

half and quarter decimal. The present pennies would have to pass ten to the florin, and half pennies ten to the shilling or half silver. This system would have

A gold piece.....	100 cents
A half gold or 5 silvers.....	50 "
A quarter gold or 2 1/2 silvers.....	25 "
A 1/2 silver piece.....	15 "
A silver.....	10 "
A half d.....	5 "
A quarter d.....	2 1/2 "

Now Messrs Editors, what is there to hinder us taking our choice of these three systems? There is really nothing, except the unlearning of the old, and taking note of the new, where indeed there would not be much to learn, as the pieces carry almost their own instructions with them. If there is to be the same currency for all the Provinces, some slight confusion must almost necessarily arise, but it will be better to put up with a little inconvenience for a while, in order to gain a faultless currency, than to cause an equal amount of confusion, and gain a mere nothing or a sham. We have the decimal coins and are likely to have more, and need never lack a supply of them, either new or old. And what is more to the purpose, we want a more correct and more convenient system of decimal currency, one that shall suit the merchant and tradesmen a counter, as well as the accountant's ledger.

We have three systems to choose from. The simplest or that requiring the least number of coins—being the silver crown system, beautifully adapted to a country in its infancy of barter and exchange. The second or gold and silver system, more appropriate and convenient for a country more advanced in banking and mercantile pursuits, (like ourselves). And the third or sovereign system, better adapted to a country like England, that has almost a superfluity of coins, and needs no paper of a less denomination than a five or a ten pound note.

To us then, who even as a Grand Dominion, would find an issue of notes of the denomination of one or more "gold" very inconvenient I think the system based on the *British half sovereign* would be the most convenient that could be adopted.

Under it our exchange from or into sterling would be a very simple process, that of merely dividing or multiplying (as the case may be) the number of golds by two—as thus, \$12.82 would be £6 2 10; \$17.96 would be £8 19 6-10, and so on, and in each country the amount in sterling or currency would be understood almost at a glance. Not so our Nova Scotia dollars and cents, for take the above casual figures 12.82 and 17.96, and without a ready reckoner the 82 and 96 cents will puzzle considerably.

In the above you will perceive that I have avoided giving the gold and silver coin any other name or nick-name, for what real necessity is there for any other name than gold and silver—why call them dollars and dimes pounds and shillings? is not gold and silver quite as easy, and is not the original meaning quite as easily understood? Is there not also a universal meaning in the names by which the several metals are known? and are they not translatable into any known language? not so the old Dutch daalder or the Spanish or Yankee dollar, or even the English pound and shilling? To the term "cent" there could be no great objection, because it has a specific meaning, is translatable, and sounds better than "coppers." Suppose 375 to represent a sum of money, would it not sound as well and be as well understood if called "three golds seventy-five cents," as it would if called three dollars seventy-five cents, or three pounds seventy-five pence.

Such a system of decimal coins as I have herein shown that we already possess, would not only be the most convenient for us to adopt and use, but our doing so might open the way for the decimal system in England, and might even tend to lead the United States currency to assimilate with it. As thus take the quarter eagle or two and a half dollar gold piece and you find the 25 cent piece is a pure decimal of it, the same as the English shilling is the decimal of our two and a half gold piece. They have thus the gold and the silver the same as we have, and by adopting the same principle as is here proposed for ourselves they would, like ourselves, have a gold dollar, silver dime and half dime, &c., &c., and thus the foundation might be laid for even a universal decimal currency in gold, silver and copper coins.

In neither England, the States, or the New Dominion, would there be any actual necessity for new coins, the old cents or coppers needing but a stamp to show the increased value.

I have written more than I originally intended, but I am anxious to show that our Nova Scotia currency is about the most inconvenient for the general public that could well be devised, and at the same time to point out how we might be supplied (under the Dominion) with a more perfect decimal currency.

I remain Yours &c.

J H HUDSON,
Station Agent Rocky Lake, Nova Scotia

THE LONDON JOINT-STOCK BANKS.

