

EDITORIAL

LA FOLLETTE WHERE THE ROAD FORKS.

By DANIEL DE LEON

ROBERT Marion La Follette has said many remarkable things since his incumbency as a Senator. His analysis of the banking situation, about two years ago, was luminous; his arraignment of the railroads has been pungent; his castigation of the courts raised well-merited welts; his exposure of plutocratic methods to corrupt the Senate has the shivers down the spine of two of his colleagues and placed several others on the anxious seat.

All this, and many more acts of the Senator, marked him a man of strong mind, keen penetration, and also boldness. All this justified the belief that, if the Senator would only broaden the sphere of his economic and sociologic studies, he might raise himself by his own boot-straps out of his own class interests, and rise to the elevation of Socialism. Nevertheless none of the Senator's acts and utterances was above that of a talented bourgeois who might at any time cast anchor and move no more, either forward, nor yet backward.

Senator La Follette's late Cincinnati speech was, however, an utterance of different stamp. The speech may be judged by this one sentence: "It is strange that when the court goes to its furthest limit in imposing penalties on combinations of capital, all of the capitalist owners get away with the full value of their property, but when the court goes to the same limit in enforcing penalties on combinations of labor it takes away the homes and savings of the workman."

The man who reaches that point has reached the point where the road forks, and beyond which he is forced to go. There is no stopping there. Either he must take the fork that leads to Socialism, or he takes the fork that leads to reaction, away back reaction.

Is La Follette to come out for Socialism? Or does his kinship with Roosevelt Insurgentism indicate, as his Carnegie Hall speech this week would seem to indicate,

that the Senator is to travel the backward road of the whoopers-up for a Catilnarian Caesarism?

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official website of the Socialist Labor Party of America.
Uploaded December 2012

slpns@slp.org