

cision of the Master-in-Ordinary was reversed, and the right of the shareholders of the company who had contributed to this reserve fund to rank on it was virtually negated.

In the ordinary course of winding up, shareholders are not entitled to share in the assets of a company until after all the claims of the outstanding creditors have been satisfied in full; and as this very seldom happens, the shareholders very seldom get anything back on account of their investment. The contributors to the reserve fund, believing that they were to be in a preferential position, endeavored in this action to place themselves on a par with the creditors and share pro rata with them. The learned judge, however, who tried the action, in the absence of any by-law setting out the object of crediting this reserve fund and the way it was to be considered when credited, held that there was nothing to indicate that this reserve fund was to be considered in any way different from the ordinary capital stock of the company, which had previously been paid up.

This case not only illustrates the folly of the high finance essayed by a number of too aggressive financiers who some time ago were very much before the public eye, but is also a good lesson to other companies to be most careful as to the system adopted in the internal management of their affairs. Everything in connection with the management of a loan company should be done in a systematic way, and all changes should be carried out with the greatest care, so that when difficulties come there will be no room for dispute as to the standing of parties; but the shareholders, as well as those interested otherwise in the company may be protected to the utmost where otherwise they may have to suffer severely.



THE WINNIPEG FIRE.

Tuesday night's fire in Winnipeg was startling to the citizens in two directions. For one thing it indicated to them how terrible a thing a conflagration in the heart of the city might be if the wind fanned the flames persistently among its inflammable and irregularly built blocks. For another, it demonstrated how unhappy, not to say helpless, an urban community is when deprived of its customary conveniences or motive powers. Thus, we are told that both electric light and electric power were cut off by the melting of the wires, and that primitive lighting methods and type-setting by hand had to be resorted to by newspapers and householders. Happily the fire, though fierce, was confined within a limited area, and there was no truth in the damnable story circulated in commercial circles of Toronto on Tuesday forenoon that the fire broke out afresh during the early morning and did four million dollars worth of damage. As it is, the loss is serious enough, approaching a million dollars.

On the corner of Bannatyne Avenue and Albert Street, which last runs parallel with Main Street, is a large structure, formerly four, but quite lately raised to seven stories in height, occupied by Bullman Bros., lithographers. In this fire started between nine and ten o'clock, and its contents were largely of an inflammable nature. The flames spread to the Woodbine Hotel on the south, and then, leaping over

Bannatyne Avenue, attacked the extensive store of J. H. Ashdown, which reaches from Albert Street to Main Street. This was presently gutted, and more than gutted, destroying a very heavy stock of hardware, oils and explosives. Further east the flames spread, burning out Steele, the photographer; Dixon, the cigar man; Geo. E. Ellis, jeweller; Kyle, Cheesbrough & Co., dry goods. Explosions in Bullman's and in Ashdown's premises were frightful, and at the same time extremely dangerous, and the other places burned were none of them without considerable stocks of merchandise. For a while it looked as if the newspaper offices, situated to the west of Albert Street, must be destroyed; and what is more, the Leland Hotel, the new Union Bank building, and even the city hall were in line of the advancing flames. But happily before midnight the fire was got under control, its ravages being confined to the blocks bounded by Albert, Main and William Streets north of the Woodbine Hotel. The water pressure was seriously deficient throughout the night. This arose, not from any lack of water at the source of supply, but from the fact that the mains are no longer adequate for the requirements.

This extensive fire points out afresh the necessity of new places keeping their fire-fighting appliances, especially their water supply, on a level with the growth of a city or town. We say points out afresh, because it is only a short while since the people of Winnipeg were warned, not by an eastern journal, but by one of their own journals, the Free Press, that the city's water supply was inadequate for fire purposes. It is true that like sensible people the Winnipegers were at the moment, and still are, procuring new fire appliances—a new engine and water tower, more hose and new stations, and the city's fire department is not badly equipped. The fire department consists of sixty men, with four engines and four chemicals, in three stations, with thirty-two horses. The fire pressure was 75, and eight hose apparatus, two hook and ladder trucks and one aerial ladder were also part of the equipment. The hydrants numbered 564, and there were 12,225 feet of two and a half inch hose, while 106 fire alarm boxes provided signals. The great fault lies in the insufficiency of the mains to supply water enough to combat a heavy fire. This, while a more expensive, is a yet more needful provision for the safety of a great and growing city.



RAILWAY ACCIDENTS.

The succession of deadly railway accidents on the railways of Canada and the United States for weeks and months past has become sufficiently regular to make people begin to sicken with apprehension. And it is a frightful feature that a large proportion of them are the result of negligence or disobedience of orders by railway servants. We know how, in others than railway workers, familiarity with danger brings about contempt for it. Sailors are proverbially reckless; so are miners, and they are in peril half their time. But in the case of miners so many lives do not depend upon their prudence or recklessness as where trains are carrying hundreds and thou-