

ST. HELENA.

Perhaps one of the greatest incongruities that strikes the visitor to our city and its surroundings is that St. Helena, one of the most beautiful and fertile islands in Moreton Bay, should be utilised only for the purpose of a penal establishment. Except in the cost of transferring the prisoners to a main land gaol, we cannot see any valid reason for continuing to use the island for its present purpose. On the other hand, as the Home Secretary himself admits, there is great cost in the maintenance of an island prison because of the cost of transport and loss of time for officials and other travelling to and from the place,—to say nothing of inconvenience to married members of the prison staff. It is understood that the Comptroller-General of Prisons (Major A. T. Peirson) is in favour of transferring the prison to the mainland. On the point of expense, Mr. Huxham points out that at present most of the buildings on the island are in a dilapidated and dangerous condition and the cost of a new island prison would be about £120,000 as against only half that sum for the construction of a mainland prison. Though Mr. Huxham does not hold out much hope of his being able to make the change in the near future, it is something to have the Government recognising that the island has for too long been withheld from becoming what it is so manifestly fit to be,—the leading pleasure resort of the people of Brisbane. The wonderful fertility of the island would enable it to be transformed into a perfect garden. On the question of the use to which the island might be put, there is no occasion for haste. Mr. Huxham favours leasing the island to some person or company for use as a pleasure resort, for he is afraid that if the island were left to the care of the general public, it soon would be overrun with weeds. Some time ago, a deputation of boating men asked that the island should be converted into a pleasure resort, and we have not the slightest doubt that the boating men would soon rid Mr. Huxham of his fears about the weeds, and we have Green Island as a good example of what enterprise can do on a pretty island of Moreton Bay. Incidentally to the statement about the future of St. Helena, the Home Secretary spoke generally about our prison system. The public, we think, will agree with him in the view that imprisonment should be reformatory rather than punitive. In that view, Major Peirson is wholly with the Home Secretary, and, what is more to the point,—as is well known—he is zealous for putting the principle into practice with all those who are so unfortunate as to

all those who are so unfortunate as to be imprisoned in the gaols under his control. The Home Secretary's anxiety is for a site offering adequate scope for the carrying on of healthy out-door activities, such as farming, gardening, quarrying, and the like; he is a thorough believer in the open-air treatment of prisoners, and dry statistics justify his faith in that treatment as assisting greatly in the reformation of prisoners. It has been found that by healthy occupation, by implanting in prisoners the belief that the community, far from revenging itself on them, earnestly desires that they should no longer be offenders against the law, the road to reformation is opened wide, and that the favourable turn in the whole life of

an offender, many a time has come when he has been in prison subjected to an enlightened reformatory influence. In all countries where this more enlightened method of dealing with prisoners has been tried, an unmistakably great diminution in crimes and other offences against the law has been the result.

It was a bit of luck for Mr. Ryan that he was not on this side of the earth when the red flag procession and the incidents arising out of it occurred in Brisbane. He could refuse to pass an opinion on the disturbance, using the plea that he was not here. It would now be a fair justification of personal neutrality. But evidently there are still lofty souls in the world who turn upon their luck in a most inappreciative temper. They are blind to the interpositions of providence in their behalf. Mr. Ryan surely blundered when he constituted himself the legal champion of the convicted red-flaggers. Possibly he has some subtle explanation in reserve to the effect that his legal championship is the clearest and most convincing evidence that neither he nor the party he leads has any sympathy with demonstrative foreigners or ignorant Australians who seem to take delight in flouting the grand old British flag, which, to our great good fortune, is the flag of this country. But why does he, in view of more recent happenings in North Queensland and his and his colleagues' silence concerning them, unmask his batteries upon his political opponents on the unwarranted assumption that they directly or indirectly encouraged the outbreak in Melbourne? Why has he taken this course? He knows—who in Queensland does not know?—which party is the consistent upholder of law and order and to which party almost all the breakers of law and order belong. He knows which party has the vote of the revolutionary plotters and sympathisers. He knows which party contains the strikers who from time to time inflict hardships upon thous-

contains the stripes who from time to time inflict hardships upon thousands of persons quite unconnected with the industrial quarrel. But let the big case pass. Let Mr. Ryan try his clever mind upon a convincing statement which will reconcile his meagre and unsatisfying references to Townsville and Charters Towers with his swift excursion into denunciation in connection with the Melbourne happenings. His friends and foes are aware that humour is not his strong point; but, if he does not agree with them, now is his chance to overwhelm them with the fun of the thing.

