

Folk Sets Good Example In Enforcement of Law

Pool selling at the Delmar track has ceased. Governor Folk has again triumphed. He has made it clear to the public and to defiant offenders that a law can be enforced when those who have the authority to enforce it are earnest, determined and honest.

Relying on the sentiment in favor of race-track gambling, the proprietors of the Delmar track declared that Missouri's anti-pooling law could not be enforced. The same influence that had been successful for years in quieting police activity against gambling and other forms of vice were exerted to intimidate Governor Folk and his agents.

The power of the St. Louis police to make arrests outside the city limits was denied by the race-track men. They threatened to bring the county and the municipal authorities into conflict, but an injunction issued by a judge of the state supreme court frustrated this plan. When finally the police were ordered to raid the track the owners at first refused the officers admittance, but when the gates were forced the race-track employes offered no further resistance. Then the race-track men tacked up a sign which read: "This track closed. No racing until further notice." Of course, the end is not yet, but all the advantage is now on the side of law. The burden of litigation has been shifted to the bookmakers and track owners. Governor Folk holds the fort and is comfortably awaiting a siege.

It should be a source of congratulation to all good citizens that Governor Folk was not forced to use state troops. Those executives who have determined that the laws shall be enforced rigidly ought to shun as much as possible all show of military power. Public opinion will go far with them if they exhaust every other legal means of enforcing the law before summoning troops. They will place themselves in favorable contrast to those autocratic governors who have employed state troops on the slightest pretexts to intimidate workingmen. The public will not soon forget how the militia of Colorado was bought and paid for by a capitalist faction, and how this anarchistic act resulted in disorders of the most dreadful kind. The events which have followed in quick succession have brought down upon the government of that state the execration of all who love liberty.

In their struggle for better political conditions the reform governors will be guided by the highest wisdom if they renounce all forms of imperialism. But this does not mean that they shall never employ the military arm. It merely means that they shall be as careful to comply with the law governing the use of state troops as the autocratic executives of the past have been eager to misinterpret both law and fact in order to employ the military power against the people.

Governor Folk's triumphs in Missouri have more than a local significance. They are creating throughout the country respect for the law. They are teaching that the right enforcement of law has the power to chastise those who hitherto have held themselves immune from punishment, and, better than all else, they are giving the people a faith in the law which they have lacked and which was lacking because executives feared to assail entrenched and embattled lawlessness.

LAUGHABLE RAILWAY LOGIC

The Omaha branch of the railway literary propaganda, which has been flooding Nebraska newspaper offices with "free" arguments, has been investigating the rate schedule of the Newberry law and has discovered that the rate on potatoes is higher in this schedule than the rate now charged by the railroads. The delighted bureaucrat then points out with facile and trenchant pen the possibilities for the Nebraska potato "if its cultivation is undertaken more largely." The writer concludes his argument by saying that "if this were to be the effect of state-made rates, the contention by the opponents of the Esch-Townsend bill that government-made rates would work hardship to the agriculturists of the west, may be worthy of consideration.

Are the Nebraska railways opposed to the enforcement of the maximum freight rate law because it would permit them to charge a higher rate on potatoes than they are now charging? Or is it because as a general rule the Newberry law, if enforced, would cut the present railway rates from fifteen to twenty per cent?

The fact that the railways find it perfectly feasible to charge a lower rate on potatoes than the Newberry rate, shows the justice of The Independent's contention that even though the maximum law

schedule would have been confiscatory in 1894, 1895, 1896 or 1897, changed conditions have made that schedule right and proper at this time. The rate on potatoes and perhaps on a few other commodities may be too high in the Newberry schedule, but this merely indicates that the general level of rates provided by this schedule would not be unjust to the railways.

The bureaucratic sophist ignores the fact that the Newberry law made provision against an unchangeable schedule. It fixed a maximum rate, but expressly provided that rates could be lowered if found to be too high. To lower such rates was to be the duty of the state board of transportation, which the railways destroyed. But the non-existence of that board would be no legal bar to the lowering of rates from the figures fixed by the maximum rate schedule. All provisions of this law could be placed in full force and effect if the attorney general would do his duty by taking steps to remove the supreme court's injunction.

WANTED—A POET-STATESMAN

Marquis Ito chanting an original poem in honor of the Americans at Tokyo must have presented an inspiring sight. The world will never know its loss in that Secretary Taft was unable to "get back at" the marquis with a little original versification. John Hay, who was a poet as well as a statesman—some say a better poet than statesman—is gone, and Taft is a poor substitute.

When next the occasion arises to send a special envoy to "jolly" the Japs the president should advertise for a poet and statesman. The president himself is an author and statesman, but this does not quite fill the requirements of modern diplomacy. Perhaps it would be well for the president to establish a night school and set his cabinet members to scribbling verses with "Little Breeches" and "Jim Bludsoe" as models. England could "get back at" the marquis with a vengeance by unleashing Alfred Austin, granting that Rudyard Kipling did not hastily seize the lyre and slash out an imperialistic strain, "Lest We Forget." In this humiliating quandary the president will perhaps be compelled to call upon Richard Watson Gilder, the poet laureate of the Cleveland administration, to construct a fitting metrical response to the good, gray, if somewhat hairless, poet and statesman of Nippon.

MORAL PHASE OF REFORM MOVEMENT

One phase of the present reform movement is attracting a large share of attention in the press. It might be called the moral phase of the economic evolution now in progress. Alongside the agitation against the railways and trusts, against special privileges for the few and against corruption in public office, is to be found a growing agitation against vice. At first glance the observer is apt to consider this trend as having no connection with the political movement, but in fact it arises from the same awakening of public conscience.

Governor Folk, of Missouri, is striving to suppress race-track betting; Governor Hoch, of Kansas, is demanding the enforcement of the prohibitory law, while Indiana's executive has declared war on vice in the cities whose police are under the supervision of commissioners appointed by him. Renewed efforts are being made in numerous municipalities, large and small, to regulate the saloon, to stop gambling and drive out of existence the joints and dives. In several states a law against cigarettes has been added to those laws which deal with the habits of the individual.

While the moral sense of the people has something to do with this regenerative movement, its primary cause is a general recognition of the fact that the punishment of crime is no adequate check to personal or public wrongdoing. It is a realization of the truth contained in the old adage that "it is useless to close the stable door after the horse has been stolen." Those who have joined in this moral revival argue that unless the young men and women of the nation can be protected from the tainted atmosphere of vice it is useless to be constantly carping about good citizenship. Unless the purity of the home can be preserved purity in public life is impossible.

The reformer, however, can go even deeper in search of the causes that have led to the present carnival of corruption. A nation in which material ideals have to a large extent replaced spiritual ideals is bound to suffer from public corruption sooner or later. What these material ideals are all good citizens are beginning to understand. The single word "selfishness" will probably express the idea better than any other. It was this demon of selfishness in the British people that the great novelist, Charles Dickens, strove to overthrow, and the work he did in behalf of his people was matchless and priceless. We, too, have had our altruistic preachers and teachers who have nobly inculcated the doctrine of love contained in the