

elsewhere—in great part due to lack of scientific knowledge, in part to long winters, magnificent distances, and corresponding cost of supplies and transportation. The history of the Montreal Mining Co. is a record of the folly of selling large tracts to land jobbers, who, by a pull on the Land Department, obtained a patent right to induce the public to invest in chances—in other words to run the lottery business under the name of an investment in mineral property. Happily this state of things has been closed out. But it is to be feared that Government may be induced by sectional clamor to do indirectly what it has declined to do directly. There is no reason why a solvent and honest government should sell any property without knowledge of its value. It is a violation of the great public trust committed to it, to offer valuable mines as premiums for the mere chances of discovery. It is cheap literature from the dust-heaps of exploded political economy, to say that it is not the business of Government to discover mines. It is the duty of Government to know the most that can be practically learned of the resources entrusted to its administration, and it should, therefore, know as fully the value of a mineral range as of a timber limit, or of an area of agricultural land. Its knowledge should be intensive as well as extensive. The difference of cost in obtaining this knowledge as against the present system is no argument against the principle, that the Government of a great province like ours should not facilitate gambling in mining locations.

The operation of mines by the Government would seem to be expedient for the following reasons :—

1. That until it is undertaken there will always be pressure upon the Crown Lands Department to sell more mining land than there is an actual demand for, that is "actual" as opposed to merely "speculative" demand. The function of the Crown Land Department to survey such land and give title will be debauched, as it has been in time gone by, for the purpose of enabling speculators to take advantage of the immoral cupidity of those who are ever ready to invest in hazardous chances ; or for the purpose of enabling the buyers of such tracts to hold them against the anticipated demand, and thus rob future citizens of the equal rights they should have with citizens of today. The amount of money which has been turned from the lines of honest enterprise into this profitless channel is very great, with great consequent loss to the community.