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EDITORIAL

## THE “APPEAL TO REASON’S” STRAW-VOTE.

By DANIEL DE LEON

**A**S appears from an article in the Chicago *Inter-Ocean* of the 3rd of the last month, reproduced elsewhere in this issue,<sup>1</sup> the Chicago publication, evidently a Taft stand-pattist, turns against Roosevelt in humorous style a straw-vote taken by the *Appeal to Reason* among its readers on the presidential question.

The *Inter-Ocean* may laugh; the *Inter-Ocean* may make merry over the figures, and use them as the basis for humorous dialectics at the expense of Roosevelt. We can not blame the paper. As for us, the figures rather call for moans and groans.

The figures, cited from the *Appeal to Reason’s* straw-vote, present the following table:

Debs .....	65,928
McNamara .....	541726
Gompers .....	48,225
Roosevelt .....	41,384
Haywood .....	41,109
Taft .....	426

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Total ..... 251,798

Decomposing this table into two—a reactionary and a progressive table we get;

### Reactionary Table—

McNamara .....	54,726
Gompers .....	48,225
Roosevelt .....	41,384
Taft .....	426

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Total ..... 144,761

<sup>1</sup> [See “Roosevelt and the Straw Vote,” page 3.]

Progressive Table—	
Debs .....	65,928
Haywood .....	41,109
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Total .....	107,037

In other words—

Even crediting the Progressive Table with Haywood, whose recent utterances as to methods savor so strongly of the Cave Dwellers’ Age as to entitle him to be entered on the Table lead by McNamara—even then the Progressive Table foots up only 107,037, or 37,724 below the Reactionary Table.

We have been and are no admirers of the *Appeal to Reason*. We admire neither the *Appeal to Reason’s* manners nor its matters. Indeed, we have, more than once, aye, frequently, and out of respect for Socialism, been under the painful obligation to handle the paper severely, and none too severely. Nevertheless, all along we imagined that the *Appeal to Reason* was a sort of “ground-breaker” for the Socialist Movement. We imagined that, while the *Appeal to Reason* had no seed worth speaking to drop into the furrows, and that, while, even as a plow, it was rather rickety, yet, notwithstanding, it could and did do this much—cut up the underground roots, and tear down the thick underbrush of politico-social superstitions. The *Appeal to Reason’s* straw-vote disillusion us.

If, out of its 251,798 *Appeal to Reason* readers, not an insignificant minority, worthy to be denominated “freaks”—not even a minority too large for entry under “freakdom,” yet a minority—but a positive majority, a robust majority, nearly 38,000 strong, can display such politico-social superstition as to divide its presidential preferences between a McNamara, a Gompers, a Roosevelt and a Taft, the fact calls for moans and groans—groans and moans for *Appeal to Reason* manners and matters.

### Roosevelt and the Straw Vote.

(From Chicago *Inter Ocean*, March 3, 1912.)

We are sorry to say that it looks as if many of us might have to desert Mr. Roosevelt for Mr. Debs.

It is the Appeal to Reason that brings us up against the logic of the case. You know the Appeal to Reason, a Socialist paper that is even more “progressive” than Mr. Roosevelt has avowed himself—to this date and in public. This is saying a good deal for the Appeal to Reason, we admit, but it is true.

The Appeal to Reason has taken a straw vote among its readers on the presidential question. A straw vote is the true way to test the sane, safe and sober sense of a nation on a subject of real importance. The old-fashioned ballot is all right for a school election or when the position of poundmaster {postmaster?} is at stake, but on a question like the Presidency, give us a straw vote every time.

And what do you think? Why, Mr. Roosevelt got 41,384 votes! And how many do you suppose Mr. Taft got? Just 426!

Of course, that throws Mr. Taft out. Logic is logic—and we have to go with the straw vote of the Appeal to Reason.

And by the same logical process we shall have to throw out Mr. Haywood—the Mr. Haywood who was tried for dynamiting outrages in Western mining circles. He got 41,109 votes. To be sure, this shows that he and Mr. Roosevelt are close rivals for So-

cialistic popularity, but there is no going back on the straw vote.

And now, alas! we must say good-bye to Mr. Roosevelt. Why? Because there are—and we grieve to have to say it—three men in the country more popular in Socialistic circles than even Mr. Roosevelt. Yes, sir; three. And here they are with their vote:

Debs, with a vote of 65,928.

McNamara, with a vote of 54,726.

Gompers, with a vote of 48,225.

Doubtless you know all about Debs, McNamara and Gompers. They are all popular in Socialistic circles, though Mr. McNamara, owing to circumstances over which he had no control, is no longer active in spreading the propaganda. Anyway, the vote shows that the readers of the Appeal to Reason, while fond of Mr. Roosevelt and reposing a large amount of confidence in him, still rank him as a little less tried and true than Debs, McNamara and Gompers.

And of course, the same logic that forced out Mr. Taft and Mr. Haywood will have to eliminate Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Gompers and Mr. McNamara. That leaves us with Mr. Debs on our hands.

Can we stick to Mr. Roosevelt as against Mr. Debs? Not if we are logical. We just can’t do it. Straw votes are straw votes and logic is logic.

So, as between Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Debs, many of us will have to desert Mr. Roosevelt. It is too bad.

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