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THE PREFERENTIAL BALLOT

The Independent Straw Vote Nominates Watson and Allen.

The Independent's experiment with the "preferential ballot" has been educational in more ways than one. First of all, it shows that a very large per cent of populists—regardless of locality—are in favor of Thomas E. Watson of Georgia for the presidential nominee this year. Secondly, it shows that a large per cent of them want William V. Allen of Nebraska as his running mate. Were The Independent called upon to decide between Watson & Allen and Allen & Watson—after eliminating the matter of state pride—it would be puzzled to know which to choose.

In the third place, The Independent's "straw vote" shows that very few mistakes are made in voting the preferential ballot. Eight "null votes" out of 396, is a trifle more than 2 per cent; and an inspection of the eight ineffective ballots shows that the voters were possessed of that spirit of cocksureness which often causes men to err. Instead of reading the instructions in regard to the proper manner of voting, most of them made a cross instead of using figures to express preference. Where only one cross was made, the vote was counted as a first choice; but where two names were marked, each with a cross, there was no way of determining the voter's preference, and his ballot went into the "null" pile. One voter expressed double preference, voting two "first choice," two second, etc., making it impossible to count his ballot—it could not be placed in two piles at the same time.

The count was made as follows: Large cards were prepared each containing the name of one of the candidates named in the ballot; another was labelled "scattering;" and one was marked "null votes." These cards were arranged on a large table in the same order as the candidates' names appeared on the ballot, followed by the "scattering" and "null" cards.

The ballots were then taken up and inspected to find the voter's first choice. If it was Watson, the ballot was placed below the Watson card; if Allen, below Allen's card; if for some person whose name was not printed in the ballot, in the "scattering" pile; if the first choice could not be ascertained the ballot went into the "null votes" pile.

When this first distribution was made it was found that W. S. Morgan and James H. Ferriss had not received a single first choice vote; and the remaining ten candidates had ballots as follows: Owers 1, Watson 171, Williams 7, Weller 2, Breidenthal 4, Brown 1, Livingston 1, Calderhead 3, Allen 137, Barker 30. There were 31 ballots in the "scattering" pile, cast as follows: W. J. Bryan 12, T. H. Tibbles 3, Col. S. F. Norton 3, Gen. Nelson A. Miles 2, Marion Butler 2, and G. W. Berge, Tom L. Johnson, John O. Zabel, Milton Park, Fred G. R. Gordon, A. L. Mims, Frank T. Richey, William R. Hearst and James B. Weaver had one each. There were 8 ballots in the "null" pile.

While some of the "scattering" candidates had more first choice votes than several of the regular candidates, it was thought proper to eliminate the entire 31 votes first. These ballots were then taken up and redistributed according to second choice. An inspection of the abstract will show that 8 of these went to Watson, 2 to Williams, 1 each to Breidenthal, Brown, and Livingston, 2 to Barker, and 2 were "null" because no second choice had been marked.

Judge Owers having the lowest number, his ballot was redistributed. It went to Allen, who was the voter's second choice.

E. Gerry Brown being now one of the "low men," his two votes were redistributed, going one each to Watson and Weller.

A. H. Livingston was eliminated next, both his votes going to Barker. Weller's three votes were now redistributed, going one each to Watson, Breidenthal, and Calderhead.

Calderhead dropped out next. Three of his supporters had expressed no preference for second choice and their

Candidates	First choice	Elimination										Nominated	Eliminated				
		Scattering	Owers	Brown	Livingston	Weller	Calderhead	Breidenthal	Williams	Barker	Allen						
Owers.....	1		X														
Watson.....	171	8		1		1		2	5	31						219	
Williams.....	7	2						1			X						11
Weller.....	2			1		X											3
Breidenthal.....	4	1						1		X							6
Brown.....	1	1		X													2
Livingston.....	1	1			X												2
Calderhead.....	3							1	X								4
Allen.....	137	14	1							2	2	1				157	
Barker.....	30	2			2					1	2	X					37
Scattering (a).....	31	X															31
Null votes.....	8	2						3		2	5						20
Totals.....	396	31	1	2	2	3	4	6	11	37						396	

ballots went into the "null" pile; the other went to Breidenthal.

Breidenthal went next, his ballots being given as follows: Watson 2, Williams 1, Allen 2, Barker 1.

Judge Williams, who had now eleven votes, was next eliminated. Five of his ballots went to Watson, 2 to Allen, 2 to Barker, and 2 were "null" because no further choice was expressed.

This left the field with Watson, Allen and Barker. The last had gained 7 votes in the redistribution, but was still far behind the other two. His votes being redistributed, 31 of them went to Watson, 1 to Allen, and 5 were "null" for the same reason as before stated—that no further choice had been marked. One of the ballots having Barker as first choice was marked for Williams, Weller, Livingston and one or two others, as subsequent choice; but as all these had been previously eliminated, the vote was "null" because no choice was expressed for a candidate still in the field.

This rounded up the work. Watson's 71 had grown to 219; and Allen's 157 had been increased to 157. If this had been a formal vote to make real nominations, the candidates would be: For president, Thomas E. Watson of Georgia; for vice president, William V. Allen of Nebraska—and The Independent believes that would make about the strongest ticket the people's party could put up.

Under the count as made, of course, it is impossible to know who were marked as second choice in the 171 Watson ballots first given to him, or in the 137 Allen ballots; so I made a count of second choice for the purpose of making a little analysis of the vote. It is as follows:

	First choice.	Second choice.
Morgan.....	0	27
Owers.....	1	1
Ferriss.....	0	6
Watson.....	171	137
Williams.....	7	24
Weller.....	2	6
Breidenthal.....	4	9
Brown.....	1	4
Livingston.....	1	7
Calderhead.....	3	4
Allen.....	137	69
Barker.....	30	63
Scattering.....	31	12
Null ballots.....	8	27
Totals.....	396	396

A little calculation will now show that in the 157 ballots which went to the Allen pile, 99 of them claim Watson as second choice. This is evident from the fact that although Watson was named as second choice by 137 different voters, yet he gained but 48 in the redistributions—showing that at

least 99 of his second choice votes are hidden in the Allen pile. A similar calculation for the Watson pile shows 49 Allen second choice votes in it. And in both there are 56 second choice votes for Barker.

