

been done which could make them of somewhat more benefit to the public than mere official records? In some cases, I believe, a little has been attempted in the home circulation of any data obtained; but usually Government reports seem to be looked upon as purely official documents,—are sent the round of the newspapers, which usually suppress them, sometimes from short-sighted jealousy oftener from want of room,—are printed in the Appendix to the Journals or otherwise, and, having been read by any Government clerk who chances to be of an inquiring turn of mind, are duly filed and forgotten. In Otago there appears to be a thoroughly organized mining survey staff, and the information derived from this source is stated by Mr. Pike to be most useful to the miners. Why, then, should the outside public be excluded? The returns from the gold fields are falling off—why has this valuable information never been employed for the purpose of attracting hither labour and capital? Ballarat, in Victoria, has just sent, or is about to send, an agent home to England, furnished with the fullest information concerning the district, in the expectation of inducing monied men to embark in the mining ventures of that Colony. Why do not the several mining districts of New Zealand follow this example? To call the attention of local Governments to these and other kindred subjects appears to me part of the duty of the General Government. Nevertheless, as far as I can learn, as soon as the delegation of the Governor's powers under the Gold Fields Act to the Superintendent of a Province has been made, the Colonial Government thinks its task is done. Pamphlets from the Geological Survey Department are occasionally forwarded to the district, but practical advice and information as to what has been done in other mining districts, abroad or in New Zealand, is seldom or never transmitted.

Beyond this point, I do not think the Colonial Administration could, in justice to the agricultural districts of the Colony, be expected to incur special expenditure from the general revenue. To make a money grant of any kind, either in this or any similar case, would be an exceedingly unwise precedent to establish, for it may be easily foreseen that the custom once initiated, the different districts would each demand a like grant, and thus, in all probability, a considerable expense would be incurred. Even the expense, however, would be a small matter compared to the injury done to the Colonists themselves. Government grants in aid of industry have at all times a very strong tendency to cramp the self-helpfulness of the people. There is already, in my opinion, too little interest in the development of the country shown by the people of New Zealand; too great an inclination to lay everything that has to be done upon the Government; and to grumble at it, alike for everything that is left undone, and for raising money by taxes to meet the expense of anything it attempts to do. The people of New Zealand occupy a very similar position to that of the waggoner in the fable, who preferred calling upon Hercules to putting his own shoulder to the wheel; the only difference is that our Hercules is more ill-advised than the mythic one, and does sometimes attempt to help in his blundering manner, and is then grumbled at by Colonial waggoners because he demands payment.

It seems, then, that as far as direct interference is concerned, it would be injudicious of the Colonial Government to take any active measures towards the development of new industries in the Colony. Indirectly, however, and through the medium of local institutions, the Government may exert an influence of the very utmost importance. It will be necessary, before proceeding to the discussion of this part of the subject, that I should shortly touch upon the management of local affairs in New Zealand; and in order to prevent confusion, it will be desirable at the same time to consider what the proper functions of these inferior organizations are with respect to the development of the country, and more especially, in reference to the subject of the present essay, how far they can assist in the permanent settlement of a mining population in New Zealand. These points being disposed of, I will return to that above mentioned—namely, the indirect influence of the Colonial Government towards the same end.

Local Government.

It will scarcely be thought necessary to demonstrate now-a-days that it is beyond the province of any Government whatever to take upon itself tasks which private enterprise is willing and equally able to perform. Nor, on the other hand, would it appear wise in a Government to undertake works of any kind because private enterprise is in a state of torpor; on the contrary, I should say that that would be the best possible justification for the Government remaining inactive, since the more it does the more it will be expected to do, and every step in this direction is a further injury to that self-reliant spirit which it is so difficult, and yet so desirable, to encourage in all countries. Nevertheless, it may be said that if the Government and the governed really constitute one body only, and the work of the former is undertaken, not only with the consent but with the co-operation, either by an increase of taxation or otherwise, of the latter, no harm is done by any task which the Government may enter upon. Thus there is no impropriety in a local Government providing a sufficient water supply for its district; the people consent and agree to a rate for the purpose, and the organization of the Government gives it an advantage over private enterprise. It would evidently be improper for the Government of a country to undertake tasks of this nature, because it represents numerous, and in many cases conflicting interests. Nevertheless, such works as telegraphs, postal services, main lines of road, &c., in which the whole State has a direct interest, may properly be carried out by the State Government. From these considerations may be deduced the principle that a Government is justified in setting about any work which is for the benefit of the whole of its constituents, provided such work is undertaken at the expressed desire of those constituents, but that no Government has a right to draw a distinction between different interests, or to favour one at the expense of another. This principle will be found equally applicable, whether it is viewed in connection with State, Provincial, Municipal, or any Governmental system. It is not easy to discuss a question of such magnitude in a few words; but I think it will be seen, without further amplification, that so far as a people like to look upon its Government as an instrument for any purpose, so far is the Government justified in carrying out the wishes of the public, but an instrument wielded by the people is the only true position for any Administration. When it becomes an originator, save in the matter of instruction and advice, it becomes also an usurper of a portion of the people's prerogative.