(From the London Daily News)

THE half-yearly meetings of the London joint-stock banks are always regarded with considerable interest as affording valuable information of a trustworthy character, which cannot be obtained elsewhere. To a certain extent they indicate the actual state of trade, as prosperous or adverse, sound or speculative. It is the peculiarity of a bank that an exposition of its affairs tells indirectly as much, if not more, with regard to the mercantile community at large, than about its own individual business. Many other companies regularly publish their accounts, but nothing more can be gathered from them than that this one is making a good profit, or that another has been unfortunate. It is different with a joint-stock bank. If we are told that the past half-year has been one when an exceptionally high rate of interest has prevailed, but that the losses from bad debts will prevent the payment of as good a dividend as before, we see at once that the country has been overtrading, and that undue speculation has resulted in a corresponding increase of mercantile failures. If, on the other hand, the accounts show a profit larger than ordinary, notwithstanding that, as in the past six months, discounts have commanded barely more than 3 per cent, we may be assured that if business has been comparatively restricted, at least it has been safe and remunerative. Or again we may test, as in 1866, the effect produced by mere distrust, and consequent pressure on the money market. At that time everyone was so anxious to be prepared to meet the worst that bankers did not venture to take the full benefit of 10 per cent, although commerce was in so strong a position that the sharpest crisis known for forty years caused the suspension of no more than one or two firms of railway contractors. Illustrations of this kind, however, might be indefinitely multiplied. It is sufficient to point to the value of the knowledge which can be derived from what many will think so comparatively insignificant a document as a joint-stock bank report. Within the last twelve days six out of the eight principal establishments in London have held their meetings, and an analysis of their accounts will show the subjoined results. The capital paid up, compared with June, 1866, remains stationary:—

London and Westminster	£1,000,000
Union of London	1,200,000
London Joint-stock	1,050,000
Alliance	933,725
City	500,000
Imperial	448,940
Total	£5,218,665

The reserve funds stand as follows—		
	1866.	1867
London and Westminster	£450,000	£500,000
Union	300,000	300,000
London Joint-stock	319,991	337,839
Alliance	70,000	
City	140,000	50,000
Imperial	60,000	45,000
Total	£1,339,991	£1,262,839

It will be seen that in one instance the reserve has been entirely absorbed, and in two others that a material diminution has taken place. These adverse changes, however, are attributed to exceptional causes, such as the depreciation of securities (probably railways) and, as regards the Imperial, to gross carelessness on the part of a cashier by an over payment of £19,000 on a drawing account. In one, at least, of the other banks a large sum has been written off the profits to meet unexpected losses. These also have most likely arisen from the present financial position of the railway interest. It is satisfactory to find that a course we have long advocated—that of separating the actual liabilities for deposit and current accounts from the item of acceptances—has been generally adopted. For want of this distinction, the half-yearly balance sheets as rendered in the old form were often calculated to mislead ordinary observers. In only one case out of the six banks under notice—the London Joint-stock—the information does not appear in the report, but the omission was practically rectified in the chairman's speech. Compared with last year the sums deposited by the public, as far as can be ascertained, are as annexed:—

	1866.	1867
London and Westminster	£21,924,211	£21,858,938
Union	10,760,631	10,614,718
London Joint-stock	Not stated, about	10,865,000
Alliance	1,141,383	1,241,578
City	Not stated	2,285,068
Imperial	Not stated.	1,072,448
Total		£47,937,770

The liabilities on acceptances for the present year are subjoined. It is only right to add, however, that it rarely happens that a bank experiences any loss on this amount, as care is invariably taken to be amply covered:—

	1867
London and Westminster	£ 781,250
Union	7,332,404
London Joint-stock, about	8,860,000
Alliance	222,521
City	1,777,529
Imperial	40,863
Total	£14,077,567

*Against securities valued at £10,114,000. These amounts are occasionally large, especially the Union, which figures for more than half the total, but, as previously observed, we may safely assume that only under very exceptional circumstances can any liability accrue under this head. There may be temporary inconvenience, as we believe occurred more than once during the late crisis, but no ultimate loss. Setting aside, therefore, these obligations, and looking only to the deposits and current account of the public,

it may be of interest to compare the cash and government securities held by each bank with the total actually owed. The amounts at 10 per centages are as under:—

	Cash and Gov securities.	Percentage on assets due.
London and Westminster	£6,370,796	23
Union	5,301,168	41
London Joint-stock	2,682,601	24 1/2
Alliance	857,228	28
City	821,175	36
Imperial	325,440	30

