

every mining district where operations are being carried on upon any sort of a large scale a properly qualified inspector.

We would particularly warn inexperienced speculators proposing to invest in prospects in new mining districts of the province to be careful in dealing with the so-called brokers (land sharks they really are), who rarely lose the opportunity when it occurs of fleecing the unwary visitor. Instances are common enough of brokers making commissions of 1,000 per cent., and even more, on sales, and we heard of a case not long ago where an intending purchaser was asked and very nearly paid a broker, of somewhat unenviable local notoriety, \$10,000 for a claim, the owner's price thereof being \$1,000. A broker who carries on a legitimate business and is content with legitimate profits is a very useful member of society; the other man is—well, quite the other thing, and if his offence is not an indictable one, the sooner the law in this respect is made to fit the crime the better.

The conduct of Ministers of the Crown, or of officials holding high positions of trust and responsibility in the provincial public service, allowing their names to be associated with, and consenting themselves to act upon the directorate board of company enterprises, has formed the subject of much adverse criticism by the provincial press of opposition political views, on the grounds that a public official has no right to use his titles and position to advertise either his own private business or that of anybody else. There can be no doubt but that the investing public are largely influenced by reading influential names on a prospectus. Herein, we think, is found a tangible ground for objection to this common enough practice, because if the enterprise comes to grief—and new mining enterprises, however honest and capable the management, are always to a certain degree liable to catastrophe—our public men, whose names are associated therewith, risk not only their own, but the country's reputation in the general blame consequent upon disaster.

There can, of course, be only one way of regarding the action of public officials who become prominently associated with and largely interested in private enterprises, wherewith in the regular course of public duty they must have important relations.

In the prospectus of the Klondyke Mining, Trailing & Transport Corporation, Limited, of London, the following notice is prominently displayed:

The company is fortunate in having as its representative on the spot a gentleman who has been for three years resident on the Yukon fields, and is now occupying an important official position here, and who has already secured considerable inter-

ests and gold claims, which he has agreed to transfer to the company.

Our contemporary, the *Province*, deduces therefrom that the "representative" here referred to has apparently turned his official position in the Yukon to practical account. This is hardly a fair hit, for, whereas the inference is decidedly uncomplimentary, there is absolutely no evidence to show that the gentleman in question did not—quite legitimately—either stake or purchase his claims and interests.

Nevertheless, there is a strong feeling among prospectors and miners in the province that Government officials, such as Mining Recorders and Gold Commissioners, should not be allowed to own mineral claims or interests in their official districts at all, and we are inclined to hold the same opinion.

It is a well-known fact that in the older camps prospectors are always on the lookout for claims that have "run out"; in other words, claims whereon the locator has failed to do the annual assessment work required by law. We are informed of cases where Recorders, who by virtue of their special opportunities naturally keep themselves better informed in these matters than others, have either re-staked claims for themselves, or have given special information to particularly favoured friends, accepting remuneration in the shape of "an interest." Whether this is a true state of affairs or not, it well might be, and such a contingency is not by any means desirable.

It is true the salaries of Government officers are not always adequate to their services, and it is therefore not altogether surprising that a careful man, though he be a public official, should be anxious to provide for the future. While, therefore, we submit that civil servants holding the positions of Mining Recorders or Gold Commissioners should not be allowed to own mining property in the districts wherein they reside, we would suggest for the consideration of the Government the advisability of pensioning on retirement public officials after a certain term of honorable service.

We would again respectfully call the attention of the Minister of Education to the absurdity of the regulation now in force of teaching "agriculture" in the public schools in the mining districts of the province. If it is really deemed necessary to increase the number of subjects taught in the original public school curriculum, it would be eminently more fitting to instruct the sons and daughters of prospectors or miners in the elements of (say) mineralogy or geology. These are subjects wherein children bred up in mining camps and hearing from their earliest days of "strikes," "formations," "fissures" and "contacts," would show a rational interest.