

Governments, and the coloured gentlemen who preside over the finances of St. Domingo, they have so regulated the paper currency that it needs a strong man to carry a dollar in paper home. And now Canada has taken the first step in the same descent by empowering her Government to issue eight millions of legal tender paper, convertible indeed, but without a proportionate reserve. This Sir Francis Hincks condemns, though he seems disposed to reserve the prerogative of condemnation to himself.

It is the business of the Government to put its stamp on the coin, as an assurance that the piece is of a certain weight and fineness. You take your gold, if you please, to the mint and get it back stamped in the shape of sovereigns. There is nothing of fiat about this, more than about any other stamp or certificate of value. Happily Governments may now be trusted to discharge this function honestly. In former days they were in the habit of stealing a portion of the gold and substituting

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enterprises for the investment of other peoples' money, and by taking Government contracts and corporation jobs. The abounding dishonesty which has since then been our curse, the repudiation of the debts of States, towns, and cities, with the alarming development of the disposition to steal trust funds,—these and other unfavourable elements in the life of the time had their source and main impulse in the delusion about the nature and powers of paper money, in the uncertainty of its value, and in the extravagance engendered by the war. A passionate greed for riches was developed among our people. Men had no longer any vision for realities, but built upon illusions and impossibilities as if they were the solid facts and laws of nature. The leading clergymen and writers of the nation encouraged and defended this enormous and reckless acquisitiveness, and talked in philosophical phrases about the aspirations of the masses for improved conditions, leisure for culture, and a higher civilization. The pulpit gave to luxury the sanction of religion, and the press urged the people onward in their career of extravagance, in the name of patriotism, and declared the national debt a national blessing. It was not to be effected that the working-men should be wiser than their teachers. The increase of wages for all kinds of manual labour was very great, but comparatively few of the working-men saved anything. They imitated the profusion of their employers and guides. Economy was deemed unnecessary, stupid, and mean. New wants were invented: prudence and simplicity of life went out of fashion; and habits were formed and sentiments adopted which have wrought most important changes in the character and aims of the working men of this country. The sheer wastefulness of that period, if it could be adequately portrayed, would appear incredible to all who did not witness it." *From "Certain Dangerous Tendencies in American Life."*