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EDITORIAL

PATH-FINDER FLAGLER.

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J [OHN H. FLAGLER](#), the head and front of the offending, known as the tube-making, end of the United States Steel Corporation, deserves credit as a “path-finder” for his class.

Mr. Flagler availed himself of the opportunity of a dinner tendered to him by his employes in McKeesport, Pa., to advance certain theories that are of peculiar interest in these days of universal unrest.

Mr. Flagler denounced the politicians. He spoke as one who knew from long experience. His experience with politicians was particularly in connection with the tariff. The tariff, Flagler found out, was manipulated by the politicians. These were Democrats and Republicans alike. The only thing they had in common was ignorance. The tariff was the joint product of their joint ignorance, seasoned by their status of politician.

It is the earmark of the practical man that he does not gather facts for the gathering’s sake, like some old curiosity shopman. The practical man gathers facts to enable him to draw a conclusion. Flagler draws.

The conclusion of Mr. Flagler is that “the tariff should be removed entirely from politics.”—A pregnant conclusion.

Occasionally one hears in capitalist legislative halls the opinion that this or that measure should not be determined by political considerations; that it should be determined by high ethical principles. The opinion, though a confession of the low level on which “politics” moves, does not repudiate the politician. It but summons him to rise above himself. It proceeds from the principle “the politician you will always have with you.” Tube-making end of the Steel Trust Flagler’s conclusion goes far beyond that: It amounts to a drastic revolution—nothing less drastic than the wiping out of the politician altogether, in so far as a tariff is concerned,—to begin with.

If tariff-making is to continue (Flagler says it shall); and if tariff-making is to be taken out of the hands of the politician (Flagler says it must); what else can the conclusion be but that that part of legislation—formerly falling within the province of the politician,—shall be taken from the politician and vested in—whom?—and vested in the Flagler class.

If tariff-making, why not also other branches of legislation? The tube-making end of the capitalist class evidently proposes a measure that shall be the entering wedge for others of kindred nature.

This is path-finding with a vengeance, and a very clean-cut path at that, Mr. Flagler would cut through the jungle. Already the direct capitalists' nomination scheme is cutting down the "political boss" in one State after another. The tube-making end of the capitalist class is sharpening, it would seem, the woodman's axe to cut down the product of the "political boss" itself, the politician—and leave legislation entirely and directly to be enacted in the private office of His Serene Highness the Capitalist, thus avoiding the present expensive and never wholly safe farce of elections.

John H. Flagler is a genius among path-finders.

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

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