

large fortunes in the hands of the few, while the great mass of the people is poor. I am very much of the opinion expressed by the honorable member of Prince Edward Island last session, that public works should be constructed now when so many are unemployed and labor is at the cheapest rate. No man has a greater objection to running the country in debt than I have, but if those works are to be carried on, now is the time to push them forward. I would issue Dominion notes, but unfortunately the Government have put golden shackles round their hands and cannot do that if they wished, unless they are willing to repeal the Act of last session.

Hon. Mr. SCOTT—Get a press and print off our bills as they did in the United States.

Hon. Mr. WILMOT—Yes, and what did they do? In twelve months they would have been utterly bankrupt if they had attempted to carry on the war on a gold basis. They carried on the great war and built their Pacific Railroad with greenbacks. They paid off a very large portion of their debt and reduced taxation under that system. I think what carried the nation safely through such a great emergency is sound. We know that William Pitt inaugurated such a system in 1797, and when it was abandoned, Great Britain, in 1823, was visited with a commercial panic unparalleled in her commercial history. History is a storehouse of facts, which speak for themselves. In France the only issue is the notes of the Bank of France, not redeemable in gold, and what is the state of trade there? The whole of the business is carried on with that paper, and yet it is at par with gold, and they hold a larger amount of gold now than Great Britain. The United States even, during the suspension of specie payments, had more gold in the treasury than there was in the Bank of England. The gold system is scientifically false, because they attempt to make a certain specific quantity of gold, which is merely a unit in quantity, by legislative enactment, a unit of value, contrary to the great natural law of supply and demand. To my mind it would be just as reasonable to expect a hundred tons of iron to remain suspended in the air without any support, contrary to the law of gravitation, as to pass an act to say that a unit in quantity should at all times be a unit of value. The whole monetary system should represent barter, which is the first mode of exchange in which each article of exchange is the measure of value of every article you receive for it; but under our system you fix the price of gold as the standard which everything else

has to be bartered into giving a monopoly to the holders of money. In the United States gold was at one time 196 premium and it is now within five per cent. of par, as with large exports and small imports, the gold is being brought into the country by the regular course of trade. I have been in a position to frame tariffs, to tax the people, and to carry on the affairs of a country, and I have seen in commercial operations, through an adverse balance of trade, a sort of *legerdmain* by which property has been filched away from the owner at half the value, because there was a drain of gold, causing great depression of trade and panics that have been so frequently witnessed. I wish to lay those facts before the House and before the country. We can have nothing to say here respecting the tariff, but we can speak as to what policy would, in our opinion, be best for the Dominion. With respect to the proposed changes in the Joint Stock Companies' Act, we know that a number of those bills came before us last session, and I for one think there should be a general act under which such companies should be incorporated. I entirely agree, also, that it is desirable to afford additional security to life insurance policy-holders. I think there is nothing that should receive more attention from Parliament. Men on limited revenues deprive themselves of comforts to meet the premiums on their policies in order to make provision for their families, and through the failure of companies in the United States and Great Britain, parties who had paid their policies for years, depriving their families of comforts in order to do so, have lost everything by the fraud or mismanagement of those companies.

Hon. Mr. ALEXANDER—On the opening of Parliament the members of the Senate are more or less anxious to express their individual opinions on the prominent questions of the day. He did not propose to weary the House by going over the different subjects embraced in the Speech from the Throne, but considered it to be his duty to refer to the continued commercial depression felt in all the trade centres throughout the Dominion. Of course we cannot expect that this young country will be exempt from these great periodical changes, to which, we observe, all other countries have been exposed. The causes of such crushing reaction and stringency are well understood. During the years of great prosperity from 1867 to 1873, too many rushed into every department of trade, and as a natural result we have had excessive production and excessive importations, ac-