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## COMMENTS.

THE strike still drags its slow length along, the only move of importance being the return of the stevedores laborers to work with the consent of the Trades' Hall, and under honorable arrangements with their masters, pending a conference between the ship-owners and the trades representatives, or some final and decisive movement on the part of the latter. That the Employers' Association has been working out a deep and well-planned scheme of dissimulation is now apparent, the Trades' Hall people have been gulled to a great extent by its diplomatic hypocrisy. The anxious demands of the public for a conference have been dodged with consummate cunning, and the painful struggle protracted solely with a view to weakening the resources of the men, and obtaining an unconditional surrender of unionism and the rights of labour. The Association has, at length, exposed its hand, and if it has to be met as a body of pusillanimity will avail the men nothing. It will have to be met determinedly, and the people at large, although they have already suffered much, are prepared for a yet more trying time rather than see the cause they hold so dear go down before combined capital. It seems now that the Trades' Hall has been too temperate; its anxiety to temporise, and by moderation to secure a speedy end to the trouble, has had an exactly contrary effect, and now boldness and determined action in the teeth of all odds form the only course that remains open for the salvation of the cause.

THE case of George Elliott, charged with arson, and at present incarcerated in Melbourne gaol after being remanded twice, is a fine lesson, and an admirable illustration of what might happen to any poor man in this land of the brave and the free. Elliott was arrested on suspicion of having set fire to a house at Sarrocco. The glorious old chestnut about every man being innocent in the eyes of the law as he's proved guilty would be rung in here, only we know it to be a bald and venerable lie, and have too much sense to aggravate the case by flaunting the wretched myth. Nothing has been proved against Elliott; he has been in gaol several weeks, and when last brought before the Court he was airily told that his case could not be tried till the 15th of November. Meanwhile he can enjoy all the privileges of cell No. 12, including vermin, and the sumptuous fare provided for convicted criminals, vagrants, and other nobodies. This is a matter in which the poor people should bustle themselves to insist upon a revision. Such a thing never happens to a rich man, and to accept it tamely as a mere necessity to law is sheer pusillanimity, disgraceful to a civilized people. Elliott may be innocent, but guilty or innocent there is no restitution to him for the long imprisonment, the suffering and ignominy he must endure whilst awaiting his trial. Let every man bring the case home to himself, and he will have a just appreciation of the true position. Certainly we do see much bragging about our freedom, and pay too little attention to our rights.

WE don't expect much from the Board appointed in accordance with Fire Law Price's demand for an investigation into his conduct in commanding his men to wade reluctantly in the gore of their fellows. Major-General Keogh, "an Imperial officer," Commander Hay, and Mr. Nicolson, M.P., form the commission of inquiry, and there is but little doubt that the preponderance of the military spirit will ensure a verdict upholding the furious Lieutenant-Colonel, and assuring the people that he only acted as an officer and a gentleman in commanding his men to lay them out without reluctance, or any display of unsoldierly sentiment.

Justice Windeyer is on the job again. Windeyer is one of the novelties of latter day justice in New South Wales. A man named Chas. Hunter was tried before him on four charges, and this is how the Age reports the result:—"Justice Windeyer recorded sentence of death against Hunter, and in the case of the second daughter he was sentenced to 14 years' penal servitude on the two first charges, and to 10 years on the third, the sentence to be concurrent." This is a gorgeous anomaly. We want to know now how Justice Windeyer intends to carry out those sentences. Would he like to have the man serve his fourteen years and his ten years, and then hang him, or would it please him best to hang the man first, and let him take out those time sentences subsequently? It seems a rational mind that there is something wrong about this thing. The legislators of New South Wales have been too lax in making their laws, or they would have provided for contingencies of this kind. As judge of an important town like His Honor, Justice Windeyer, has no scope under present arrangements. If he wants to hang a man, and then give him seventy years in iron, to be followed with three floggings of one hundred lashes each, he cannot carry out his ambitious scheme without depending on the jurisdiction of the Almighty, and following the criminal into the next world with the end. This

is manifestly unfair to the judge, and we are convinced that something ought to be done, although we are not in a position to state the manner of the reform. It is interesting to note that Hunter's sentences are to be concurrent. That's where the difficulty comes in. He may be an extraordinary man, and able to serve twenty-four years and be hung concurrently, but we have our doubts.

Mr. Allison Smith, the mechanical genius of the Victorian Railway Department, made a noble effort to obviate the effects of the great strike at the Newport workshops a short-time back. In a moment of inspiration it occurred to this brainy wonder that the nation was being hurled to ruin by the exorbitant cost of coal, and he resolved that that iniquitous thing should not be; so he set his gigantic intellect to work, and evolved a brilliant scheme for driving the whole of the machinery by wind. Mr. Smith is a man of magnificent ambitions, but, sad to say, they are never realised. He is always on the eve of inventing some complicated affair which is going to save the Government money enough to build a surplus as big as a Church; it is not his fault that these grand conceptions invariably go bang, and leave nothing behind but a lot of scrap iron, fractured cranks, and exploded boilers, besides a terrific bill, which the people graciously pay. It was so with the great man's idea for propelling the workshop mills by wind. He built up an elaborate windmill at a high price, and then, just as he expected to see the whole motive power of the world revolutionised, it was found that a unisconceived theory upset the whole arrangement, and the noble conception had to be cast away on the historical scrap heap, to fade to rust and dust, and be forgotten like a hundred more of Allison's brilliant ideas. There is a growing feeling of weariness amongst informed people regarding Mr. Smith's innovations in the domain of mechanics, and the public begins to believe that if that prolific genius intends continuing his efforts to revolutionise modern engineering he'll have to stand the racket himself, and give an impoverished Railway Department a chance to square up.

THE boatmen of Perth, Western Australia, have been having an exceedingly high old time of late, and even yet the sound of a delicious drunk asserting his superiority over all created beings and things, and expressing a desire to fight the most prominent man in the colony, may be heard through the gloom and obscurity stillness that usually surround that cosmopolitan metropolis. A barque laden with beer was wrecked near the mouth of the Swan river a short time back, and a day later barrels of tangle were discovered, floating joyously about the harbor. A wild cry of exultation went up, and presently every man who had a boat was chasing a barrel of beer about the face of the waters, or carting a glad refrain as he towed a jiggered hopped towards the shore and thought of the delicious old family drink they would have up at his house for a month to come. The unfortunate wretch who had no boat went ashore in a wash tub or a bath, or mounted a raft, and opened his shirt to catch the floating gain, or took his neighbour's front gate, and pulled madly after the dead loads of cheap beer with a butter pat, or a piling, or anything he could catch up in the moment of excited expectation. The greater part of Perth has been drunk ever since, but now everybody is called upon by law to hand over all beer recovered from the face of the hearing deep to the police or other constituted authorities. If this is done the police and other constituted authorities will very probably never be sober again.