

As usual, ready cash brought its temptations, and Henry's bank was on the "hit list" of the group known as "the Cobourg Conspirators". In the wake of the Upper Canada Rebellion of 1837, a small group of Americans, encouraged by disgruntled Canadians, planned a clandestine attack on Cobourg. Squire Henry's bank was to be a prime target, after which they would "dispose of" two prominent members of the Family Compact. The conspirators did land just east of Cobourg, but were discovered before any harm was done. A trial led to the ringleader being sentenced to seven years hard labour in the penitentiary.

A "Schedule of Real Estate for Sale 1833" listed the following banks as operating in Cobourg:

An office of the Bank of Upper Canada, and an Agency of the Commercial Bank of the Midland District. There are settled in Cobourg, and vicinity, many respectable and opulent English, Irish, and Scotch families. The society of Cobourg and vicinity is considered equal to any in the Province.



The Commercial Bank, headquartered in Kingston, collapsed just months after Confederation, causing the resignation of A.T. Galt, our very first Minister of Finance.

In 1848, with a population of 3,444, Cobourg experimented with issuing its own money in the form of municipal notes or debentures. Like most other towns, Cobourg and its people were facing a severe shortage of ready cash with which to transact business. In Cobourg's case the situation had been made more difficult by the arrival on their beach of thousands of Irish immigrants for whom they had to take responsibility.

Some of the wealthier residents underwrote the municipal notes, issued in 5 and 10 shilling denominations. An editorial in the Cobourg Star on April 12, 1848 commented:



We are happy to find that our Corporation have come to the conclusion to issue a small amount of Notes to their creditors, who being of the poorer class, have been very much cramped for the want of the smaller sums due them for labour.

IN CANADA

With Confederation and the British North America Act of 1867 the **new federal government took control over coinage, currency**, bills of exchange, promissory notes, banking, and incorporation of banks. This allowed for the creation of a uniform currency across Canada. Official Canadian currency took the form of the Canadian dollar in 1871, overriding the currency of individual banks.

Canada's banking system developed very differently from that of the United States. Whereas in the United States a large number of small banks served just one town or state, Canada's banking sector came to be dominated by a few banks with transcontinental branch networks. **The Canadian system promoted stability and produced far fewer bank failures, but was much less competitive.**

Harwood, July 10th, 1857. Administrator. 38

DECIMAL CURRENCY.

THE PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE having passed an Act requiring all the ACCOUNTS-OF THE GOVERNMENT to be kept in DOLLARS and CENTS, from the FIRST of JANUARY next, it is desirable that the same system of Accounting should be generally adopted throughout the country.

The BANKING INSTITUTIONS have, therefore, resolved to make a similar change, to take effect at the above mentioned period, and they request that parties transacting business with them will have the amount of all Bills or Notes intended for Discount or Collection, and falling due on and after the first of January next, expressed in Dollars and Cents. It will also be necessary that all Cheques and other forms, in use for Banking purposes, be adapted to the Decimal System.

1st May, 1857.

For the Bank of Montreal—D. DAVIDSON, Cashier.
 For the Bank of British North America—THOS. PATON, General Manager.
 For the Commercial Bank of Canada—C. S. ROSS, Cashier.
 For the Bank of Upper Canada—THOMAS G. BRIDOUT, Cashier.
 For the City Bank—F. MACCULLOCH, Cashier.
 For the Quebec Bank—C. GETTINGS, Cashier.
 For the Gore Bank—A. STEVEN, President.
 For La Banque du Peuple—B. H. LAMOINE, Cashier.
 For Molson's Bank—WILLIAM MOLSON, President.
 For the Bank of Toronto—A. CAMERON, Cashier.
 For the Niagara District Bank—THOMAS R. MERRITT, Vice-President. 23

Cigars! Cigars! Cigars!

On January 1, 1858 decimal currency was instituted.