

first objection we propose to meet, so as to reduce the objection to one of very little weight, by making provision for Mining Registrars to be of easy access in almost all parts of the District; and as to the fee, we would recommend the imposing of so small a fee as to render its payment light, and in view of the benefits conferred by registration, almost inappreciable. On the whole, we unanimously concur in thinking that the advantages immensely preponderate over the disadvantages.

63. We recommend that, in all cases except the ordinary block claim in alluvial ground, registration should be compulsory, so that no right to a claim or to any interest in any claim other than those comprised in the above exception, shall be recognized unless registered. And, with a view to encourage registration, we propose that certain peculiar advantages shall attend the registration even of ordinary alluvial block claims. Compulsory registration in all but ordinary alluvial block claims.

64. We would further recommend that Mining Registrars should be resident on every Gold Mining Field, and in such places on the Fields as would afford the miners every reasonable facility of access to these officers. A District Registrar should, we think, be appointed to each district, and this officer might conveniently hold his office in conjunction with that of Clerk of Petty Sessions, or Warden's Clerk. His remuneration for his duties as Registrar to be by fees, and his office to be central, and open for registration business at least four hours every working day. Books according to a uniform plan should be furnished to these Registrars, and kept by them as record of all transactions affecting the property to any claim or share. In addition to the District Registrar, we think there should be Divisional or Sub-Registrars for the more outlying portions of the District. The conduct of the business of these Sub-Registrars to be regulated by the same rule applying to the District Registrar. The appointment of these Sub-Registrars to rest with the Warden of the District. Both the District Registrar and the Sub-Registrar to furnish monthly statistical returns to the Department, such returns to be certified by the Warden. All registrations to be made either in the Office nearest to the claim, or in the Office of the District Registrar. And where claims have once been registered at one Office, all subsequent dealings, either by way of transfer or mortgage, or in any other mode, to be registered at that same Office. The Sub-Registrar, in any place where the Warden holds his Court, to take plaints and to issue summonses. We recommend that all certificates of registration of titles shall be on parchment. Mining Registrars.

65. The fees for registration at present charged we all think too high. The work on the part of the Registrar is not arduous, the expenses of the Office should not be great, and therefore we think the fee should be small. Where the fee is now half-a-crown, we think one shilling would be ample. Registration fees too high.

66. We desire to point out a very serious evil which exists under the present system, with regard to registering claims to be held in reserve. The principle of allowing Mining Registrars to registrar claims as held in reserve, without the sanction of the Warden being first obtained, is in our opinion faulty,—because such registration may be, as indeed the evidence shows it constantly is, effected without the existence of any real cause for it. Upon the mere unquestioned allegation of the claimowner that he has reasonable cause for the suspension of labour, the Registrar, whose interest it is to secure as many fees as possible, and who is not required to make any investigation, nor indeed has the means of making any, into the truth of the allegation, thereupon takes the half-crown and grants the certificate. The frequent abuses in practice of a system so susceptible of abuse constitute a very just cause of dissatisfaction amongst the industrious and honest miners, who see the claim of an idle and unscrupulous neighbour lying unworked and protected, even though without any due cause it is so unworked, and when by means of its not being worked injury results to others. We think, then, that the Warden should be applied to before registration is made, and that only under his authority should the Registrar grant this kind of certificate. Means also should be provided for hearing objections, on the part of others interested, to the holding of a claim in reserve. Registration for reserve. Evils of present system.

67. In addition to compulsory registration of all claims other than the ordinary alluvial block claim, we recommend, with a view to fixing and defining the boundaries of claims, that survey should be compulsory in all cases where registration is compulsory. The evidence adduced before us shows that a very large proportion, certainly three-fourths, while some witnesses put it as high as nine-tenths, of the disputes which have arisen, have been upon the question of boundary; and taking into consideration the largely increased areas which we hope to see granted to the miners, your Commissioners agree in thinking that the comparatively trifling expense which compulsory survey would involve to the claimholders would cheerfully be borne by them, and that it would be acknowledged that a benefit far exceeding the cost would thereby be conferred. More money is expended, and more time absolutely wasted upon litigating these disputed questions of boundary than would a hundred times pay all the expense of survey, to say nothing of the spirit of hostility and heart-burnings which are kept alive by such often-recurring strife. Survey.

68. We recommend that Mining Surveyors be appointed for each district. Care should be taken by the Department of Mines that none but gentlemen of competent skill be appointed to the performance of duties, upon the accurate performance of which, interests of such great importance will mainly depend. The smaller details of the duties of the Mining Surveyor may be left to the determination of the Mining Department, but we recommend that they shall be under the immediate supervisions of the Wardens of the District; and in order to ensure care and efficiency in the discharge of his duties, we think it would be well to hold the Surveyor responsible for the accuracy of his surveys, maps, and plans. Periodical returns of surveys effected should be made at short intervals to the Department. Mining Surveyors.