

SECOND ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
BEAVER AND TORONTO
Mutual Fire Insurance Company.

THE Second Annual General Meeting of the members of the above Company, which had been summoned for the 21st March, was adjourned on that day till the 23rd, in consequence of the general elections for the Province of Ontario being held on the day first named. The meeting, which took place at the Company's Office, Toronto Bank Buildings, was organized in the usual manner. Charles E. Chadwick, Esq., President, took the chair. The Report of the Board of Directors for the year 1870 was read as follows :

REPORT.

We meet together on this occasion under circumstances which have no parallel in the history of fire insurance.

On the 16th of August of last year, the affairs of the Company were in a condition so flourishing, that your Board could not but look forward with pleasure to the prospect of presenting you this day with an unusually favourable report. They expected to be able to say, that the business was largely increased, that the Company was free of debt, and that a handsome fund remained on hand towards the reduction of future assessments.

THE OTTAWA FIRES.

But on the following day, the 17th, an event occurred, so disastrous, and involving so many of our members in its frightful consequences, that all ordinary business calculations were put to flight, and the only question left for your Board to consider was, what was their duty to the sufferers, and how they might best fulfil it?

On that day a storm of wind arose from the south-west, which lashed into flames the expiring embers of fires which had been smouldering in the patches of woodland scattered here and there through the counties of Lanark, Renfrew, and Carleton, in the Province of Ontario; and Ottawa, in the Province of Quebec. For four months previously no rain had fallen in these counties, and the fields were parched up with drought, so great as seemingly to fill the air with inflammable exhalations, and to render fences, buildings, pastures, and trees, so dry that the merest spark must set them in a blaze. In this condition were the seven townships of Fitzroy, Huntley, Goulburn, March, Nepean, Gloucester, and Hull, when the storm of the 17th August swept over them, and in the brief space of four hours left them a blackened desert, with here and there a house or barn untouched, but everything else—dwellings, outbuildings, fences, bridges, crops, meadows; nay, even horses, horned cattle, sheep, pigs, poultry, every variety of tame and wild animals, and, saddest of all, twelve human beings—all involved in one common destruction. Those