

## Wallace, Evangelist or Buyer

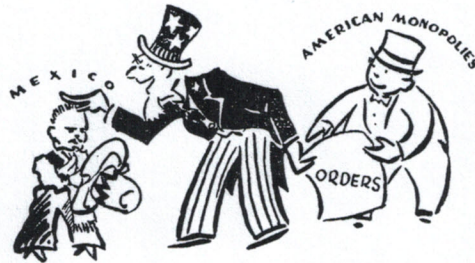
VICE PRESIDENT-ELECT WALLACE good neighbored us into Mexico last month. Rumor has it that this sort of work in Latin America will be a function of his otherwise innocuous office during the next four years.

Now, a good neighbor is one who not only passes the time of day with you, but also one who will help you out when you are in need. And a neighbor who flatly refuses to do business with you, even when you offer him attractive bargains, can hardly be called good. By that standard, in view of our protective policy, Mr. Wallace may find difficulty in convincing Latin America of our good neighborliness.

His mission may indeed have some embarrassing moments. For instance, he may run into the proposition of buying Mexican oil at a lower price than our domestic producers demand. Some months ago this happened. The Navy, which is under instructions to buy only domestic products, whenever possible, found that the only company able to guarantee such delivery was asking ten cents per barrel more than the lowest bidder, whose product would have come from Mexican oil wells. The higher bidder got the business.

Overlooking the extra cost to American taxpayers, this was not the way a good neighbor should act. Would not the purchase of this oil have improved our relations with Mexico much more than the most evangelical protestations of good will?

Large quantities of copper and other non-ferrous minerals are accumulating rapidly in Mexico (as well as in Chile and Peru), because the war has shut off European markets. These metals are vital for military purposes, yet because of our tariffs they can not come in. Mexican copper can be bought for two cents a pound less than domestic copper, but a four cent tariff keeps it piled up in Mexican warehouses. *Apparently we are more neighborly toward our own mine owners.*



With warehouses in Latin America bulging with raw materials, especially farm products, and the United States the only important market, no amount of explaining our willingness to buy from them will be conducive to kindly relations. Our deeds and Mr. Wallace's words simply won't harmonize. Hitler, with his disadvantageous barter system, would seem a better neighbor to Latin-American if he were able to dicker for their surpluses.