

in their efforts to relieve the community from the present incubus, and to substitute therefor a useful currency. The introduction here of the coin which had gone out of use in the United States was entirely by the importations of brokers for their own benefit, and not through the agency of individuals, who did not find such coin in common American circulation.

Hon. Mr. Holton regarded the measure, however intelligible, if judged in the light of a future enactment, as per se, as stupid a proposal as was ever suggested to a deliberative assembly. It would be impossible to enforce the duty along so extensive a frontier as ours, and the effort to do so would only expose us to the derision of the world, who instead of finding us ready to deal with the overplus of silver here already, would see a protective duty being imposed in its favour.

Mr. Gibbs could appreciate the difficulty of the task undertaken by the Government, who would not, in his opinion, succeed in its accomplishment. Nor could he see any great hardship to the public if, for considerations affecting their own convenience, they voluntarily consented to take for twenty-five cents what was really worth but twenty-four or twenty-three. A rate of three or four per cent might increase the general revenue, but fifteen would merely offer a bonus to smuggling. It would be preferable to postpone the proposal to next session, when the whole subject might be comprehensively considered, and meanwhile people anticipating legislative action would take steps towards freeing themselves from the nuisance.

Mr. D. A. McDonald would support the resolution, as being at least a step towards the extinction of a trade injurious to the public, and beneficial to the brokers only.

Mr. Lawson thought that it would be impolitic to refuse to receive the currency of our neighbours at its standard gold value. He was not able immediately to refer to the proper authorities, but was under the impression that the American dollar was worth 91 or 92 cents, which value he suggested should be fixed for it by law.

Mr. Cartwright had no faith in the power of an import duty to stop the circulation of coin, which only a rigorous personal search could exclude. Still, if the Government wished to take the responsibility, they might try the experiment. The quantity in the coun-

try was very large—probably not less than seven or eight millions.

Hon. J. Rose considered this an over-estimate. The proposal to fix a specific duty, although fair in theory, was open to the objection that the intrinsic value of the coinage varied very materially.

Mr. Dufresne said that it would be remembered that, early in the session, he had asked the Government if they did not intend to establish a mint for the improvement of the coinage, a word which he had found in his dictionary—an old machine perhaps as worn out and useless as himself (loud laughter)—to mean the reduction of crude metal into a shape fit for currency, and that he had been answered by the Hon. Premier in the jocular strain with which his philosophy was wont to treat even the most serious subjects. (Laughter.) Our great difficulty arose from such a scarcity of circulation as induced us to lay our hands on anything we could get.

Mr. Kirkpatrick would vote for the measure, although considering that eight or ten per cent would be a better rate to impose. It would be still better to fix a specific value for the coin, which would show the United States that we were not unwilling to take their currency at its real worth, which, had he been Minister of Finance, (hear) he should have taken care to ascertain.

Hon. Mr. Cartier urged that people and small traders were those who suffered by this nuisance, and that the only way to remedy the difficulty was to clog the importation from the States. He did not think there was anything very stupid in such a measure; this was only a first step, and would be followed up by the Finance Minister either by a fractional paper currency or by a silver currency of our own.

Hon. Mr. Dorion thought the House should not be asked to accept or trust this, which was only part of the policy of the Government on this subject. Such a proposition, if carried out, would only have the effect of increasing the nominal value of silver in this country. It seemed to him the only proper way to deal with this question would be to fix the real value of these coins, and if that were not sufficient to abate the nuisance, a penalty ought to be imposed on those who received them at a higher rate. The present measure was rather calculated to throw obstacles in the way of a settlement of the whole question hereafter than to abate the nuisance.

[Mr. Rose (Huntingdon)]