The number of ballots cast is not large. It was not expected or intended that it should be. The vote was restricted to enrolled members of the Old Guard of Populism, primarily to increase the interest in the enrollment—which it did very materially—and to find out whether the preferential ballot could be applied in a practical way in making direct nominations. I am satisfied that not only is it feasible to make nominations by direct vote—and this year, too—but that the Hare or "preferential" ballot should be used. Even in the event of a convention, the ballot could be used with telling effect. Only one ballot would need to be taken. It would do the work. It might take a little more time than an ordinary roll call—but there would be no dead-locks, no "climbing into the band wagon."

The ballots cast came from 39 states and territories, thus eliminating the question of sectional prejudices. Perhaps I had better give a little more detailed account along this line:

Alabama—17 votes: First choice, Allen 11, Watson 5, James B. Weaver 1.

Arkansas—13 votes: First choice, Allen 1, Watson 11, Barker 1.

California—5 votes: First choice, Allen 1, Watson 2, Barker 1, "null" 1.

Colorado—6 votes: First choice, Allen 3, Watson 2, Owers 1.

District of Columbia: 1 Watson vote.

Florida: 1 Watson vote.

Georgia—9 votes: First choice, Watson 8, Breidenthal 1.

Illinois—5 votes: First choice, Allen 1, Watson 3, Barker 1.

Indiana—15 votes: First choice, Watson 8, Williams 4, Barker 2, "null" 1.

Iowa—6 votes: First choice, Allen 1, Watson 2, Barker 1, Bryan 1, Weller 1.

Kansas—18 votes: First choice, Allen 3, Watson 6, Barker 3, Breidenthal 2, Weller 1, Williams 2, Hearst 1.

Kentucky: 2 Watson votes.

Louisiana: 1 Watson vote.

Maine—2 votes: Watson 1, Barker 1.

Massachusetts: 1 Miles vote.

Michigan—4 votes: Watson 1, Bryan 2, Zabel 1.

Minnesota: 3 Watson votes.

Mississippi—3 votes: Watson 2, "null" 1.

Missouri—48 votes: Allen 4, Watson 30, Barker 9, Norton 2, Bryan 1, Breidenthal 1, Richey 1.

Montana—4 votes: Allen 1, Watson 1, Calderhead 2.

Nebraska—134 votes: Allen 29, Watson 21, Berge 1, Bryan 5, Barker 1, Brown 1, Tibbles 3, Butler 1, "null" 2.

New Hampshire: 1 vote for Fred G. R. Gordon.

New Jersey: 1 Barker vote.

New York—2 votes: Allen 1, Bryan 1.

North Carolina—4 votes: Watson 3, Butler 1.

North Dakota—2 votes: Allen 1, Watson 1.

Ohio—9 votes: Allen 1, Watson 5, "null" 1, Williams 1, Tom L. Johnson 1.

Oklahoma—5 votes: Allen 1, Watson 3, Livingston 1.

Oregon—3 votes: Allen 1, Watson 1, Norton 1.

Pennsylvania—2 votes: Watson 1, Barker 1.

South Dakota—2 votes: Allen 1, Watson 1.

Tennessee—2 votes: Allen 1, Watson 1, "null" 1.

Texas—35 votes: Watson 21, Bryan 1, Barker 8, Mims 1, "null" 2, Miles 1, Park 1.

Utah: 1 Allen vote.

Virginia: 1 Watson vote.

Washington—2 votes: Allen 1, Calderhead 1.

West Virginia: 3 Watson votes.

Wisconsin: 1 Bryan vote.

Wyoming: 1 Watson vote.

Such is the experience with the preferential ballot. The result on this occasion was not close enough to bring out the really effective features—Watson being such a general favorite all over the country. Since the polls were closed a good many ballots have come in, but, of course, they cannot now be considered. They will be retained, however, and filed away. All future letters of invitation will also carry a blank ballot which the recipient may fill out and return with his enrollment. Just before the national convention—if the nominations are to be made by convention—all ballots on hand will be counted and the result announced through The Independent.

America Up to Date

(Adapted to the tune of Jim Fisk.)
If you listen awhile I will sing you a song

About this great land of the free,
With its trusts and its tramps and its millionaire scamps

From the ocean across to the sea,
J. Pierpont Morgan and oily John D.,
Who controls all our big New York banks;

Bill Allison, Aldrich, Steve Elkins, Matt Quay,
And a hundred more rich tariff cranks.

Phila Knox, Perry Heath, and our Postoffice Payne,
With his Neeleys, Rathbones, and wild Beavers,

And a million more grafters all hunting for spoils
Like an army of well trained retrievers.

Then there is our sultan of all the Sulus,
With his servants and forty odd wives,

His dattos and eunuchs in lace and gold braid,
And his subjects in fear of their lives.

And all those wild people we purchased of Spain
For "benevolent assimilation,"
Such a bargain we made to get hold of their trade

Was not seen since the days of creation.
We have seized all their land, burned their houses and crops,
And we cured them with water each day.

We will make them kneel down to the stars and the stripes,
We will tax them for all they can pay.

Our "fifty-cent silver" will buy all their wares
At half price, with its lustre and ring.

We will make them all knuckle, kowtow, and salaam,
Doff their hats and shout, "God save the klag."

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