

FIRE INSURANCE

ADDRESS DELIVERED BY B. E. WALKER, ESQ., IN PROPOSING THE
TOAST TO "FIRE INSURANCE INTERESTS" AT THE ANNUAL
BANQUET OF THE INSURANCE INSTITUTE OF
TORONTO, OCTOBER 11TH, 1904

*Mr. President and Gentlemen of the
Insurance Institute of Toronto :*

I would first like to make you aware that I am very deeply sensible of the compliment you have paid me. I believe I am the only layman who has been asked to speak to-night. I think it is very presumptuous indeed of me to attempt to deal with the subject of fire insurance. And I am particularly unfortunate in having to speak on a subject which has been dealt with by so able an expert as Mr. Morrissey. Indeed how I am to say anything new about fire insurance, after all that has been said, I cannot very well at this moment imagine. You must not expect that at this late hour I can re-arrange such thoughts as I have, and if I repeat what has been said before you must bear with me. I wish also to say that I am just as sorry as you must be that, after hearing so many jokes and such splendid music, we should be called upon to return to serious business. I fear that if I am to deal with the subject of fire insurance I shall have to speak about it from a serious standpoint, not interspersed to any extent with jokes, ancient or modern.

I would like to speak first about the interest attaching to the creation of institutes. The bankers about 1890 established an association which, while it has served their purpose in the matter of legislation and in conserving the powers of banks, was also intended to be an educational institution for the associates. It has not become that; it has simply remained a useful instrument