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FRANK E. HOWE, Editor and Pub.

BENNINGTON, VT., APRIL 20, 1914

William D. Haywood told his audience in New York last night that, in case this country resents the insults thrown at us by Mexico and consulates that country, union labor in this country would rebel and stop business. Haywood is, of course, being as usual, but the government should take prompt steps to put him where he belongs—at work under guard in a federal penitentiary. There is too much temporizing in these days with his kind of traitors. The danger is that every little white tie influence some weak-minded enthusiast or some unbalanced demagogue to crime and assassination, just as they last week stirred up a half insane old man to try to kill Mayor Mitchell of New York. The only way the world ever improves is through the improvement of the average. The two great dangers are the excesses of the rich and unrighteous and the excesses of the ignorant and depraved. To the second of these groups Haywood chiefly appeals, though a good many idealistic people are led astray by his false doctrine, which has over and over again proved a delusion and a snare during the history of civilization.

It is the contention of the Burlington contemporary (The Free Press) that there is no more certainty in Vermont than in New York that an extra session called for the purpose of enacting a law providing for direct nominations would result in the accomplishment of that purpose. * * * Would any pledge the members of the present legislature might give of willingness to support such a direct primary bill, as the Free Press proposes, be any more binding on those members than were the pledges in their party platforms they ignored and flouted? Once assembled in special session under an implied provision to enact a law that would provide for direct nominations what guarantee or certainty would there be that they would redeem that promise? If they craftily avoided the redemption of party pledges heretofore is it to be supposed they will now be more loyal in the observance of a promise informally made the people?—Montpelier Journal.

We do not believe that the Journal and the Free Press realize quite where their argument is taking them on this subject. We all know that the New York legislature is notoriously corrupt and often under vicious control outside its own membership. The Vermont legislature may sometimes be incompetent but it is not corrupt as anybody who is in any degree familiar with it knows. We do not believe it fair to the Vermont legislature to compare it with that of New York. Before the Free Press and Journal which seem to be working together in this case go further along this line they should look over the records and see if Vermonters have not always pretty liberally accepted the mandate of a popular majority. The talk about platforms "ignored and flouted" is merely silly in this application for both the Journal and Free Press know or ought to know that a majority of the members of the Vermont House of Representatives are not chosen on any party platform and therefore not bound by one. There is every reason to believe that the present Vermont legislature would promptly and fairly enact a creditable primary law. Any intimation that it would not we consider an unjust reflection on the honesty and patriotism of a group of representative Vermont citizens.

Printers a Good Lot

Considerable notice was recently given by the press, that among the 1,500 inmates confined in the State Penitentiary at Joliet, Ill., not a printer wore a cell number. This information came to light when it was desired to publish a prison paper. The same article goes on to say that "it was necessary to suspend the publication of a prison paper in an Ohio Penitentiary because of the absence of printers, although there were found to be 50 bankers behind the bars." Do not the above findings hit the theory square in the slats, that all printers are a bad lot? Too often the printer is looked down upon when in reality his calling is of the highest. Forget to associate the word "tramp" with printer for few there are today that hit the ties.—Springfield Reporter.

Dumping Criminals on Other Communities

Every good citizen should protest against the rapidly growing custom of suspending punishment or dropping a prosecution on condition that the accused leave the community. The Rutland incident where an of-

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ender's sentence of two to five years in the House of Correction and six months at Waterbury for a serious charge is to be carried out if he is seen in Rutland within five years is often duplicated in Vermont. Cowardice and shiftlessness in assuming duties in even more reprehensible in communities than in individuals. One who cleans his back yard by throwing his dead cats over the fence onto his neighbor's land is doing in a small way what a community does in dumping its criminals onto another.—The Advance.

Newspaper Men Should Keep Out of Politics

We are not acquainted with Editor Towne of the Franklin, N. H. Journal-Transcript, but we admire his attitude toward public office. Many of the papers of his state have been naming him as a desirable man for the governorship, but he states in his own editorial column: "I have no objection to 'being mentioned,' but the editor would not accept the nomination if it was unanimously handed him by all the political parties on a gold salver." Mr. Towne is everlastingly right. The place for a newspaper man is in his own office. His ambition should be centered in his newspaper, and not toward political, financial or other affairs which are likely to develop entanglements which give a bias to his expression of opinion.—Bottleboro Reporter.

