

thereto. All such clumsy and primitive methods have finally, in the course of years, been superseded by a system under which materials have been utilized which are at once a medium of exchange and a means of measuring values. Thus there now pass from hand to hand, all the products of the sea and the land, with which a bountiful Creator has endowed the Earth. Thus has the progress of civilization been accelerated by the invention of money. It is this beneficent work which the Currency Branch performs on behalf of the Canadian government.

The Currency Branch was established in 1881, Colonel Fred Toller being the first comptroller. A brief resumé of the events which led to the formation of the branch is as follows:—

In 1858 Sir Alexander T. Galt, Inspector General in the Cartier-Macdonald cabinet of the Province of Canada, instituted an issue of provincial notes to the amount of \$2,000,000 which was increased to \$8,000,000 in 1866. At Confederation this provincial note issue became part of the liabilities of the Dominion as legal tender. Dominion notes were administered by a Department known as Receiver General distinct from the Finance Department until that Department was abolished in 1879. The Finance Department managed the business thereafter and as the importance of the duties developed, the Currency Branch was organized in 1881.

The present Comptroller of the Currency is Mr. J. E. Bourke, as assiduous officer full of nervous energy who has proven his worthiness to the high office he fills by rising from the ranks; he having been formerly a clerk in one of the outside offices of the department. He is assisted by a staff of 40 clerks. The Comptroller deals in Dominion notes, gold, silver and bronze coins and for the supplemental redemption of the note issue he may also hold Ex-

chequer Bills bearing the endorsement of the British government. The notes are received from the lithographers and in due course handed out to the lady members of the staff. Each lady signs her name to her allotment of notes in compliance with the law which requires an original signature to each note to make it legal tender. This course requires much checking and re-checking until finally the notes are stored in the vaults ready for issue. Gold, silver and bronze coinage are also held in the vaults; these being supplied as required by the Ottawa Branch of the Royal Mint.

Branch offices of the Department are maintained at certain points in the Dominion as required by statute, viz.:— Halifax, Charlottetown, St. John, Montreal, Toronto, Winnipeg and Victoria. The official in charge of each of these offices is known as the Assistant Receiver General. It is the duty of this officer to efficiently supply the chartered banks, or others applying, with any of the aforementioned mediums of Dominion Currency. Notes no longer fit for circulation are redeemed at these offices, cancelled and remitted to the head office and there destroyed. This involves one of the most absorbing duties of the Comptroller's office, as the necessity of a clean note circulation cannot be denied. Silver and bronze coins worn smooth are redeemed at their face value; mutilated coins being subject to a discount of 25%. A very large quantity of gold is held by the Comptroller for the redemption of the Dominion notes. A brief account of the nature and composition of notes, gold, etc., follows:—

Dominion Notes.

Dominion note circulation consists of \$1, \$2, \$4, \$5 and 25c bills; also in larger denominations, \$500 and \$1,000 bills are issued for general circulation. In addition, notes of large denomination are issued for