LOAN COMPANIES' MEETINGS.

As was evident from the communications we published some weeks ago from Registrars, a marked change has come over the financial condition of Ontario farmers. Where they borrowed from necessity a few years ago, they are now paying off, perhaps to take advantage of a lower rate, or if borrowers it is for the purpose often of securing additional land to farm. We have since heard from the Registrars of Huron and Essex upon the subject. The former states that the receipts of his office were less, by several hundred dollas in 1882 than in 1881, and the mortgages presumably fewer. The latter, writing from Sandwich early in January, is under the impression that more discharges were registered last year than in former years. "In some cases," he says, "money borrowed is being paid back, or its source perhaps changed from a loan company to some neighbor who now has money to loan at reduced rate. * * * Having had good crops, money borrowed would be more for the purposes of making improvements or acquiring more land."

In a state of affairs which points to a smaller demand for loans on real estate and lowered rates of interest, the outlook for loan companies is not so favorable in Ontario, whatever it may be in newer territory. Companies with large reserve funds and greater earning power, will find it easier than others to maintain a high ratio of earnings, but the newer companies, and those without the advantages we have named, must have difficulty in maintaining usual dividends. It should be remarked, however, that some of the companies reported it possible to obtain slightly better rates in 1882 than they could in 1881. In Manitoba, an average rate can be obtained, perhaps two per cent. higher than here.

The tone of the Western Canada Loan and Savings Company's report is that of satisfaction, which appears to be justified by the figures it contains. In order to be able to accept the money offered it, on deposit or otherwise, the legal limit being reached, the capital had to be increased, which was done under a resolution of August last by issuing $1,000,000 new stock. These shares are all taken and 20 per cent. paid thereon ; half of this payment is apparently added to Rest, which with the addition of $25,000 out of earnings, swells that fund to $570,000, where the paid capital is $1,104,962. The aggregate of debentures is now over $1,173,000, about one-fifth being Canadian. Deposits remain at about the same amount as last year. A contingent fund of $11,234 is maintained against possible loss. The total of loans is placed at $3,759,000, an increase of $400,000 over the previous year, while the earnings were $266,000. Ten per cent. dividend was paid. A branch office has been opened in Winnipeg during the year, the prospects for which are reported as very fair. It is observable that the president's address dwells upon the slightly higher rates of interest prevailing in Ontario now compared with 1880 and 1881.

The Imperial Loan Company is able to show that with loans exceeding a million dollars, it has only three properties on its hands, two of which are rented. From the earnings of the year it has paid seven per cent. dividend, added $6,000 to Reserve, making that $81,000, and left $3,462 at Contingent Fund. While deposits have lessened during the year, debentures, both foreign and Canadian, have increased, the appointment of agents in Edinburgh having, it appears, added to the sales abroad. The opinion is expressed that there is no likelihood of average rate of interest falling below its present level, indeed the directors have found it advancing during the last half year.

INSURANCE COMPANIES MEETINGS.

There was some unusual and excited discussion at the annual meeting of the Royal Canadian Fire Insurance Company. A shareholder put a number of queries to the chairman with respect to the nature of mortgages held, transfers of stock, fees of the Board, &c., and managed in so doing to reflect upon a director, who contended that he was right with not unjustifiable warmth. In answer to an inquiry as to the probable winding up of the company, the president stated that such a step would be contrary to the general wish of shareholders, and none of the directors, it appears, favored it. The premium revenue for 1882 was $352,534, being $22,000 less than in 1881—we again remark that no separation is made in the report between fire and marine revenue or expenditure, as there ought to be—while the losses and loss appropria ion are $46,000 less. The balance carried to reserve out of earnings is this year $19,015, where last year it was $4,000, so that the dividend, absorbing $15,000, can be better afforded. After paying five per cent. dividend and putting aside $137,000 for re-insurance, as required by the government standard, the company shows a surplus of $9,403 over all liabilities, capital included. Some of those present at the meeting spoke in very confident terms of the future of the company.

