

## HE WAS ONCE A TRAMP HIMSELF

The Reason Lewelling Gives for Promulgating His Now Famous Proclamation Regarding Vagrants.

TOPEKA, KAS., Dec. 5.—[Special.] Governor Lewelling was besieged by correspondents this morning, who pressed him for an explanation of the peculiar circular issued from the executive department yesterday directing the boards of police commissioners in all the first class cities of Kansas to ignore the law hereafter under which tramps have been arrested and thrown into jail for no other offense than tramping or being without visible means of support.

The governor protests that the circular referred to was not issued for the purpose of catching votes, or to array the poor against the rich, but because he believed it to be a simple act of justice to an unfortunate class.

In the course of a conversation with a JOURNAL correspondent to-day the governor said: "I had been thinking about the executive circular on this subject for some time, so that it was no sudden inspiration. There is no demagoguery or anarchy in it, unless the partisan newspapers choose to take that view of it. I had no consultation about it with anybody, except that several police judges had spoken to me about the flimsy charges upon which some of the so-called tramps were arrested. Judge Babb, of Wichita, has several times indicated to me that the law was unjustly applied, and my own observation confirmed his statements.

"I am not in sympathy with lawbreakers, but I told that we have no right to interfere with an unfortunate citizen who is compelled by force of circumstances to tramp about the country, or arrest him before he has committed some overt act against society. I was a tramp once myself—in Chicago in 1865. I found myself penniless, with no place to sleep; I walked the streets all night, but found a job next day shoveling dirt on a railroad, and was glad to get it. I did not consider myself a thief or vagabond because I was out of employment, and had I been arrested I should have felt that my country or the law of the land was doing me an outrage.

"The extreme meaning of my suggestion to the police commissioners is that the arrest and imprisonment of tramps before they have transgressed any law shall be discontinued. If the effect shall be to encourage the professional tramps to come here in large numbers we have ample protection in law whenever they commit any offense to justify an arrest, but I do not believe in or uphold the practice of taking a poor wayfarer to jail whose only crime is that he has no employment and cannot find any, and in the meantime is forced to spend a night in a box car or a railroad yard."