

of the origin of the Regulations. It is not to be wondered at then, that a code of Regulations framed under such auspices—without a parent bold enough to acknowledge his offspring—should fail to meet the adequate requirements of an interest such as gold-mining. Nominally and theoretically, on doubt the Minister for Lands is the framer of the Regulations; but it is not to be supposed, that under a system such as ours, a Minister for Lands should possess the technical knowledge required.

14. Another glaring defeat of our present system is, impossibility of obtaining reliable information in Sydney as to the condition of the mines. It is obvious that the existence of an Office in which information can be obtained that can be really depended upon, with reference to the condition of the mining affairs of particular localities, would materially conduct to the employment of capital and energy in such matters. Such an Office as we recommend should be the repository of the official statistics of the Gold Fields—as indeed of all mining localities; and by the periodical publication of these statistics, information would be authoritatively furnished which would either warrant the embarking of combined capital and of individual energy in mining enterprise, or prevent the wasteful expenditure of money in bubble Companies, and the fruitless journeyings to profitless fields by individual miners who can ill afford to throw away time and labour. Such an Office would diffuse *sound* information; and would without unduly interfering with private agencies, operate as a salutary check upon the delusively glowing representations of professional puffers. The imperfect and exaggerated accounts of new discoveries, which are furnished by interested parties, not unfrequently caused great excitement, giving rise to hopes only doomed to disappointment, and to expectations never to be realised. A very marked illustration was afforded only recently by what occurred at Trunkey Creek, where the discovery of a few hundredweight of rich quartz was magnified into a discovery of what was said to be the richest quartz-mining field ever discovered in any of the Australian Colonies. Such a statement immediately gave rise to the formation of several Companies, all resulting in mere failure. The disastrous consequences of this kind of thing are not confined to the shareholders in those Companies, but, engendering a well-grounded distrust of all reports, true as well as false, operate most injuriously to the whole mining interest. Had there been a Government Office in Sydney to send up a competent and reliable officer to examine and report upon the true state of things, these deplorable results could never have happened.

15. Again, such a department would be made a valuable storehouse of information, with regard not only to geological discoveries tending to throw light upon and to guide the operations of prospectors, but also to the most recent improvements in machinery, modes of working, treating gold and other such particulars. And not only would this information be easily accessible to such of the public as could attend personally at the Office, but by periodical publication such as we have before hinted at, the Department could be made the means of disseminating largely and most beneficially this most useful knowledge. In the neighbouring Colony of Victoria, whose mining legislation and administration are so far in advance of ours and whose material prosperity is by consequence of so much greater than ours, (notwithstanding that the mineral wealth of this Colony in metals other than gold is far in excess of any known in Victoria, and that the area over which our gold deposits extend is much larger), the Government has established a most valuable Museum in connection with the Department; returns are collected from every mining district, and reports published from the mining surveyors quarterly; a summary of the mining work of the year is published, and from time to time the Department issues maps of the more important mining districts; new Fields are examined and reported upon by the competent officers and these reports published; and, under the immediate supervision of Mr Brough Smyth, the Secretary for Mines for that Colony, a most valuable and comprehensive work upon the Gold Fields and Mineral Districts of Victoria has been compiled and published.

16. Still another very serious defect on the existing system must be pointed out, and this is, the difficulty and delay which occur in declaring auriferous tracts as Gold Fields, so as to protect such tracts from absolute alienation. Promptitude in this matter is of the last importance; and yet it is clearly established in evidence that, for many months after localities are known to be payably auriferous, no proclamation issues declaring them to be Gold Fields, and in the meantime they are selected and practically alienated in fee.

17. In addition to the great and beneficial objects we have already indicated as being likely to be attained by the establishment of such a Department with a Responsible Minister and a permanent Secretary and efficient officers, we may point out that it appears to us to be most essential that there should be centred in one individual directly responsible to Parliament some power of effective supervision of the administration of the Gold Fields. This we think would tend to a *uniformity of administration* hardly to be expected so long as different officials are allowed to proceed according to their individual views, in the practical irresponsibility which must exist where there is no controlling powers possessed of the requisite knowledge at head quarters.

18. Besides the chief permanent official—the Secretary for Mines—we recommend that there should be a second officer possessing special practical qualifications, particularly with a view to the contingency of his being sent up temporarily to new Fields, or to his being able to discharge the duties of the permanent Secretary, in the event of the latter officer himself visiting the Fields. The special objects with which these officers should visit newly discovered Gold Fields may shortly be summarised thus:—reporting upon the Field, its general geological features, and probable gold-bearing prospects,—the most convenient postal routes to be established,—the sites of townships,—police requirements,—water facilities, and so on. These are the only two officers of the Sydney Department whose appointment would need special care and discrimination. All that would be required in addition would be

Impossibility
of obtaining
reliable informa-
tion in Sydney
Office.

Information as
to geological
discoveries—im-
proved methods
of working—
machinery, &c.

Delay in pro-
claiming Gold
Fields.

Necessity for
supervision of
administration.

Second special
permanent
officer in the
Department.