

If the Federation hoped to impress the employers with a sense of the unity of Labour, it must by this time be conscious of the egregious blunder made. Had the men stayed at work and given a day's pay to the cause of the Federation, there would have been some sense in the proceeding. As it is, the utter futility of the day's strike has been made obvious to the workers, and has helped to discredit still further the Federation and its methods. No cause is helped by that which savours of the ridiculous.

The Sympathetic Strike.

The unfortunate part of the whole affair has been the extension of the strike beyond the limits at first contemplated. Owing to the fact that some of those who participated in the twenty-four hours' strike were not taken on again after the strike, some of the members of the Auckland General Labourers' Union went on strike as a protest against the treatment meted out to their comrades. Out of a total of 1,000 men, some 400 ceased work. As a protest, this partial strike is utterly useless. It has produced more trouble in the ranks of Labour than inconvenience to the employers. Plenty of workers have come forward to fill the places of the strikers, and the employers have stood firm against the attitude taken by the Federation. A sympathetic strike is never a very wise form of strike. It may be justified in cases where a small union is on strike and needs support from larger unions connected with the industry. But, generally, the sympathetic strike deprives the workers of financial assistance. A half-hearted sympathetic strike can only damage the cause of the workers, inasmuch as it causes dissensions in the ranks of labour, and proves the weakness of those calling the strike. The recent strikes have evoked no public sympathy, since they have been mainly actuated by the desire of one set of workers to dictate to another set of workers. The attempt to make martyrs out of the men who were sent to gaol in default of finding sureties for good behaviour has proved a miserable failure. The twenty-four hour strike by way of protest has proved a failure, and the partial strike of the general labourers has been another failure. Much needless suffering has been brought on the men and their families, and much needless loss on tradespeople and others indirectly affected.

The Trouble at Huntly.

Despite an emphatic warning, the miners at Huntly participated in the 24 hours' strike, and have met with rather serious consequences. Surface-men and some loyal workers were kept on, but for the majority the mines were closed down for a couple of days till the directors had time to consider the position and to confer with the Mineowners' Association. The decisive action adopted by the directors came as a surprise to the miners. All the members of the executive of the union were dismissed from employment, and the directors explain the reason in these terms: "In dispensing with the services of the members of the executive, the directors are not seeking to strike a blow at unionism. They recognise fully the right and desirability of the men working in a large industry being banded together officially in union, and taking united action for the benefit of members, but they do claim that the actions of the men placed at the head of such a union shall be those of law-abiding and agreement-keeping citizens, and not those of men who evidently fail to realise their honourable duties and their serious responsibility." The view was taken that the strike was a challenge to the directors, which raised the question as to whether the employer was to be left even the right to carry on his business. The dismissed executive counselled the men to return to work, but this they refused to do, awaiting action by the Federation of Labour.

The End in Sight.

It appears that the Federation declined to accept any responsibility in respect to either the Huntly trouble or the general labourers' strike at Auckland, and even went to the extent of warning the watersiders workers against holding a meeting during working time last week to consider the question of a sympathetic strike. This chilling repudiation of a course of action precipitated by the Federation made here the utter helplessness of the whole thing even to

the most blind followers, and at the time of writing the watersiders had dismissed the sympathy strike idea, the tramway-men had carried a vote overwhelmingly in favour of seceding from the Federation, and general labourers were anxious to get back to work. The Federation leaders were expected to visit Auckland, but failed to do so. Numerous secessions and internal opposition to a senseless strike policy have crippled the Federation, and the end is in sight.

"What Should Have Been."

Even the Federation must have been surprised at the bold defiance from affiliated union members, and its disappointment is voiced in the official organ, "Maoriand Worker," thus:—"The weeks' feet away and our union prisoners continue in confinement and cell—yet unionism as a whole is indifferent. It should have been so different, so tremendously different. All unionism should have been on fire. And because forty-five of their class, resisting bravely the intimidatory bludgeoning of plutocratic law, accepted gaol rather than bend their necks to the rank injustice, the Dominion should have rocked with the mass motion of working-class defiance and demand. Concerted campaigning should have spread as the whirlwind. Every trade union should have been up in arms. The Labour movement of every centre ought to have quivered with the white heat of organised protest."

Seeing the Other Side.

