

# Wallace Plan? Bees Know Better

By W. D. Hoffman

What Senator Farmbloc feared most in this world, next to his pressure-group constituents, was the Crop Surplus. A bee in his bonnet, he voted for the billion-plus handout to "agriculture," announced himself enthusiastically for Wallace for President, and proclaimed staunch support for increasing domestic tariffs for landlords on a straight Plough'er-Under platform.

Senator Farmbloc's only agricultural activity for years had been the farming of farmers, but often he poked around in his apiary, the honeybee fascinating him. Hurrying home to his tenant-farmed empire to collect his rents, his New Deal benefits and to order reductions in acreage, he hived a couple of booming swarms and lay back exhausted, his rotund face scarlet with exertion, muttering about the Curse of the Surplus even in Beedom. And he had a dream. . .

He found himself pushing his way into a great city populated by honeybees, and, lo, when he glanced at his lower extremities he found he too had taken on the form of a giant Drone bee. Passing the Soldier Guards, he saw towering skyscrapers, vast honeycombs of Nature's most skillful engineers reaching tier on tier above him.

"Welcome, Senator Drone," greeted an idling male. "Fortunately it is the season of the Mating of Virgins, or you would be thrown out on your ear."

"Tut, tut," said the Senator, "the swarming nuisance brought me here. I bear credentials from the Department of Agriculture to institute the Wallace Plan and abolish the Curse of the Surplus. Where will I find the Queen?"

"This way, Sir." The big fellow escorted the Senator along the corridors past the Wing-Fanners. "Our air-conditioning here is the best in the world," he explained with pride. He pointed out the fat condition of Hive City, cells bursting with wealth,

Workers ripening nectar with wing movements, Nurses feeding larvae like baby birds, Young Bees bustling by with baskets of yellow pollen, Fielders crowding in with nectar, Comb-Builders hanging in long festoons fashioning cells, the strongest light unit of construction known to science.

"See 'em work their fool heads off," chuckled the Guide. "Only us Drones have it soft in this town. Nothing to do but the love-making. It's fun while it lasts, but it's sad to think how soon we'll be kicked out to starve."

"That, too, I intend to correct," Senator Farmbloc affirmed gravely. "A new deal for Drones is at hand, under the Wallace Plan."

"Indeed!" ejaculated the Drone Guide. "That sounds too good to be true. Hello, here's Her Majesty now!"

The long-bodied Queen Bee was backing out of a cell where she had deposited an egg.

"Your Highness," intoned the Senator pompously, "I have an order from Secretary Wallace, backed by a billion just voted, to halt this swarming, institute parity, curtail production and end the overburdening Surplus that is the cause of all the troubles of agriculture."

The Queen in her excitement at these brusque words dropped an egg on the Drone Senator's shiny bald head, then backed shyly away. "I do not understand," she said timidly. "It is the Surplus that enriches us here in Hive City, and brings prosperity both to us and the Beekeeper."

"Ah, there is the rub," the Senator insisted. "You are being robbed by the Beekeeper. Under a scarcity-economy that will be ended forever."

Her Queenship fluttered her short wings in confusion. "But long before Man gave us boxes and wax-foundation for homes we enjoyed the blessings of the Surplus, dividing by swarming, thus continuing the species in spite of Foulbrood, moths and fires in the forests. You know, Man has not changed bee-economy one whit; he has merely adapted himself to our ways, thus earning him an income for his extra equipment. The Beekeeper pays for his share of the honey by feeding us syrup over the lean years. Before Man came our Surplus tided us over without syrup."

"When there's a Surplus, there is bound to be unemployment," the Senator said impressively.

"Indeed no. The more nectar we receive, the more eggs I lay, the more Workers are hatched—and the more Workers, the more wealth. It is the strong colonies of many Workers that make us all rich, Senator Drone."

"But the Surplus always spells low prices and ruin to the industry. Now the government intends to subsidize you. Under scarcity-economy the Wallace Plan will pay you benefits."

"Benefits? You mean in money? Honey is money here, you know, Senator."

"That's all right, Your Majesty. The government will pay you in honey."

"But where will it get the honey? Not by taking it from other bees, surely—robbing them to pay us?"

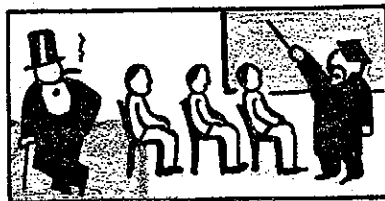
"The idea," said the Senator impatiently, "is to increase farm purchasing power—I mean, bee purchasing power."

"Through scarcity?" buzzed the Queen softly.

"Listen, insect! Can't you see, the government is going to give you the purchasing power—more honey for reducing production."

"But where is that honey coming from, unless the government steals it from other bees—?"

"Purchasing power," the Senator



bellowed, "must equal the Cost of Production. Can't you get it through your insect head that there is a Great Depression, vast unemployment, farm mortgages in jeopardy, land prices sagging, with banks, railroads, investment interests and the republic itself in danger, because there is a Surplus that nobody can buy?"

"Oh, Senator." Her Queenship blushed deeply. "Really, we have no such troubles here, because we have no vast interests that control the source of our wealth. The flowers are free."

"The flowers? Free? Well, what the—?"

"No banks own the honey plants, no corporations hold mortgages on them, no real estate investments are based on them. The flowers have not been monopolized by the few, hence overcapitalized, as I understand Man uses that word. Here we all have access to Nature."