The directors of the London Mutual Fire Insurance Company are very well satisfied with themselves, judging from the tone of the first paragraph of their report for 1882. In these congratulory sentences the claim is made, indeed, that "the Company's financial standing, the character of the risks, the business generally, have never before stood in so good a position." Let us see, by comparison, how this is :

	1882.	1881.
New business....	$13,943,000	$14,537,000
Losses..........	53,335	78,925
Amount at Risk..	39,118,000	38,477,000
Available Assets..	308,945	282,241

These available assets consist of (1) $32,686 in cash ; (2) $30,000 deposited with the Dominion Government; (3) $21,087 of agents' balances, consisting of agents' bonds and members' due-bills ; (4) $2,224 of bills receivable and mortgages ; (5) premium notes $208,432, and (6) a sum of $15,422 due upon assessments of previous years, unpaid. Items No. 3 and 4 show, we are glad to see, a reduction from previous years' statements, while No. 6 also is reduced in amount. But their "availability" in the proper sense of the word is a matter open to question. It has been found possible to reduce the rate of assessment from 60 per cent. to 52½ per cent., a matter upon which the president dealt with pride. The losses were less than the average of recent years, largely because the company has not suffered during 1882 from lightning stroke or running fires in the woods. A smaller number of fires than before appear in the list attributed to incendiarism and unknown causes.

The report of the Waterloo Mutual Fire Insurance Co. is before us. The company's policies number 10,506, insuring $9,043,000. The losses paid in the year last past were $46,582, as compared with $46,440 in 1881, when 4,050 policies were issued. We observe that the claim is made of a "surplus in cash assets to the credit of the company of $7,458.88," which sum, we find, is the remainder after deducting re-insurance liability and unadjusted losses ($40,785.36) from the total assets, excepting premium notes ($48,244.24). Upon this we have to remark that to call such items as Bills Receivable, office furniture, agents' balances and uncollected assessments—the amount of these four items being $12,327—"cash assets" is a mis-application of terms. The Co. has $122,087 notes uncalled. Although an Ontario charter was obtained in 1881, authorizing a capital stock of $100,000 to $500,000 to be raised, it was not considered expedient to open stock books last year.

ENGLISH LOAN COMPANY.

The adjourned annual meeting of the shareholders of the English Loan Company held in London on the 1st instant, was very fully attended. Discussion was lively and some plain speaking was done. The annual report was read by the President, Hon. Senator Vidal, who was in the chair. We take the following figures from the report:

Receipts for the years 1882 were $107,451, the prominent items being re-payments on loans $80,036 ; receipts on stock, $7,017 ; English Savings Co., $16,798 ; disbursements amounted to $107,400, of which $39,856 was absorbed in paying off loans, $14,812 in paying assumed mortgages ; paid overdraft Federal Bank $13,398. In the printed statement of affairs, the liabilities of the company, capital included, are shown to exceed the assets by $67,904. These liabilities are: Assumed mortgages, $39,160.33 ; English Savings Co., $53,995.86 ; paid on stock, $285,543,-66 ; loan on Ontario Bank stock, $97,168 (this lean reduced on Jan. 5th, 1883, to $93,000) ; Federal Bank overdraft, $804.53 ; outstanding accounts, $277 ; appropriation to meet losses ascertained, $13,850 ; for possible losses, $2,550. Total liabilities, $493,349.38. Among the assets are the following : Loans, $281,740.12 ; Ontario Bank stock, 944 shares, at 110, making $103,840 ; English Savings Company's account, stock and deposit, $16,284, and English Loan Company's building, $22,000 ; together with minor assets, making the total assets $425,445.23.

The losses of the company it appears, were principally made in 1880 and 1881. It had no inspectors, but to save the expense of these essential officers it was the custom to accept the valuation placed upon property by its agents. Let those companies which are doing likewise, take warning. At least *forty* properties have been abandoned by their owners to the English Loan Company. Presumably more money had been advanced on them than they were worth. About a fourth of these abandoned properties were sold by the company during 1882 for what they would bring. Worse than this, however, we are reliably told of half a dozen cases in which mortgages held by the company were