

# DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 2, NO. 168.

NEW YORK, SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15, 1901.

TWO CENTS.

EDITORIAL

## ROOSEVELT'S SENSE OF POLITICAL PERSPECTIVE.

By DANIEL DE LEON

**T**HERE is one passage in President Roosevelt's message to Congress that is worth all the rest. It is worth all the rest because all the rest are of the style of trite declamation common to all such documents, and allowing not the slightest insight into the individuality of the message-writer, whereas the one passage in question acts like an X-ray that conveys an accurate idea of the thoughts that the President is revolving. The passage runs this way:

“Next to the farmer, most important is the workingman.”

It would be a waste of time to hold up this passage to view with the pitchfork of social science, and illustrate both the historic anachronism expressed, and the absurd social parsing implied in the sentence. Everybody knows that the day of the farmer as a leading class lies, in the language of Artemus Ward, “in the dim and distant vister” of “the dollar of our daddies”; and so does everybody know that to divide modern society into farmers and workingmen is like dividing the equine race into draft-horses and ponies. The significance of the passage lies not in its blunderbussing. Indeed, looked upon from its blunderbussing side this notable sentence would have nothing to distinguish it from the others. In what then consists its singular merit? In this President Roosevelt has matured so rapidly in the art of political “Get-there” that he has reached to its fullest the otherwise difficult sense of political perspective.

Politicians with the presidential bee in their bonnets have been slaughtered by the bushel “outside of the breastworks” of nominating conventions for lack of just this sense of political perspective. They want to be President. The ardor of the desire makes them vault over intermediaries. Votes are needed to be elected. The

workingmen poll ONE HUNDRED votes to every ONE vote polled by any other set of folks. Forthwith our presidential-bee-in-the-bonnet politician begins to scrape and bow before the Workingmen, whose friend, long-lost but finally found brother the politician announces himself. But in thus fawning upon the Workingman the politician neglects to pay the court to the Farmer, and there he dies, not because the Farmer holds the scales on election day, but because he holds the scales on nomination day, a day that precedes election day and on which the Workingman has nothing, or hardly anything, to say. In nominating conventions the Farmer's friendship is useful to a great degree, his lack of friendship proportionally damaging. Nine out of every ten politicians with the presidential bee in their bonnet lack the sense of political perspective that correctly places nominations before elections, and would guide them accordingly, to give their first thought to the Farmer, placing the Workingman as "next in importance."

Roosevelt does not propose falling into that pit. The Workingman can wait. After he has secured the nomination for President, it will be then time enough for him to ingratiate himself with the Workingmen, lunching them vicariously by feeding and wining some pronounced limbs of the Organized Scabbery as he did when, immediately after his nomination for Governor in 1898 he "tipped the elbow" with the ex-Anarchist convict Heinrich Weissmann and the sweet-scented Korkowinsky, alias Harry White.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.  
Uploaded August 2006