

“arises. [Editor’s Note.—The creamy lather, no doubt, “ is ingeniously devised to assist in shaving profits.] “Then the mass is permeated by chlorine and sulphur “dioxide gas, prepared in generators of Dr. Island’s “own design. The hard ores have now become solu- “ble salts and it is no longer a difficult job to extract “the principal metals from the baser in the salt for- “mation.”

So far the technical side of things. Next the Courier touches on matters financial to this effect:—“One “day a promoter hit upon the Island building, and “saw the dentist’s operations. He had insomnia for “a few days, and spent the time dogging the footsteps “of Sir Donald Mann, with whom he had a bowing “acquaintance. Sir Donald ran out to Island’s place. “. . . . Now Sir Donald has formed a ten-million- “dollar company to boost Island’s invention.” Thus the Courier.

From all available facts it may be fairly deduced that Dr. Island is treading the road that the first-year youth travels when he is initiated into the mysteries of qualitative analysis. The “horror of odours,” we quote the Courier’s phrase, is one of the perquisites of the adolescent investigator.

Yet we do not wish to scoff at Dr. Island. He may be a genius, and he may be merely a misguided and mistaken inventor. The chances are largely in favour of the latter alternative. But the most serious phase of the whole business is the fact that Dr. Island permits the public press to exploit him and his process before he has given one iota of tangible proof that he can get commercial results. If Dr. Island were a professional metallurgist he would have lost caste at once. As matters stand, it is only possible to say that, whatever the improbable merits of his process, he is countenancing the worst kind of wild-cattling in connection with the flotation of his company.

The Courier’s statement that Sir Donald Mann “has formed a ten-million-dollar company to boost Island’s invention,” we disregard entirely. Sir Donald is too wise a bird to be caught with chaff. He has made a conditional offer. The condition is that Dr. Island perform up to the limit of his promises. The fulfilment of that condition would bring more than ten million dollars from any magnate.

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A commission of technical men is shortly to investigate the Island process. We do not know that the report, if unfavourable, will be made public. But, whether that report be favourable or unfavourable, the self-respect of the inventor and of those associated with him should preclude the publication of such fatuous nonsense as the Courier has spread abroad, and common honesty should prevent the promoters from selling any shares.

A COMMISSION FOR NOVA SCOTIA’S GOLD MINES.

Seven years ago the Government of Nova Scotia engaged Mr. T. A. Rickard (who as mining engineer, as editor, and as author needs no introduction to our readers) to make a cursory examination of the gold mines of the province. Mr. Rickard came and went, and no one was the wiser. His report was never published. According to the Government, the report was unpublishable. According to Mr. Rickard, the Government should have published his report. With this question, however, we have nothing to do. It is necessary only to mention that the non-publication of Mr. Rickard’s report has had a most mischievous effect upon Nova Scotian gold mining. The colour of the report is not known to the public. Yet it is taken for granted that Mr. Rickard expressed a strongly adverse opinion in regard to the future of gold mining in the Province. That there is absolutely no ground for this belief, does not modify the current misconception.

As there is no probability of Mr. Rickard’s pronouncement being made public, the only possible course is to disregard it altogether. It is unprofitable, at this late date, to attempt to allocate the responsibility for the fiasco. The urgent duty of the Government is to make a strong effort to appraise the present value and the future prospects of each gold producing district in the Province.

An appropriately selected commission composed of mining men whose names carry weight and whose judgment may be thoroughly relied upon. Such a commission, amply supplied with funds, and provided with every facility for examining the representative gold mines, would be in a position to learn much concerning the industry.

We believe sincerely that the report of a properly constituted commission would place Nova Scotian gold mining in a very favourable light. Of course, everything will depend upon the personnel of the commission, and upon the authority with which it is clothed.

In selecting the members of the commission it is imperative that men of world-wide experience in gold mining be selected. It is equally necessary that a Nova Scotian mining man be chosen. Everybody interested will also agree that the inclusion of Mr. Fari-bault, whose knowledge of the whole subject from a geological standpoint is at once complete and accurate, is necessary.

The duties of the commission should consist in making an abstract of the history of each district, in describing the present condition of every mine, in diagnosing the whole industry, and in formulating a plan whereby Government assistance can be best applied.

The open publication of the report of this commission would rouse world-wide interest. The mining fraternity is waiting for it. It is the obvious duty of the Provincial authorities to act at once. The Rickard