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WEDNESDAY, - - AUGUST 7, 1895

ENFORCEMENT OF LAW IN NEW YORK.

New York city is having a novel experience in the enforcement of the laws enacted for its government. Mr. Theodore Roosevelt is distinguishing himself as president of the police commission, in a way unexpected by everybody and startling to the violator of law. Better that the present city administration should be turned out because it enforced the law than that it succeed in violating them.

He is undertaking the enforcement of the law not because the law is especially in harmony with his private views, but because he is sworn to enforce the law. Such a man has the requisite qualifications of a ruler; and New York city is a splendid opportunity for the exhibition of his excellent qualifications. His idea is that if the people do not desire the enforcement of the laws they have enacted, they should repeal them or dispense with his services.

The lesson, which New York is now learning, is one which the people of the United States everywhere need to learn; governments, and particularly city governments, are wont to enact laws which are enacted to appease enthusiasts, but are not intended to be enforced; this custom has become so general that statute books and ordinance records are disregarded and so entirely overlooked by executive officers sworn to enforce them, that their existence is unknown to the public generally; or if known are looked upon with contempt. The habit has a tendency to bring all law into contempt; the violation of one statute with impunity tempts the offender to the violation of others, and leaves very uncertain where the line between right and wrong lies; in other words, it leaves the fixing of that line to the officers; this in turn results, as in New York city to a very great extent and in other cities to a less extent, in the system of blackmail under which crime thieves and police officers become rich.

Mr. Roosevelt believes that it is his duty to enforce the laws as he finds them; the result will be, no doubt, that many impracticable laws will be repealed, others will be amended to conform to the real necessities of good government and the welfare of the people and, if Mr. Roosevelt is continued in office, New York city will be the best, instead as heretofore, the worst governed city in America. The controversy there now is not whether saloons shall be closed on Sunday or remain open, but whether the law shall remain a law or shall be abrogated by officers sworn to uphold it.

The enforcement of the laws of Oregon on the same theory as that adopted by Mr. Roosevelt in New York, would astonish many, but it would be most salutary in its ultimate effect. We suggest that some of our state and county officers try the experiment; they would at least cause the next legislature to do some beneficial repealing.

OUR SECRETARY OF STATE.

Mr. Kincaid was nominated and elected upon representations that he would correct many of the abuses which have crept into the administration of the office for which he was a candidate. He claimed and was represented by his friends to be an economist, a man of integrity and of good judgment. We will not accuse him of obtaining money under false pretenses, but we are free to criticize his administration. His first work after entering his office was to examine the fee law and ascertain where a possible addition to his income could be made; among other improvements in this line, as we are informed, he claimed the right to charge \$2 for attaching the seal of the state to a state deed, although the law provides that upon payment of \$1.25 for the land and the fulfillment of certain provisions of the law the purchaser shall be entitled to a deed; heretofore the deed has been delivered upon fulfilling the conditions, but now the purchaser must pay Mr. Kincaid \$2 or go without a deed. Mr. Kincaid has pronounced himself a greater constitutional lawyer than the attorney-general, has ignored the latter's advice, employed other counsel and carried to the supreme court the question as to the right of the railroad commissioners to their pay, and the supreme court on Monday rebuked his pretended wisdom and commanded him to draw warrants for the salaries as provided by the legislature. The constitution of the state provides that the secretary of state shall receive no emol-

uments other than his salary, but every dollar of fees earned by the office we understand, are claimed by this economist as his own.

From his own standpoint he is doing well; he is there for what there is in it, and there is a whole lot in it; but this is his last harvest from the state's domain, and we suppose he believes that a short crop with a big price is better than a long crop at the constitutional rate.

The formation in Portland of a club called the Oregon Road Club is a recognition of the very important place good highways of travel hold in the progress of a state. Undoubtedly the zeal for cycling is at the bottom of the agitation and furnishes the chief incentive. Unlike the patient horse, which goes when the master drives, the bicycle rebels at rough roads and in silent stubbornness compels their betterment; in this way they are a advantageous to a community. The new club can be of great service in gathering information as to the best way of building roads and keeping them in good repair when once constructed. The field in Oregon is a large one and there is abundant opportunity for the exercise of much labor and enthusiasm, but when once people have come to realize how great a comfort good roads are and from a business standpoint how wise an investment, the desire and demand will make their building and continuance a thing of easy moment.

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 aug7-d2t

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 aug1

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 jly181m

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