"That's Communism!" shrieked Senator Farmbloc, his large Drone body stiffening. "It's against the American form of government! The very first thing that must be done here is to institute private property, a system of land tenure under which the flowers will be a good sound investment, yielding rent, capitalized, bought and sold in the American Way."

"Really? But the Workers already own an equal share in all the flowers now," the puzzled Queen insisted. "Under your plan, you would have to give title to the flowers to the Drones. Of course, you wouldn't think of that—?"

"You've got to get on a solid American basis," snapped Senator Farmbloc. "Why, your whole bee-economy is haywire. Hive government is communistic, totalitarian, a dictatorship. Everything is done for the state and the individual counts for nothing. You are the dictator. This is America and we must insist on freedom, the right of the individual."

"The right of individual Drones to rob the Workers? By a dictatorship from the Agriculture Department?"

"No! By sane compliance, the

government rewarding those who cooperate."

"Not by offering bribes to comply?"

"Your dictatorship has got to end! All this regimentation here in Hive City must go—"

"To give way to Wallace Plan regimentation, Senator?" Her Queenship shook with gentle laughter. "Is shovel-leaning, perchance, your substitute for the individual initiative and enterprise you see all about you? Is millions on relief the substitute you offer for the fully employed Workers buzzing in and out of this community?"

"Anything is better than dictatorship!" thundered the Senator.

The Queen preened her wings. "Really, Senator, you have been misinformed. What you see here is not dictatorship. Your early students of the Honeybee believed a King Bee was dictator-boss. Then they said it was a Queen Bee who ruled. All were wrong, as modern students of bee-economy know. We are not a dictatorship, but a democracy—"

"You're crazy!" broke in Farmbloc. "Everybody knows you're the whole show here."

"On the contrary, I am merely the Breeder. I take all my orders from the bees. They instruct me when to lay many eggs, when to desist. It is the colony spirit that decides—the great voice of the mass, the democracy. When nectar comes in freely, the bee-people communicate the fact to me and feed me concentrated food to stimulate my egg-laying. Listen, my friend, to the commotion—a Town Meeting is being called because I have stopped work to listen to a Drone!"

"Democracy your eye," railed the Senator. "Under democracy the individual has the right of private property—"

"Private property in the planet? In the land, the rain, the sunshine



and the flowers? In the common heritage of all?"

"The devil! Why, some of our richest Earth-owners were once poor men, proving how opportunity flourishes in America."

Her Queenship smiled. "I am beginning to see, Senator Drone. You have talked about the Cost of Production and purchasing power. Here we have no Cost of Production except labor, combs and box-hive, because there is no investment in flowers—no monopoly of Nature. Hence production and purchasing power always strike an exact balance."

"You've got overproduction right now!" exploded Farmbloc.

"Indeed no. All the Surplus you see is Security Insurance, for us and the Beekeeper. After we swarm, the Surplus will go into more happy population of bees in new Hives. Individuals are an asset in our economy. They are a liability in yours. Yet you give lip service to individualism. Here, the more individuals, the more relative production, the more wealth. We are not struggling with a problem of indigents and jobless Workers. And you are even talking of moving some of your unemployed to South America!"

"I never heard such fool ideas," declared the Senator, in disgust. "How can more individuals be an asset when there are 12 million without jobs now?"

"Do you see any bee Workers unemployed, Senator Drone? How could they be jobless so long as honey plants are available without price or rent? Shame on your American Way, if it means the right of a handful of Drones to put 'No Trespass' on the Earth and lock out your people from the source of wealth! You ought to do far better than the Honeybee, because we are limited by the fixed supply of bloom, given by the season and the weather. Man, on the other hand, is able to expand production at will, to create new forms of plant and animal food according to his needs. There should never be a hungry individual among you."

"But the damn Surplus!" puffed Farmbloc. "It's still the Great Political Issue, and the Wallace Plan of scarcity is the only solution."

The Queen shook her dainty head sadly. "I suppose you Earth-owners are completely hopeless, since you insist on a Cost of Production that includes tribute in the form of rent for Nature. You decline to shake out the water from overcapitalized lands and special privileges—"

"We want no Communism in ours," snapped Farmbloc.

"Nor democracy, either, if it involves letting the Workers have equal access to the planet on which they were born," the Queen said, mildly. "Our sort of democracy is permanent, by the way, and not threatened by Communism and Fascism because of millions of unemployed." Her Queenship turned about in great agitation. "It seems the Hive City Town Meeting is protesting at Drone Regimentation as ordained in the Wallace Plan!"

A great hubbub had arisen, a loud humming, a buzz of thousands of wings all about the Queen. Quickly she responded by turning back to her work of laying eggs, leaving Senator Farmbloc crouching in a cell, hiding from the wrath of the multitude.

"Down with the Flower-Grabbers!" rose the cry. "Down with Wallace-Regimenters, the Scarcity-Mongers and the Drone-Monopolists! Down with Destroyer Farmbloc! Hurrah for Free Land, Free Flowers, Free Earth and Free Workers!"

There was a mighty rush. In a moment the Senator was seized from behind and a Worker mounted his back. Quickly he was rushed out of Hive City into the cold drizzling rain. In a panic, the Senator lay down in the grass to starve and die, the ultimate fate of all his kind in Beedom.

Suddenly he gave a great start, sat up, rubbed his eyes. A dream! Lordy, what a relief. He got to his feet, scanned his vast empire of rich lands, going increasingly out of production. "By Henry George!" he sputtered. "If I'd been awake I'd have had better sense than try to put over a drone-economy in a hive of bees!"

"All things come to those who own land in the right quantities."

—"The Golden Earth"