The difficult question of whether or not it is high treason to turn a bust of the German Emperor with its face to the wall has been settled by the sentence of four months' imprisonment passed upon Herr Schatz of Saargemund. And yet the luckless Schatz may plead that he had a certain warrant for his rash act. It may be remembered that the people of Alsace recently gave some trouble, and the Kaiser shook his mailed fist at them, metaphorically speaking, and said that Alsace might find itself incorporated with Prussia unless it learnt to behave itself. Prussians themselves, by the way, resented the implication that their kingdom was a penal establishment; but that is another story. In sending his paternal admonition to Alsace the Emperor concluded with the words that the people "had so far seen only his good side, but they might soon see another." That was enough for the enterprising Schatz. At an ensuing meeting of a French society to which he belongs, Schatz quoted these words of the Emperor and then, advancing towards an Imperial bust that was on the shelf, he remarked: "We will see the other side at once," and turned it with its face to the wall. So Schatz will stand in the corner, so to speak, with his face to the wall for the space of four months, and when he is free once more he will probably imitate the clever parrot who never talked but was "a beggar to think."

Regenerating the Race.

The First International Congress on Eugenics, which has recently concluded in London, was enthusiastic enough almost to persuade us that its members knew what they were talking about. If we would only allow them to pass a few laws they would regenerate the whole human race. But to the critical and the cynical it would appear that Eugenics is a sort of new scientific Calvinism. We have all been damned or blessed by our grandparents, and there is no appeal. From the moment of our birth we are foredoomed to criminality or saintship, and a glance at the genealogical chart will show us which it is. If any doubt still remains we all have some physical stigmata of irresistible tendencies, and if these are adverse the best thing we can do is to go away and hang ourselves, like Julius Caesar, first signing a petition to Parliament to pass some eugenic law that will effectually prevent us from ever being born again. Here and there in the babel of quackery some sane voices are raised to remind us that we know next to nothing about heredity, that it is all guesswork, and that stern fact is fatal even to the gussier.

A Voice of Sanity.

One such voice of sanity in London asked if the Eugenists would have forbidden the marriage of Marcus Aurelius. Himself the best and wisest monarch that ever lived, he was none the less the father of Commodus, who was as vile as his father was virtuous. Edward I. of

England was a pinnacle of virtue, and yet his son was a dissolute rascal, but this very son was the father of Edward III, the pattern of all knightly and chivalrous virtues. Frederick the Great, who worshipped his regiment of giant grenadiers, sought to perpetuate them by marrying them to the tallest women he could find, but their children were of only the average size. Goethe, who had an extraordinary perfection alike of mind and body, was unable to perpetuate his kind. Two generations followed him, two generations of nonentities, and then the line became extinct. Doubtless the Eugenists mean well, but they need two things for their salvation. First of all, they should study the obvious and visible facts of the world's history. Secondly, they should abandon the theory that sound minds accompany sound bodies. They do not. The world owes infinitely more to the physically weak than it does to the physically strong, and it continues to be almost a truism that genius rarely shows itself in a healthy body.

A Novel Strike.

Unlike a section of the working class which has lately been active in its hostility to law and order, a party of territorialists at the Bluff went on strike last week as a protest against the non-enforcement of the law against shirkers. Save for the circumstance that the incident is opposed to good discipline, the action of the Territorialists is somewhat refreshing in its novelty. It appears that young fellows eligible for service have not only persistently refused to attend parades, but have made themselves obnoxious by taunting to a degree of exasperation the loyal subjects anxious to do something for the good of the country. The Territorialists have declared their intention of not attending another parade until the shirkers are prosecuted.

Public Works Statement.

