

time to deepen the note of contempt in the outer world's comments upon our methods in South Africa.

#### PLENTY OF LAW ALREADY.

Probably no great harm will come from the vast amount of ignorant and foolish talk now indulged in by many people who ought to know better in regard to new penalties for anarchists.

The fact that even lawyers in all parts of the country are quoted in favor of defining an attack upon the president as treason; that other lawyers urge military trials; that congressmen and others who should be better informed propose that an *ex post facto* law should be passed covering Czolgosz's case, and the further fact that there is much clamor for immediate action by congress in various directions, all go to show that there is vast public ignorance of the law and the constitution, to say nothing of the nature of our government.

The constitution of the United States defines treason against the United States as levying war against them or in adhering to their enemies or in giving the latter aid and comfort. It also provides that no *ex post facto* law should be passed. Elsewhere it is written that cruel and unusual punishments shall not be inflicted.

There are laws enough in the United States and in every state to punish adequately every attempt against the life of any American citizen, from the highest to the humblest. The only thing that is necessary in the case of Czolgosz is that he shall be indicted, tried, convicted and punished for the crime which he committed. For all this the laws of the state of New York, and of all states, are adequate, except as to the matter of intent.

In his sober moments no intelligent citizen of the United States would undertake to open the way, even by a constitutional amendment, which would be necessary to that end, for wholesale prosecutions on the charge of treason. The history of the race shows the wisdom of the founders of this government in strictly defining the crime of treason.

It has been held for many years that our criminal laws are defective in respect to the punishment to be inflicted upon a man intent upon murder who may not accomplish his purpose. A great deal is to be said in favor of the proposition that an assassin who proceeds to his murderous business with deliberation, and who fails of his object through some fault not his own,

should receive the same penalties that would be inflicted in case death resulted by his act. If the attempt upon the life of the president shall happily prove unsuccessful the fact may induce many of the states to change their laws in this respect.

Deliberate intent to commit murder, whether the victim be the president of the United States or the humblest citizen, should be punished much more severely than it is. No other change in our laws appears to be necessary.—Editorial in Chicago Chronicle of September 11.

#### WHAT MAYOR JOHNSON WANTS.

Some time ago the La Crosse Press asked Mayor Tom L. Johnson, of Cleveland, O., to write for it a statement of what he expected to accomplish, through the county auditors of that state, in the direction of compelling the railroad companies to pay their fair share of the taxes. Mr. Johnson replied:

Answering your inquiry as to what I hoped to accomplish by appearing before the county auditors, and as to what I did accomplish, I will say that I hoped to arouse the taxpayers to a realization of the fact that the railroads of the state were not paying their just share of the taxes, and think I did. I presented indisputable evidence that railroad property was being appraised for them at 5 to 18 per cent. of its true value in money, while other property—I refer particularly to residence and farm property—was appraised at from 60 to 100 per cent.—in some instances even more than 100 per cent.

I did not expect to persuade the county auditors to appraise railroad property as the constitution of the state and their oaths of office required them to do, for I knew they were dominated by the powerful influences of the railway corporations. The conduct of the auditors from start to finish was a corroboration of this fact. I pointed out that the returns made by the railroads were incomplete and dishonest, and I pleaded with them to call in the officials of these roads, as the law says they may do, and put them under oath for the purpose of examining them as to the correctness of the returns. This they refused to do.

Most, if not all, the auditors rode on passes issued by the roads, to assess which they were gathered together, and in many instances the auditors conferred with the officials of the railroads before assembling. Comment on these facts is almost unnecessary. They were shown up by reports made by the city detectives, who were put on the trails of the auditors, and by the admissions which we forced from the auditors themselves. No one will deny that an auditor who accepts a pass from a railway corporation is morally incompetent to make an honest appraisal of that company's property for taxation; particularly is that true when the railroads maintain expensive and powerful lobbies in the legislature to prevent the enactment of laws that will put their property, for tax purposes, on the same basis as other prop-

erty in the state, and by judicious distribution of favors corrupt our public officials—even judges on the bench. The proceedings of these meetings, through the columns of the daily newspapers, were brought forcibly to the minds of the people.

A steam railroad is worth just what it will sell for, the same as any other property. It will sell for just what its stocks and bonds will bring in the open market. The law says that all property shall be assessed for its true value in money, but county auditors have made an arbitrary rule that all property shall be placed on the duplicate for 60 per cent. of its true value in money—all property except steam railroads and other public service corporations. By some means which we could not learn, and the auditors themselves could not explain, they assessed railroad property on a different basis. If you remember, I asked our own auditor, Mr. Craig, to tell me what method was employed, and he answered: "I don't know that we have any, and how we do arrive at the value I don't know." As a matter of fact, he couldn't nor could any of his colleagues. There was no method. They simply guessed—guessed away thousands of dollars of the people's money. It wouldn't have been worse had they broken open and looted the counties' strong boxes.

The railroads in Ohio to-day are dishonestly escaping payment on over \$500,000,000 worth of property. Will the people permit this? They will not in my opinion. I offer the prediction that from the disclosures made from these meetings there will grow a sentiment that will sweep Ohio from end to end and overwhelm these men with shame and disgrace. Had the railroads yielded even a little they would have made the harder the work which is to come. We will go into the courts to set aside this dishonest appraisal, and we will go before the state board at Columbus and demand that all railroad property be raised to the same plane as other taxable property. If justice is denied us there we will appeal to the higher courts.

The grand and final battle will come when the people become aroused. The people are not easily stirred up, but when they are, something must give way. They are beginning to see the outrageous injustice in the present inequitable valuation of taxable property, and when the proper time comes they will rise up and demand that there be a change, and, in my opinion, there will be a change and that soon. The men elected to carry out the laws will do it honestly and with partiality to none, or the people will sweep them from their high places into the jails and penitentiaries or the eternal oblivion of private life.

What Mayor Johnson is endeavoring to accomplish in Ohio needs also to be accomplished in Iowa, for here as there officials whose pockets are filled with corporation favors discriminate in favor of railroad property by taxing it at one-tenth while taxing other property at one-fourth of its value, thus compelling the many to pay more than they would if values were assessed as the law of the state and justice require. In the Hawkeye as in the Buckeye state equality of taxation will be the leading issue of this year's campaign.—Dubuque Telegraph.