This comparison, however, fails to set forth the entire truth, since, notwithstanding past experience, most of the banks continue to lend money at call to the discount brokers, and to reckon it as so much money in hand. In one instance it is shown that the sum thus employed is fully equal to the amount actually held by the bank in their own till and at their credit with the Bank of England. It seems almost incredible that the lessons taught by the events of the last summer should be thus entirely thrown away. There is no reason whatever why a banker should not lend his money to a bill broker if he sees that it is to his advantage. Indeed a highly profitable business has been thus carried on for years. But the banker has no right to reckon upon money thus lent as the same thing as money in hand. The proper head under which it should appear would be "Bills discounted loans, &c." The present plan only serves to inspire a false security. As regards profits, the banks have probably cleared as much this half year, with money at about 8 per cent, as they did a year ago when it was at 10. The dividends, however, are somewhat lower, owing chiefly to losses having been now written off which properly belonged to 1866. The prospect is not discouraging. Even the lowest return shown is equal, at the present price of the shares, to more than 6 per cent, without reckoning the probability of a future increase. Annexed is a comparison of the rates paid this year and the last:—

	1866 Per cent per annum.	1867 Per cent per annum.
London and Westminster	23	23
Union	25	25
London Joint-stock	20	16 2-3
Alliance	5	3
City	12	10
Imperial	8	6

GREAT WESTERN ENTERPRISE.

ABOUT the beginning of this year the construction of six powerful freight locomotives was begun by the Great Western Railway Company, and, with the exception of painting, which will yet occupy about a week, the first of these has been brought to a highly satisfactory completion. On Saturday morning the locomotive was taken out of the erecting shop, and subjected to a trial, under the direction of Mr. Robinson, Mechanical Superintendent, and Mr. R. Archibald, the general foreman. The trial proved the realization of the best hopes of these gentlemen, and reflects the highest credit upon their abilities.

This new locomotive has been named the "Baker," in honour of Braxton Baker, Esq., the Secretary of the Great Western Railway Company in London. Her appearance is calculated to realize the most masterly conceptions of the mechanical observer, and she is ornamented with a fine display of brass flashings, in the shape of cylinder castings, dome covers, and name plates, got up in exquisite style and splendid finish. The weight of the locomotive, exclusive of tender, is 32 tons and the cost of construction will not fall short of £20,000. She is the largest and most powerful engine on the road, and is to be the standard model for all future freight locomotives for the Company's service. We are indebted for the following technical and explanatory outlines of her parts to an employee in the mechanical department, who favoured us with a view of her working. The boiler was built under the supervision of Mr. J. G. McIntyre, foreman of the boiler shop, and is constructed of the best Low Moor iron. The plates are 7-16ths of an inch thick, and double riveted, combining enormous durability and strength. The safety-valves and steam-gauges are both of the newest improvement, and one of the most valuable adjuncts of her boiler lies in the new safety valves, the main feature of which is to prevent the engine driver from carrying a greater pressure of steam than the standard amount fixed by the safety valves. The fire-boxes are large, and capable of generating a large amount of steam, and are exceedingly well stayed. The boiler has been tested up to 130lbs per square inch, and proved satisfactory, but is capable of standing a much higher point. The cylinders of the engine which received the supervision of Mr. Robb, architect, are 16 inches in diameter, and have 24 inches length of stroke, and weigh 1,800 pounds each—thus giving to the capacity of the locomotive the means of pulling a heavier load than any yet constructed for this road. All the other appurtenances connected with the cylinders are fitted with equal strength and durability. Her motion is an indirect one, consisting of two rock shafts placed outside the framings, which gives more facility for oiling and cleaning the works. The reversing-gear is upon newly devised principles, giving the engine driver greater control over his engine than has usually been available. The truck is a center-bearing one, the whole weight of the engine being placed upon the centre of the truck, and revolving on a pin, which gives more freedom while turning sharp curves, and less liability from being thrown off the track. The driving wheels are 4 feet 6 inches in diameter, consisting of 14 spokes made of wrought iron, manufactured by a firm in Sheffield, England, with steel tires. The axles are made of steel, combining great strength and endurance, and the journals are 7 inches in diameter. The foot plate is large and well stayed, and is covered with a splashed cab, affording unequalled comfort to the men in charge of the engine.—*H. Milton Spectator.*