

Jacques de Meulles, hit upon a scheme that was used with more or less satisfaction for well on towards a century. For fifteen years, excepting the occasional when the home government were forced, for fear of the consequences, to forward the money for the payment of the administrative expenses, salaries of the officers of the colony, wages of the militia, etc., these were the only times when money was available for use among the colonists, when it almost automatically gravitated into the hands of the traders, who in turn would have to send it back to France in order to pay their bills for goods already received, and to secure additional supplies in increased quantities to meet the growing needs of their constituencies.

### Card Money

On September 24th, 1685, the treasurer of the colony at Quebec notified the home government of the expedient he had worked out for use of the community. In justification of the proceeding, he narrates a tale as harrowing as any credit man here ever had poured into his ears by a debtor in an effort to secure an extension of time or further line of credit accommodation. For eight months, this letter goes on to state, from January to August, the King's treasurer had from his own private chest paid the tradespeople for the supplies of the vice-regal household, the wages of the soldiers, the workmen and work women whom it was absolutely essential to employ that the King's business should be conducted in an efficient and a fitting manner. But the money chests of even King's provincial treasurers have their limits, and that of Intendant Jacques de Meulles was no exception to the rule. When he had successfully passed the eighth monthly rounds of demans, he had reached the end of his personal resources, and had simply been forced to act upon the plan which he had been resourceful enough to evolve. Looking about him, he had discovered playing cards in abundance, apparently, and by cutting these in halves and quarters, the number of them will be multiplied accordingly, and in addition specific significance would be secured. Imagine this man, this genius, within the recesses of his own fertile brain, patting himself on the back and crying exultantly, Eureka! Eureka!

Why not make, as officials of larger domains make, a colonial issue of money, not silver or gold but card money, imprint the seal of the realm, and lo! real money; then issue a manifesto to the common herd,

and order them to recognize it with just the same confidence that they do the silver and gold of France. This is exactly what happened, and the ingenious finance minister apparently neither won the approval nor reaped the wrath of the King or his government.

A quarter of a playing card, with the impression of the seal of the treasurer in wax, the value fifteen sols, and the autograph of the Intendant, became legal currency for that amount; half a card became twenty sols, and a whole card four francs, or about equal to fifteen, twenty and eighty cents of our money. These values were adopted, as it permitted the treasurer to pay the soldier his wages in exact change.

The seal of authority used by this Intendant was in the form of a crowned circle, within which were enclosed three fleur-de-lis.

We have had some experience in the past few years, watching the effect upon the money market of the floating of loans, village and municipal loans, loans civil and politic, loans of the Dominion and of the mother country. How did the people of old Canada receive the proposal to establish a local currency? Just as a loyal people should, exactly, with open arms; just as some of the energetic and far-seeing people of that part of Canada that lies towards the setting sun from old Canada have in these latter days—almost falling over each other in the effort to secure some of the good stuff before the supply was exhausted; for instance, sunset subdivisions adjacent to embryonic cities of the plain and El Dorados of the mountains; rock corner lots in Prince Rupert, that would have been a great spot for Kuslokap to import his flint from, had he known of it.

But even good quality of card stock, as the stationery dealer would tell us, will, because of constant handling and carrying, become cracked and smudgy. When this took place provision had to be made for its redemption. So de Muelles would have his clerks prepare new card money to take the place of the old, and also new card money to pay the new debts of the administration, until the people began to realize that even with the coat-of-arms of the Crown, and the various signatures of the authorities attached, these bits of pasteboard were fast assuming their true value as bits of pasteboard only.

The despair of the Intendant had only been pushed back a few years. Now again he must take up his appeal to the King with greater emphasis, or the people will