

## Money

By R. G. Le TOURNEAU

*[Here is a discussion of the foregoing topic in the American Vernacular. Simple and to the point.]*

**W**HAT is money? We call it by a lot of different names. We say, "He's got the dough;" or "Who's got the spondulicks," or "Have you got the jack," or "the do ra me," or "Where will we get the mazuma." All meaning money.

Each independent country, of any size, coins and prints its own money, and the rate of exchange between countries varies all over the map. Canada used to pay us a premium for our dollars, and now we pay Canada a premium for her dollars. I don't imagine it costs more than a few cents to print a twenty dollar bill. What makes it worth twenty dollars? The government used to lay aside an equal value in gold or silver and offer to exchange it at any time. In other words, the gold would be a little heavy to carry so they gave you a certificate for it, and kept the gold in a vault for you. If you lost the gold, both you and the country would be poorer; but if you lose the certificate, just you are poorer, and the government is ahead.

We take this certificate and call it money. We receive it for what we sell and spend it for what we buy. It's good because Uncle Sam says so, and even though he fails to keep the full value in precious metals; I guess he's worth more than the certificates (\$20.00 bills) he has out; so, I'm not too worried about that. But I think we need to keep in mind that the stuff we call money is not the real wealth. In fact, were it not for the imaginary value ascribed to gold, in actual usefulness it probably wouldn't be worth as much as the chromium we use to make stainless steel.

But don't throw away those twenty dollar bills. They are a certificate of work accomplished, goods produced or services rendered. They serve as a medium of exchange — lots easier than carrying the goods around with us, and what would we do without it? In fact, there have been plenty of examples of countries where money turned out to be practically worthless.

The thing that's bothering me is that since they took away from us those shiny twenty dollar gold pieces and had us carry a twenty dollar piece of paper instead, that paper has been shrinking ever since. In the necessities or the luxuries it won't buy half as much as before, and if the government doesn't quit running down its value by forcing prices up, there will be a catastrophe. Wages can and should climb just as production climbs. In fact in my field (earth moving) contractors are paying three times the wages, and moving the material for the same price they did; because we have given them better machinery. And now that we are just about finished with building ourselves a steel mill, I'm going to brag — we can reduce the cost of making and rolling steel. So I claim that much less labor is now producing more, and you "ain't" seen nothing yet. And as production goes up, wages can go up without increasing the cost; but when they go beyond that point, you are going too fast, and there may be a skid on the next turn of the road that will wind us up in the ditch.

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