

Private bankers have absolutely no restrictions placed upon them by the Government, and have a perfect right to invest the money of their depositors in any way they choose, but it would seem that with the development of the branch banking system the day of the private banker is gradually drawing to a close. Of course there is a class of money lenders in all large cities doing a "note-shaving" business, which dignify themselves with the title of "Bankers," but further reference to these is not necessary to the purposes of this lecture.

The law governing our banks and currency are the product of the best brains and ingenuity of this enlightened country, but the most perfect Bank Acts will not prevent bad management, so that the public must always rely to a large extent upon the integrity, ability and experience of the men who manage the banks in which they are interested. This does not apply, however, to the holders of bank notes, who are absolutely safe, even from bad management. The only thing it seems to me that might be regulated is the power of taking deposits by other corporations than chartered banks, at least so long as the former have no legal restrictions placed upon their investments. You are all aware that it is the poor and ignorant people, and those who are least able to afford to lose money, who always suffer from private bank, loan company and other financial failures. They are attracted by high rates of interest, personal attachment, or other inducements, and it does seem to me that, as there are so many people in the Dominion who are unable to properly look after themselves when it comes to handling money, the Government should provide certain safe-guards, or, at all events, place restrictions such as surround the chartered banks, upon all persons or corporations who constitute themselves the custodians of the people's money.