

DEMAND FOR ABOLITION OF DEATH PENALTY ON HEELS OF "LEGAL MURDER" IN VERMONT

Windsor, Vt., Jan. 6.—"The People of Vermont versus the State of Vermont. Murder.

"That, on or about the fifth day of January, 1912, the State of Vermont did murder, or cause to be murdered, Elroy Kent, a man of unsound mind.

"The People of Vermont versus the Governor of Vermont. Complicity in the murder of Elroy Kent."

These two forms of indictment express the feelings of the people of Vermont today.

Yesterday afternoon, in the bleak jail yard of Windsor, Elroy Kent, 36 years old, was hanged.

The execution was held in secret. Only the sheriff, his deputies and the twelve legal witnesses, were present. Not the slightest hint that the hanging was about to take place was allowed to leak out.

Why?

Because Elroy Kent was a mental delinquent, an idiot, and ever since the day when a jury of farmers, in the face of incontrovertible evidence that Kent had been unable to distinguish right from wrong since the days of his childhood, found his guilty of murder in the first degree, there has been a storm of protests against what the people of Vermont do not hesitate to call legal murder.

But in spite of the protests and petitions that flooded the governor's mail, and in face of the feeling that swept the country when, in 1905, Mary M. Rogers

was done to death in this same bleak jail yard, Elroy Kent was hanged yesterday.

Kent was 36 years old. When only 7 he was arrested and sent to jail for a minor offense. Since then he had been in prison or the state asylum for the insane 30 times.

July 24, 1908, Kent killed Delia B. Congdon at East Wallingford.

At his trial physicians testified that he was mentally incompetent, and had been so almost from birth.

Yet the jury found him guilty, and the court sentenced him to die.

He was not a Harry Thaw, rich and degenerate. He was just a poor idiot, without money and with few friends.

Governor Bell refused to heed the petitions, and yesterday, the idiot was hanged.

The sheriff refused to give the details of the execution. But they have leaked out. They are unspeakable. They parallel the horrors that accompanied the hanging of Mary Rogers in 1905.

The rope with which Mary Rogers was hanged was too long. And when the drop was sprung, the woman's feet touched the ground.

The sheriff and his deputies climbed upon the scaffold, and drew up the rope.

Finally she was let down. But the doctors pronounced her not dead, and the grisly performance was gone through again.