

and thus they afforded practical relief from the difficulties of the situation. The right to issue this fractional paper not being confined to any one in particular, it was issued by any merchant or trader whose credit would enable him to do so, and much confusion must have resulted. Still, it became a firmly established factor in the exchange mechanism of the country, and, in various forms, it survived for many years both in Lower and Upper Canada. The range of circulation and the credit of the bills depended entirely upon the reputed credit of the person issuing them. From the fact that they originated in Lower Canada, and that they were generally introduced with the words, "Bon pour," etc., they came to be universally designated *bons*. We shall have frequent occasion to note their appearance and influence in the course of the development of our subject. Here we may simply observe that the use of the *bons* tended to prepare the country people for the appearance of bank notes; at the same time the inevitable difficulties connected with them afforded a basis for several sharp criticisms upon the issues of the first banks.

The scarcity of change continuing, and the system of *bons* becoming general, with obvious advantage to the merchants, it occurred to an enterprising auctioneer of Quebec, named William Titchbourne, that a fortune awaited the man who could obtain a monopoly of the right to issue these small promises to pay. No doubt the general advantage which would result from uniformity of issue, and the consequent avoidance of confusion, seemed to him a strong argument in favour of his scheme. At any rate he decided to apply to the governor-in-council for an exclusive charter. Thus we find in the minutes of Council of August 27th, 1767, a record to the effect that there was read the petition of William Titchbourne, auctioneer, praying for the exclusive privilege to issue promissory notes for small sums by way of change for silver and to supply the want of copper coins. This is undoubtedly the first attempt to obtain a bank charter in Canada. The council, however, dismissed the petition; it was, indeed, beyond their authority to grant it. It was, strictly speaking, the duty of the civil government to put a stop to the circulation of the paper then in use. But experience was showing that the laws and special ordi-