

# EXIT "HOMESPUN HARRY"

## Democrats Reject Wallace As Candidate For Vice-President

(Written for "The Listener" by A.M.R.)



HENRY WALLACE

Not the end for him, but the beginning—of something different

FOUR years ago this week, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, pressed to break precedent by accepting nomination for a third term, consented on condition that Henry Agard Wallace be nominated as Vice-President. Ever since then, someone wrote recently, "all ardent Roosevelt-haters have prayed daily for the President's health, petrified by the terrible alternative of Wallace in the White House." Indeed as the nominating conventions came round this year, and it was rumoured that Roosevelt would stand again, with the intention of handing over to Wallace before his term concluded, apprehension rose to fever heat. But now the President's own party has delivered its opponents. The Democrat leaders, cynics have suggested, prevailed upon Roosevelt merely to request, not command, that they again elect Wallace for running mate, and in this way they conquered the desire of both President and people. Wallace is dropped from the ticket as Vice-Presidential candidate.

Who, then, is this man whom the U.S. President wished for assistant and successor but whom politicians of both parties are said to fear?

He is himself no politician. But there are few other things he is not or has not sometimes been: farmer, editor, author, scientist, linguist, company president, experimenter with pigs, corn, diets, statistics, home-made mattresses, mysticism, astronomy, tennis, "farm-sabotage," Government marketing, prophecy, world organisation, and the aerodynamics of boomerangs. It could almost be said that Henry Wallace at 55 has already changed the physical appearance of America as no other single man ever has, and possibly created more wealth for the country than any other man ever will. "A

genius" his critics admit—"or else a so-far-lucky tinkerer on a gigantic scale—a blank, blank, dangerous tinkerer."

### "Henry III. of Iowa"

He is not the first Henry Wallace, but third in a dynasty. Henry I. was an Iowa farmer on week-days and Presbyterian preacher on Sundays, who, at the age of 70, started the weekly *Wallace's Farmer* that made him "Uncle Henry" to the whole mid-West, and a member of Theodore Roosevelt's Country Life Commission. Henry II., Harding's Secretary of Agriculture, wore himself out in friction with the rest of the Cabinet trying to apply nationally the *Farmer's* slogan of "Good Farming, Clear Thinking, Right Living." Henry III. meanwhile, at the age of seven, had started discussing God and chromosomes with George Washington Carver, the ex-slave scientist. At nine he had evolved a new variety of pansy. At 16 he proved by performance tests that the Agricultural Show standards for corn (maize) were faulty. And in his early 'twenties he produced the hybrid "Hy-bred" corn which has almost entirely replaced older varieties and vastly increased production.

From the permutations of genetics he turned to seeking correlations between weather and crops. Charts prophesying probable yields led to "corn-hog ratios," indicating the likely course of prices. Investigations into the intricate workings of supply and demand obviously followed. And from there the editor of an independent farmers' paper (Henry III. succeeded to it in 1924) had to advance into national and world economic policies. Thirteen years before the slump broke he charted its advance, but could not prevent its swallowing *Wallace's Farmer*. However, Roosevelt—another result of the slump—had been noting Wallace's analyses. When nominated he went to him for an agricultural policy, and when elected, called on him to lead the Department of Agriculture.

### Nationwide "Saboteur"

This department in the U.S.A. is immense. Its 47,000 officers perform for rural areas half the functions of our Departments of Health, Education, Publicity, State Advances, Research and Marketing as well as those of Agriculture. Mr. Wallace came to Washington with a plan for it in either pocket—the one for destruction, immediate; the other for conservation, long range. Back in 1920 he had suggested that "farmers should sabotage their products as do Labour and Capital." Now he practised this hint by slaughtering six million baby pigs and ploughing in ten million acres of cotton. Up went farm incomes. The piled-up goods that were clogging the factory wheels disappeared. America began working (and eating) again.

The long-range plan came into operation after this "wicked cure for a wicked system." As he had paid farmers to "not-raise hogs," Wallace now paid them to cease working sub-marginal land, to re-forest hill-sides and change over to practices and crops better suited to their soils. The headlong destruction of America's basic asset was halted—though its rehabilitation will take centuries. As the short stalk of hybrid corn has changed the face of the Middle West, so "contour farming" is changing that of the South. Meanwhile, farmers' freedom in marketing was narrowed with the offer of loans to hold crops into lean months and years—the famous "Ever-normal Granary."

Meanwhile, too, Wallace had become Vice-President, and immediately broken every tradition of the office by engaging in administration (Board of Economic Warfare) and in controversy. The latter cost him the former in a brush with Jesse Jones, Secretary of Commerce: But the President sent Wallace to Mexico instead as his personal ambassador, and then to Chungking and Moscow. The Press report that he



SENATOR HARRY TRUMAN  
Replaces Wallace as Vice-Presidential Candidate

started learning Spanish and Russian as soon as appointed was incorrect. Henry Wallace speaks Spanish fluently, and broadcasts regularly in it—better than in English. Russian he has been practising for years.

So why the opposition? "What gripes me about Henry," writes one critic, "is that you know he would cut off his hand for an abstract ideal—and cut off yours, too, just as readily." "Homespun Harry in his best suit," comments another, "always looks as if he were going somewhere on a bus, possibly to the fair, self-conscious, all dressed up and

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