sure our readers will enjoy a digest of Mr. Brodie's remarks, which will be found below. Mr. Brodie said:

It would not be easy, sir, to dispose of the subject of banking in a few sentences, but I might notice some points that may be interesting to the gentlemen present. No doubt, before banking existed there was a system of barter, consisting of the exchange of one article for another and which would be followed by the use of tokens of some intrinsic value, and from that our present complex and wide-spread system of banking has gradually developed.

There is one part of our banking system that has always elicited my admiration, and I have had the same feeling in regard to it that I have frequently in London, when standing in front of the Royal Exchange, with the Mansion House on one hand, and the Bank of England on the other, and looking at the vast stream of people and vehicles of all sorts, representing the wealth, power and energy of the British people. I refer, sir, to our wide-spread credit system. By the use of it we purchase tea in China and Japan, figs and currants in Asia Minor and the Ionian Islands, silks and wines in France, fruits and nuts in Spain, and sugar in Venezuela and the West Indies, &c., and but rarely does a hitch occur in these varied and extensive operations. It looks to me as if banking had thrown a net work over the face of the globe, like a spider's web, with the centre of it in London, where, at present, nearly everything is domiciled, and I do not know, sir, how the business of the world could now be conducted without it, any more than it could without railways, steamships, and telegraphs. It has struck me lately as remarkable how comparatively small an effect was produced on this world-wide, complex credit system, by the crippling even of such a large concern as Barings. I may say, sir, that personally I have seen this same credit system in operation in India, where the bills (Hoondees) of the native bankers (Marwarees) have passed current for generations, with rarely a default. I think, sir, that this part of the business or profession of banking, that I have been referring to, almost raises it from the common-place to the romantic. It is like the action of the telephone, which from frequent use comes to be looked upon as nothing very wonderful; but, sir, when you hear the actual voice of a friend coming to you from a distance of twenty miles, and perhaps through a storm of wind and rain, it is to me a perpetual miracle.

I might also, sir, say a few words as to the qualities required to make a good banker. I have, of course, a high opinion of education and theory, but theory without practice is not of much avail. You may explain to a man how to mount and ride a horse, but without practice, he and his theory would, on a lively animal at least, be apt soon to come to the ground. Then there are ability (for which after all one has to thank Providence) and experience, these are indispensable; but there are two qualities, and these opposites, which I think are highly requisite. I mean courage and caution. People may imagine, sir, that a banker can sit quietly in his office, and in an austere way refuse nearly every transaction, but *you* know, sir, that he has to have courage enough to accept perhaps 90 per cent. of the business risks offered to him, and to use his caution only in the refusal of the 10 per cent. that does not commend itself to his judgment. There is one other particularly desirable quality, and it applies to all businesses, if success is to be expected, which is with me a favorite definition of the word "genius," and I am apt to bore the gentlemen in my own office with it, that is, "the capacity for taking endless trouble." Without this a young bank officer will hardly ever rise beyond being a bank dude.

Before sitting down, sir, I would take this opportunity of recording my high opinion of the character and integrity of the bank staff of Canada. I have been connected with banking in this country for twenty years, and I recollect comparatively very few cases of dishonorable conduct on the part of bank officials. And with regard to gentlemen holding the position of chief executive officer of a bank, from the large corporation of the Bank of Montreal, to the smaller institutions, such as that represented by myself, I hardly recollect an instance of such an officer proving recreant to his honor and his duty.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman and gentlemen, for your patient and good-natured attention to these few remarks.

TORONTO BOARD OF FIRE UNDERWRITERS.

The annual meeting of the Toronto Board of Fire Underwriters was held, as we have said, on Thursday and Friday of last week, Mr. A. W. Smith, of the Imperial, president of the board, occupying the chair. The attendance of local managers was unusually large; but the only managers from a distance were Mr. G. T. C. Smith, resident secretary of the Liverpool & London & Globe Insurance Company; Mr. Charles E. Chase, secretary of the Hartford Insurance Company, of Hartford, Connecticut, and Mr. Peter A. McCallum, of St. Catharines, the company's inspector.