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Not Much of a Defense

In the course of an editorial in which The Messenger is taken strenuously to task for some criticisms this paper has felt compelled to make of certain of Governor Fletcher's official acts. The Bennington Banner, edited by Lieut. Gov. Frank E. Howe, who is also a member of the state board of appeals, goes into a somewhat interesting phase of the political life of His Excellency. The contemporary points out that when Mr. Fletcher was on the stump seeking election, he "took the ground that if he was governor he would try to see that the big public service corporations were served no better than individuals", and The Banner finds that the governor has done just as he promised he would because, "for the first time in a generation, Vermont has a governor who is insisting that the corporations bear the same share of the tax burden as other folks and get no special favor." The Banner states that for the past thirty years the railroads have either paid no tax at all or have paid less than half of what individuals have paid and "the tax history of other big public service corporations is about the same up to the past two years. They hate to meet their burden as the rank and file of the people meet them." The Banner finds the cause of the opposition to Governor Fletcher in the fact that he is compelling the big corporations to pay more taxes. Naturally, very naturally, The Montpelier Journal agrees fully with The Banner and goes on to say: "The campaign of misrepresentation and abuse waged against the executive is based upon the fact that he has courageously refused his pledge to secure equal justice for the people against the big corporations, which, until he assumed the gubernatorial chair, had escaped a large share of the tax burdens that properly belonged to them."

These statements having been made by Governor Fletcher's zealous defenders, it is proper to examine them and to see to just what logical conclusions they will lead. The Banner refers to the railroad taxation matter. Good. It will be remembered that an appeal was taken from the valuation of the railroad properties as made by the state commissioner of taxes because the state did not consider the figures high enough. This appeal surely was in line with Governor Fletcher's campaign promises as set forth by The Banner. At that time opposition to an increase of taxation was based on economic grounds, but the taxes were increased, although not up to the figures the state asked for.

Next comes the telephone appraisal. A valuation was made according to law by the tax commissioner for the purposes of taxation. Again an appeal was taken, as in the railroad case. Now, then, arguing on the basis of the defense put up for the governor by the two contemporaries, namely that the executive believed that the public service corporations have not been paying taxes enough in the past, it seems a reasonable and just inference that the appeal was taken to increase the telephone taxes. This would be in line with the governor's speeches and in line with his action as regards the railroads.

But a disturbing element now enters in which upsets logical deductions. The public service commission, having made an appraisal of the valuation of the telephone properties upon which it felt justified in ordering a reduction of rates, it appeared that which the tax commissioner had made and from which an appeal had been taken by the state presumably, and fairly so, on the ground that it was not high enough and was letting the companies off too easily, as the governor had said the big corporations had been let off in the past to the injustice of the general tax-paying public. The public service commission's appraisal was also below the valuation to which the companies confessed and on which they were willing to pay their taxes. The difference amounted to several hundred thousands of dollars.

The governor, apparently, was at once placed in a most peculiar position by these developments. On the one hand he had declared, according to his present defenders, that the companies had not been carrying their just share of the tax burden. On the other hand he had expressed the belief that the rates charged by the telephone companies were excessive. But, if the valuation as set forth by either the companies themselves, or by the state tax commissioner were taken as a basis there could be no such reduction as the commission ordered and still permit the companies to make the profit to which they are legally entitled.

The governor then stood as the target for one or the other of his very own guns. Either his contention that the companies were not taxed enough, or his belief that the companies were charging excessive rates was wrong. Both could not be right. The unusual position was presented of the state offering one valuation for the purpose of taxation (and from this an appeal was taken by the state presumably) while the state submitted another and much lower valuation for the purpose of making rates. Something had to be done to correct this glaring inconsistency which revealed a startling weakness

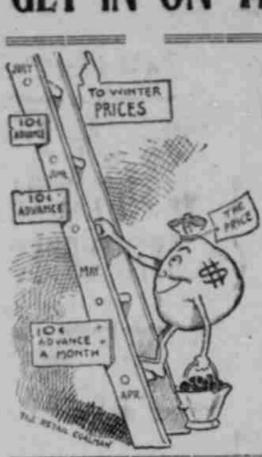
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In at least one branch of the government, if not in both. The governor cut the Gordian knot himself and asked the state board of appeals, of which the editor of The Banner is a member, to drop the appeal, to drop the tax commissioner's valuation and to accept as correct the valuation arrived at by the public service commission, which was several hundreds of thousands of dollars below what the state itself had set in the first instance for taxation purposes, and below the figures to which the companies themselves confessed and expected to pay taxes upon.

Governor Fletcher, then, makes the choice of receiving less taxes from the companies instead of insisting on more. Yet The Banner and The Journal hasten to his defense on the ground that he is bringing the public service corporations to task and making them bear their full share of the tax burden, a fuller share than they have ever borne in right to bear. Has he done all this instance? How in the world can these two papers make a defense on this score when, instead of increasing the taxes, the governor would lower them below a point which the companies confess they ought to pay? Consider the actual facts revealing Mr. Fletcher in his role of trying to save the corporations from themselves, and consider these facts further in connection with the defense which the contemporaries try to build up around him as a fearless strapper with corporation monsters. What becomes of the bold statements The Messenger has quoted from the contemporaries? "To get after them requires nerve and Governor Fletcher has shown nerve," says The Banner. Apparently he got after them and, catching up, would make them a present of some tax money to which they confess they are not entitled. Where is the consistency?—St. Albans Messenger.

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