $1,000, or where the title to real estate or some interest therein, or the validity of a patent is affected, or where the matter in question relates to an annual rent, and in some other cases, but there must be sufficient special reasons for inducing the court to treat the case as exceptional and allow of a further appeal.

There will be no longer any Courts of Queen's Bench, Chancery or Common Pleas, sitting as such. To expedite appeals to either the Divisional Court or the Court of Appeal, the latter court, now consisting of four judges, can at any time be augmented by the assistance of any judges of the High Court selected for the purpose, so that two divisions of the Court of Appeal may, if necessary, sit at once. The judges of the three divisions of the High Court are to form a Divisional Court, any three of whom shall sit as such on the first Monday of every month. In this way a monthly Divisional Court is established, the various judges taking turns, according to seniority, in constituting the court, and they are to sit until they have finished all the business brought before them.

One of the loudest complaints against the expense of litigation arises from the cost of evidence, and the cost of printing appeal books for use before the Court of Appeal. The evidence taken at the trial has, of course, to be extended by stenographers, and the charge is reduced from twenty cents per folio down to five cents, the copies for the use of the courts or judges to be furnished without any additional charge. In no case now is it necessary to print the pleadings or the evidence on an appeal to the Court of Appeal, the judges being required to be satisfied with the stenographer's copies. Security both for the costs and for the verdict (if the verdict be for damages) is no longer required to be given before an appellent can launch his case before the Court of Appeal.

Judges of concurrent jurisdiction have been in the habit sometimes of disagreeing in their judgments upon the same point of law. The decision of a Divisional Court of the Court of Appeal on a question of law or practice, unless over-ruled by a higher court, is to be binding upon the Court of Appeal, unless with the concurrence of the judges who gave the decision; and the judgment or decision of any court or judge is to be binding upon any court or judge of co-ordinate authority on any question of law or practice, unless with the concurrence of the judge or judges who gave the decision.

All jury and non-jury actions are to be entered for trial at any sittings of the High Court in any county, and in addition to the general docket, all motions, petitions, proceedings and other matters which may be heard by a jndge in court or in chambers may, with the solicitor's consent, or if the matter in controversy arose in the country, be set down to be disposed of after the trial of cases by the rota judge. This will remove the complaint so often made by country practitioners, that they are obliged to come to Toronto to dispose of such matters as are here enabled to be disposed of before the circuit judge. A very frequent cause of complaint by country practitioners is the long and uninterrupted sittings of the judges. Now no sitting is to begin before nine o'clock in the morning, nor extend after seven in the evening, and there is to be an intermission of at least half an hour at or near noon.