The community must feel glad that arrangements have been made for the supply of food to the people in northern Queensland. Matters, indeed, had got into a most threatening state—wide starvation was not far off. Now, however, the steamer *Chillagoe* is to leave Brisbane with 1,400 tons of foodstuffs, and the Government steamer *Otter* already is on her way north with another supply. The Shipping Controller agreed to the despatch of the *Chillagoe*, conditionally on an assurance being given that the vessel would be worked at northern ports, and that bunker coal would be supplied. In making this condition, the controller was acting with ordinary prudence. If any proof of the callousness of the strike leaders were needed, it might be shown in the want of food supplies in the north, and in the distress in southern cities among non-members of the Seamen's Union. People cannot be left to starve; on the other hand, strikers cannot be allowed to use the starvation of other persons as a means of gaining their objects. The pity about the whole thing is that, even in these early days of reconstruction, good money is to be made by men in all trades. Instead of semi-starvation or thorough starvation, there might easily be plenty. The cry of "profiteering" which now seems to be raised as a last hope of justification of the strikers' action certainly does not justify starving anybody. If profiteering is so rampant, it is better for all unions to get back to work and then urge the Parliaments to deal with it in calmness but with vigour.

We wish Mr. Ryan every success in his endeavours to have Brisbane included as a regular port of call for the mail steamers of the P. and O. and the Orient companies. Brisbane always has suffered an injustice in this matter, and Queensland, as a whole, has not received from the Commonwealth Parliament that measure of fairness which the federal spirit dictates. Before the war, it was left optional to the companies whether they sent their ships hither or not. Sometimes it was said that, as soon as the volume of trade offering was big enough, the companies would send their ships to Brisbane. That was true enough, perhaps; but even in those days, a greater trade might have been done with Brisbane. Mr. Ryan intends also to make further representations regarding the making Brisbane a port of call for the San Francisco and Vancouver lines. This, again, is a matter on which Mr. Ryan can usefully keep hammering away. With the Panama Canal in use, a prospect of

must keep hammering away. With the Panama Canal in use, a prospect of getting other lines to visit Brisbane opens up; and we are hopeful enough to believe that the great impetus in trade with British dominions which is bound to be given when industrial matters settle down will considerably lighten Mr. Ryan's task in advocating the claims of the port of Brisbane. Here we have no question of party politics; it is merely a question of asserting Brisbane's just claims. Our Federal members may be relied on to support Mr. Ryan to the utmost of their ability. It remains for the State Government to show that Queensland ports are worth calling at.

Two or three months ago the London "Daily News" roughly estimated the total amount of money contributed in the United Kingdom to various war funds during the whole course of the war at £125,000,000, inclusive of £10,000,000 for war memorials. The world's greatest war, says our English contemporary, has produced the greatest philanthropic effort. This is testimony to the accord between the nation and its fighting sons. Only a prevailing belief in the righteousness of the Allies' cause could have inspired the sacrifice of the fighters, the majority of whom were volunteers, or the giving and working of the non-combatants. You cannot get up so splendid a feeling as held Great Britain for several years if the cause for which you ask the service and sacrifice is obviously and incurably evil. These millions for the fighters and the stricken do not stand by themselves. All the time that the giving and the working were going on, the tax-gatherer was taking money by hundreds of millions for the prosecution of the war. For the financial year 1913-14, the British revenue was under 200 millions; for the year 1918-19 it was 882 millions. Britain began to pay almost as soon as she began to fight, and she will continue to pay for many years to come. The 125 millions for philanthropy were an addition to an enormous sum paid in taxes. A fine example to the world. A proud heritage of duty done for the Dominions to treasure for centuries to come.