

undergone much difficulty with its business in the United States, but after passing through many dark days it had shown great signs of progress. He had at no previous time felt more satisfied than at present with the position of the Company, and he was confident that during next year the business would be most successful.

Mr. Gilman asked that the minutes of the last annual meeting should be read, which was accordingly done.

Mr. Gilman asked an explanation of the item in the report of \$35,000 for mortgages.

The President explained that they had been taken from different parties as payment for calls on stock.

Mr. Gilman asked if the parties had been allowed to transfer their stock?

The President explained that one of the parties had transferred his stock to the Company, and that it had been divided among certain responsible gentlemen who were able to pay their calls.

After some further discussion,

Mr. Daniel McCarthy, of Sorel, asked if there was any truth in the rumor that the business of the Company was to be wound up?

The President said that he had heard the story from Mr. Taylor, of London, Ont., but he was satisfied, after consulting many of the shareholders, that it was not, by any means, the general wish.

Mr. B. J. Coghlin said he hoped that this rumor was not true. He, as one of the original promoters of the Company, thought there was a great future in store for it; that it had passed through its darkest days, and that its future would be one of great prosperity.

Mr. Jonathan Hodgson said that none of the directors had even thought of winding up the affairs of the Company, and he could not see why such a rumor had been circulated. He believed with the President that the Company was in as good a position to-day as ever before.

Mr. Wm. Clendinneng considered that it was a power of strength for the stock to be divided among responsible and wealthy men, and if the question was submitted to him as a heavy insurer he would rather place reliance in the nine men that constituted the Board than in one single man. He was confident that the intention of the Board in taking over the stock and distributing it was simply to strengthen the position of the Company before the public.

Mr. Gilman asked what the fees of the Board amounted to.

The President replied that the expense of the whole Board, including the President's allowance, have not exceeded \$3,000 a year during the last few years. (Applause.) They were endeavoring to conduct the business on the most economical principles.

Mr. Gilman here gave notice of the following motion—"That Article 10 of the By-laws, shall be changed by striking out the words 'Board of Directors,' in the tenth line of said article, and substituting in their place the words, 'Shareholders represented as present at such meetings,' and in the last paragraph of said article to strike out all the words after 'follows' in the first line of the last paragraph, and the following words substituted, 'All the directors shall retire, but shall be eligible for re-election.'"

The President, in reply to previous remarks, said that the Company had been rather modest in bringing their business before the country, but he believed that as an Insurance Company it stood in no mean position. There were only three other Canadian stock companies, as he learned from the Blue Book, which had a surplus. The one with the largest amount of assets had only \$1.71 to each \$1 of its liability; the next had only \$1.50, while the Royal Canadian with its smaller assets had \$3.02 for each \$1. (Hear, hear.) The Company was thus financially strong to its policyholders, and he thought there was a prosperous future in store for it.

Hon. Mr. Thibaudeau and Mr. Hodgson followed in the same strain.

Mr. Clendinneng said the country could not afford to let such a Company go down. He remembered the first days of the Company, and he was of opinion that the members had reaped much benefit from the reduced cost of insurance brought about by the formation of this Company. He wished the Company to go on because he believed that in no other city was there such equitable terms to the insured than Montreal, and this was largely due in his opinion to this Company. He was confident that the Company had seen its worst days, and that pros-

perity was in store for it in the future.

Mr. Chas. Alexander asked if the Board were unanimous in continuing the business.

The President replied that they were.

On motion of the President, seconded by Mr. Clendinneng, the report was then unanimously adopted.

Mr. Ostell expressed the opinion that the notice of motion given by Mr. Gilman would be a very bad move, as it would take the nomination from the hands of the Directors, whom he thought were best qualified to judge of the gentlemen who should act in that capacity. For that reason he hoped that the motion, when it came up for consideration, would not be considered.

On motion of Mr. James Donnelly, seconded by Mr. B. J. Coghlin, it was then resolved, "That the thanks of the shareholders are due, and are hereby tendered to the President and Directors for their service, and attention to the business of the Company during the past year."

Messrs. Matthews and Dumesnil were appointed to act as scrutineers for the election of Directors in place of the four retiring Directors. The vote having been taken Messrs. Ostell, Archer, Hodgson and Moss, the retiring Directors, were declared unanimously re-elected. The meeting then adjourned.

PREVENTABLE FIRE CAUSES.

The great bulk of the fires reported from time to time has been clearly due to causes quite preventable. A considerable number of these fires have been due to spontaneous combustion. But no such combustion could occur and do harm were common sense precautions taken to avoid storing up in wrong places matters liable to take fire spontaneously. Everybody ought to know that cotton rags saturated with oil and some kindred matters cannot be safely stored up in wooden receptacles; and it would be easy to keep lucifer matches in positions safe from rats and mice, by whose manipulations they are often, perhaps, set on fire. Spontaneous combustion is a danger easily guarded against.

Many fires are caused by the lodgment of sparks on shingle roofs. Such lodgment cannot be wholly prevented, but it may in most cases be rendered harmless. A shingle roof in good condition, well painted with some fire-resisting pigment, is not easily set on fire. It would pay property owners handsomely to keep shingle-covered roofs well protected with such pigment.

Countless fires are due to defective chimneys. Lots of them are badly built, the bricks laid in them badly bonded with mortar of inferior quality, and insufficiently plastered within and without. Then portions of the wood work are often placed in contact with the chimney. Under ordinary circumstances the bricks touched may not be hot enough to set fire to the wood. But soot-laden chimneys often take fire, and portions of them become quite hot enough to set wood in contact with them on fire. It is clear that great care should be taken in chimney building and in regular chimney cleaning. Were this done universally we should hear of no fires from defective flues.

There is the stove-pipe peril. The carelessness shown in passing these pipes, that may often become red hot, through wooden partitions, without any sufficient protection from brick, stone or plaster casts around them, is amazing. Dreadfully destructive fires have often resulted from such recklessness.

Then there is the peril due to improperly set register grates, with brick hearths resting on a wooden floor instead of a properly constructed brick arch, or where the brick enclosing the grates are dangerously near studding or lathing. It is quite shameful that fires should be caused in this way. The cost of a brick arch in front of the chimney is trifling, and it is easy to set grates in a fashion absolutely free from danger.

These matters ought to be kept before the public eye. They ought to be considered. They ought to be discussed, and the lessons taught ought to be laid to heart and practiced. Fire cannot be handled too intelligently, and conflagrations cannot be guarded against too carefully.