We understand that there was no business of very great importance to the general public transacted. An effort was made by the Dry Goods Section of the Board of Trade to obtain a reduction of the rate on their stocks, but we learn that the rate on wholesale dry goods is to remain as before.

The election of officers resulted as follows: President, Mr. H. M. Blackburn, manager City of London Insurance Company; vice-president, Mr. Wm. Adamson, city agent of the British America; secretary, Mr. Robert McLean.

The usual banquet was held in room A of the Board of Trade, and votes of thanks were passed to the retiring president and the officers of the board, after which the meeting adjourned.

INSURANCE CHANGES.

There have been many changes in the insurance firmament lately. Among the latest occurrences of the kind is the resignation of Mr. W. A. Sims of the position of General Agent of the London and Lancashire Fire, who holds the position until his successor is appointed. Mr. Sims succeeded the late F. A. Ball as manager of this company, and he has steadily made money in Ontario for the company. He voluntarily gave up doing business in Quebec because of the losses sustained in that Province. We understand that there are a good many applicants for the vacant position. May the best man win.

Mr. P. H. Sims, secretary of the Mercantile Fire Insurance Company, at Waterloo, has resigned the secretaryship of that company, which he has held from its organization. He was manager, though he had only the title of secretary, and has conducted the affairs of the Mercantile with singular ability and success. Doing business in the Province of Ontario only, the Mercantile succeeded in rolling up a larger and more profitable insurance business than many of the English offices. A regular dividend at ten per cent. has been paid to the lucky stockholders, and we think the directors made a serious mistake in accepting the resignation of Mr. Sims, especially in view of their having decided to extend their business beyond the Province of Ontario. Mr. Sims has been appointed to take charge of the Canadian business of the British America. There is ample scope for improvement in the conduct of that business. The past year has been an unprofitable one for the company, and it is earnestly to be hoped that under Mr. Sims' management, the affairs of this old company will take an upward movement. We trust Mr. Sims will be entrusted with the sole management of the company's Canadian business, so that he may be enabled to select his risks, and cut off with a remorseless hand that part of the business that has proved uniformly to be hurtful to the company. We heartily congratulate the British America on having obtained the services of so able, conservative and successful a manager.

BRITISH AMERICA ASSURANCE COMPANY.

The British America has had an unfortunate year. Its results may be gathered from the following figures: fire premiums, less re-insurance, were $711,707, against $735,287 in 1890; marine premiums, less re-insurance, $53,350, against $62,253 in 1890. Fire losses paid $475,935, and unpaid $117,936, aggregate $593,871, compared with losses paid $414,829 and unpaid $53,768, aggregate $468,597, in 1890. In marine, the losses were $29,467 in 1890, and $32,831 in 1891. Thus the fire loss is 83·44 per cent. of the premiums, a disastrous rate, against 63·74 in the previous year, while the marine losses, 61¼ per cent., leave room for a margin of profit. The effect of the year's underwriting is to reduce the company's net surplus from $187,460 to $52,793. The assets are reduced from $1,156,000 to $1,076,000.

These results by no means justify the expectations confidently expressed twelve months ago by the governor of the company that "the policy we are now pursuing will give you [the shareholders] a fair profit yearly." Is it not about time that the governor recognized that the successful conduct of fire underwriting is not his *forte*, and that a sort of technical skill, which he does not possess, is needed to place the British America on a satisfactory basis? If he does not recognize this, we tell him frankly that it is a freely expressed opinion in insurance and commercial circles, and the recent career of the company plainly justifies it

It is satisfactory to learn that, in addition to the appointment of Mr. P. H. Sims to the management of the company's Canadian business, to which we have elsewhere referred, a desirable change has been made in placing Mr. Griffin, formerly of the People's Fire Insurance Company, of Manchester, New Hampshire, who is said to be a competent man, in charge of the Eastern Department. It was high time for some moves of the kind, and more of them would seem to be in order.

At the annual meeting of the Acadia Fire Insurance Company, held in Halifax recently, the Hon. A. G. Jones, Hon. Robert Boak and Geo. Mitchell, retiring directors, were re-elected. Hon. Robert Boak was subsequently re-elected president.