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EDITORIAL

AWAY WITH THE FLINTS!

By DANIEL DE LEON

IS it cause for congratulation or for condolence that Senator Frank Putnam Flint of California announces his determination not to return to the Federal Senate when his term expires, on the ground of his being too poor a man for that chamber?

Some are saying the Senator's decision is cause for condolence. Such people reason that the Senate ought not to be a rich man's club, and, therefore, Senator Flint should stay there, and keep up the old theory.

Wiser folks are congratulating themselves.

Poverty is not in and of itself a badge of desirability. A poor man, with a vulture's eye to "perceive" and ready claws to "seize" the opportunity to "get there," is a more dangerous man than he who "is there." He who already "is there," of course, shows that he had the vulture eye and claws; and that he used them. It is also quite sure that he will want more. But, then, no one will be, or can be, or should be imposed upon by him. What he is he shows. Not so with the "poor Senator."

The poor Senator may be easily mistaken for a "friend of the people." His poverty may easily serve as the down to cover and conceal the claw. In nine cases out of ten, aye, in nine hundred and ninety-nine out of a thousand, if not in all the thousand, the poor Senator will speculate on his poverty, and turn it into assets more profitable than there are at the disposal of his colleagues who "got there" before him. What the labor-fakir is to the unalert rank and file of the workers, that the poor Senator may and probably will be to the unalert of the people. What the capitalist could not think of doing, himself, he accomplishes through his fakir labor-lieutenant; what the plutocrat could not do, himself, or even through a rich Senator, he may easily, smoothly bring about through the channel of the poor Senator, whose

very poverty would render unsuspecting. It may be even worse. The Senator who has already “got there” may have acquired habits of indolence. It may take too much of an “inducement” to move him: the Senator not yet “there” is likely to be alacritous.

By all means let Senator Flint withdraw. If there be others, would they but also go. If honest, they belong to an old era. Their presence in the Senate only confuses things. The law of social evolution excludes the notion of the Senate’s evolving back to what it once was. The law of social evolution demands and is promoted by the ulcer’s coming to a head, ready to be lanced.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.
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