This Statement was laid on the table of the House of Representatives by the Minister for Public Works (Hon. W. Fraser), in whose opinion the granting to settlers of access to their holdings by means of roads should be the first consideration in any public works scheme. Naturally, he did not wish to in any way deprecate the value of railways, but equally obvious it was that to make them of any use to the settlers, they (the settlers) must be able to reach them. He also foreshadowed a policy of giving preference to roads of primary importance, instead of "doling out a few hundred pounds yearly to each of a ridiculously large number of roads, some of them of third or fourth rate importance." With regard to the credit balance at the end of the year, it amounted to £32,500, but the Minister hoped that there would be an estimated balance this time of £394,580 to be carried forward to next year. Passing on to railways, there is a decrease in the vote this year of £253, and it is hard to think that the South Island will claim that any undue favours have been shown to the North Island. The amount voted for the North Island Main Trunk is £4,000 less, and the Stratford Main Trunk £10,000 less, than last year. Both of these are notably liable to slips with their added expense. The South Island Main Trunk is reduced by £5,000, and slips are practically unknown. The Minister said there was no intention to depart from the standard 3ft 6in gauge, such gauge being found well adapted to a country where curves were very often sharp, and where in most parts high winds prevailed, and he urged the construction in suitable districts of light railways of this standard gauge. Pausing for a moment to refer to the Ruakura Experimental Farm, Mr. Fraser said that such is the increased demand for places there by pupils that it will be necessary to consider the provision of increased accommodation. Further drainage work was now being carried on at the farm, but the cost is amply repaid by the increased productivity of the soil. Tourists, and those whose health, unfortunately, renders it necessary for them to seek one or other of the reinvigorating resorts will note that a vote of £15,000 is proposed, most of which will be absorbed by the nurses' home, drainage at Waitomo House, the completion of the Mount Cook Hotel, and improvements at the other resorts under the control of the Tourist Department. In concluding a very fair statement, the Minister said that whilst owing to the state of unrest in Eastern

Europe, it would be very necessary for Cabinet to keep a finger on the Dominion's financial pulse, yet he had endeavoured, by regarding especially the pressing requirements of the several localities, to so distribute the funds at his disposal as to conduce most effectively to assist settlement throughout the Dominion.

Legislative Council Reform.

The Government's attempt to reform the Legislative Council has been frustrated. Some weeks ago a bill, providing for an elective Council, was postponed on the ground that the House and the country had not affirmed the elective principle. In a second attempt it was proposed to reduce the term of appointments between now and any alteration of the constitution of the Council, from seven to three years. This the Council has rejected by 21 votes to 13. In both decisions the Council has clearly intimated that it is not favourable to the contemplated reform. Obviously the Government will have to resort to other tactics to bring about the result desired.

Titanic Lessons.

The much abused and rightly abused Board of Trade must be given credit for having shown unwonted but very commendable promptitude in taking to heart and acting upon the lessons taught by the "Titanic" catastrophe, and the expensive inquiry which ensued thereon. This week the Board issued a new set of rules for ensuring the safety of life at sea. These rules will be laid on the table of both Houses of Parliament early in the ensuing session, and after 40 days will have statutory effect, unless shipowners and other interested parties can procure amendments to the rules or the postponement of their operations.

By the new rules sufficient life-boat accommodation for all on board must be provided on ships which make open sea voyages of any considerable length. This applies to all classes of ships making long sea voyages. The number of boats to be attached to davits is no longer to depend on tonnage or the presence of watertight bulkheads, and the davits are to be placed amidships.

Appliances or arrangements at least as effective for launching boats may be substituted for davits, and whenever the boat deck is a great height above the water, the ship may be required to carry, in lieu of or in addition to davits, some other approved form of launching apparatus.

Lifeboats must be of a prescribed build, and though existing collapsible boats will be allowed to count for a certain period, they must after the lapse of that period be replaced by lifeboats. A larger proportion of motor-boats is to be allowed. Lifeboats' equipment is to be enlarged, and every boat must carry the prescribed equipment at all times. The number of persons to be carried in each boat is to be marked on the boat, whilst life-jackets and lifebuoys are to be suitably placed and their position plainly indicated, and at least half the lifebuoys must have ignition apparatus attached.

Home trade passenger ships, including cross-Channel and excursion vessels, are placed on a different footing. By the nature of their service, the numbers they are authorised to carry are usually considerably greater in proportion to size than in the case of a foreign-going ship.

To impose the same obligations as regards lifeboat provision on these home-water vessels as on overseas liners and traders would be to demand what is practically impossible, and under the new rules buoyant apparatus—life rafts, unsinkable deck-seats and the like—are to count as part of the life-saving provision as well as lifeboats. But life-jackets for all on board must be carried in addition to any other life-saving apparatus, and not in lieu thereof.

Whilst concentrating on the material for life-saving, the Board gives some thought to other matters not much less important. They propose, for instance, that in ocean-going passenger ships a proportion of the boat hands must be efficient deck hands, that is to say, the men stand the work, and not merely stewards, pantrymen, greasers and the like, who, perhaps, have never even assisted in launching a boat at sea, and may never have handled an oar.

The Board is also preparing a Bill designed to impose compulsorily the institution of efficient wireless telegraphy installation on certain classes of ships, and taking steps to improve the arrangements existing for reporting ice and other obstructions at sea.