

and a number of merchants of Quebec examined regarding the evil, nothing was done save to suggest a more stringent enforcement of the law of 1808 against importing spurious copper coin. This law was simply a revision of the ordinance of 1777 above mentioned. In the Provinces of Upper Canada and Nova Scotia the same evils affected the circulation. In the latter province the government rose to the occasion and grappled with the difficulty by providing a special copper coinage for the province.¹

As a result of this discrediting of the spurious copper currency, the stringent enforcement of the law against its importation and manufacture and the failure to provide an acceptable form of change, there came another dearth of copper change. Still a remnant of the old halfpence of George III, but which had become so worn as to be hardly legible, continued to circulate, which were the only truly legal copper coin. Now some of the merchants, who for profit were ever ready to provide the necessary change, precluded from importing by the effectual supervision of the customs authorities, started coining for themselves. And taking for their patterns the worn copper coppers in circulation they produced something most barbarous in design and execution. The obverse bore an indistinct head without any inscription and the reverse a hideous caricature for Britannia or an indescribable harp. These nondescripts the illiterate habitants accepted without question while they rejected the well executed "Wellington halfpenny tokens" of the previous decade. That the quantity issued was large is attested by the fact that thirty varieties are known in all stages of indistinctness and degeneracy down to plain discs of copper. Mactaggart thus described the copper circulation of Canada in 1828; "While the *French* keep gabbling about *quinze sous* and *trente sous*, which are perplexing to comprehend every sort of *copper-piece* is an halfpenny. I have no less than 120 different kinds, the greater part of them *old copper coins* of Britain and Merchants' tokens all over the world. If a lot of farthings be taken into a *smithery* and receive a blow from a sledge-hammer on the anvil, they will then be excellent Canadian coppers, or half-pennies."²

At a later date, when these imitations of worn coins had become discredited, several tons of an English trade token dated 1812, having the head of George III within a wreath on the obverse and a female seated on a bale of goods on the reverse, were imported by Joseph Tiffin, a prominent merchant of the time. Soon this token was counterfeited and large quantities of such brass imitations were passed

¹ This coinage I have described in a communication to the Royal Society of Canada. See Transactions, Vol. X., section II., page 35.

² Three years in Canada, 1826-7-8. By John Mactaggart, London, 1829, Vol. I., page 321.