

Lecquet, speaking next, declared that "The circulation is becoming more rare every day."

On December 17, 1791, a new issue was ordered, making in all twenty-one hundred millions authorized. Coupled with this was the declaration that the total amount in actual circulation should never reach more than sixteen hundred millions. Before this issue the value of the 100 *livres* note had fallen at Paris to about 80 *livres*;* immediately afterward it fell to about 68 *livres*. What limitations of the currency were worth may be judged from the fact that not only had the declaration made hardly a year before, limiting the amount in circulation to twelve hundred millions, been violated, but the declaration, made hardly a month previous, in which the Assembly had as solemnly limited the amount of circulation to fourteen hundred millions, had also been repudiated.

The evils which we have already seen arising from the earlier issues were now aggravated; but the most curious thing evolved out of all this chaos was a *new system of political economy*. In speeches, newspapers and pamphlets about this time, we begin to find it declared that, after all, a depreciated currency is a blessing; that gold and silver form an unsatisfactory standard for measuring values: that it is a good thing to have a currency that will not go out of the kingdom and which separates France from other nations: that thus shall manufacturers be encouraged; that commerce with other nations may be a curse, and hindrance thereto may be a blessing; that the laws of political economy however applicable in other times, are not applicable to this particular period, and, however, operative in other nations, are not now so in France; that the ordinary rules of political economy are perhaps suited to the minions of despotism but not to the free and enlightened inhabitants of France at the close of the eighteenth century; that the whole state of present things, so far from being an evil is a blessing. All these ideas, and others quite as striking, were brought

* For this and other evidences of steady decline in the purchasing power of the *assignats*, see Caron, "Tableaux de Dépréciation du papier-monétaire," Paris, 1909, p. 386.