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Rankin and 'Economy'

Representative Rankin, the sharp-tongued Mississippi Democrat, seems to be living in a private, sound-proof dream world. While his congressional colleagues yell for economy, deplore a likely deficit and fidget nervously at the mere mention of money, Rankin is busy cranking out schemes for the spending of tens of billions.

Not long ago the venerable southerner, in his capacity as chairman of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, rammed a \$65,000,000 veterans' pension bill through the House.

Now, undeterred by the fact that the Senate is expected to let this measure die, the irrepressible Rankin is polishing up another beauty, a veterans' bonus proposal that would cost anywhere from \$14,000,000,000 to \$60,000,000,000.

There is stronger opposition to this bill among his committee associates than there was to the pension plan. But as committee chairman and a past master at law-making maneuvers, Rankin must not be shrugged off lightly in this situation.

If he should manage to get the bonus bill to the House floor, it would take fast footwork on the part of the Democratic leadership to block its passage.

Rankin has got as far as he has with these extravagant proposals because he knows how acutely sensitive his fellow congressmen are to anything that might affect the way veterans vote.

In engineering passage of the pension measure, he successfully played on those fears. Undoubtedly he is confident he can repeat his triumph with the bonus bill if he can only get it to a vote.

It is unlikely Democratic leaders foresaw these irresponsible excursions of Rankin's into multi-billion-dollar fantasies.

They probably thought they had his free-roaming tendencies pretty well curbed when they maneuvered him off the House Un-American Activities Committee in January. That was achieved by ruling that no committee chairman, such as Rankin, could serve on the Un-American Activities group. If that was their view, then the crusty Mississippian has crossed the leaders up. Boxed in on one side, he has broken loose in another direction.

Apparently the Democratic leadership has but one real choice if it would avoid further embarrassment from Rankin. That is to drive a new rule through the House stating that any congressman named Rankin who happens also to be from Mississippi may not be chairman of anything.

South Alert to Hooded Menace

Gov. James E. Folsom and his Alabama legislature deserve to be commended for their speedy, forthright response to the ugly challenge of white-robed terror in their state.

Newly placed on Alabama's statute books is a law that bans the wearing of masks, hoods or robes. The penalty for violation is a \$500 fine or one year in jail.

Alabama thus becomes the first state in the South to strike a real blow at the resurgent Ku Klux Klan, which most southern authorities blame for the rising tide of violence in the region.

There is some talk that Alabama now may go a step farther and revoke the Klan's state charter, thus making it an outlaw organization. All decent American citizens must hope this goal is also achieved.

More than that, they must wish that a whole procession of states will follow Alabama's lead. Nothing would be more gratifying than to see the South rid itself of these night-riding hoodlums without interference from outside.

It seems incredible that we should have to be decrying such primitive violence in a 1949 America. In fact, we were not so well aware of the tragic results of this practice, we probably would be tempted to laugh heartily at the absurdly silly business of grown men running around in flapping white garments.

But, stripped of their bedsheet, these latter-day terrorists can be seen for what they are: Nazi-style bully boys with an even bigger streak of cowardice, if that is possible.

Alabama has had the fundamental good sense to unfrock these spineless bullies permanently.

There is evidence, too, that it is earnestly determined to find among them those who were responsible for the recent floggings and other outrages in the Birmingham area. A county grand jury already has returned a dozen or more indictments.

These various state and local moves to stamp out hooded violence have not kept Congress from launching its own inquiry into the outbreaks. A House Judiciary subcommittee is looking into them.

No harm can come from a further airing of the facts so that all Americans can un-

derstand the menace for what it is. But Congress ought to do nothing to discourage the excellent beginning Alabama has made toward crushing this particular lawlessness. It should allow state authorities a chance to follow through. And permit a little time for us to see whether Alabama's behavior may not prove contagious to its neighbors.

Brow Beaten Secretary

A reporter for the Christian Science Monitor observes that Secretary of State Dean Acheson has the "second best set of eyebrows in Washington."

The owner of the best eyebrows in the capital currently is arching them in mock horror at bargaining proposals offered by his opposite numbers in coal contract negotiations.

Indeed, John L. Lewis probably could concede Acheson a few points on texture and thickness and still come off first.

Lewis gains his edge because he has shown he knows what good eyebrows are for. They're to be arched, of course. But also to be knitted in a menacing scowl, lifted gently in mild surprise, or lowered to lend softness to a flinty gleam of triumph.

They even have their dramatic uses in full repose. They add a touch of sadness to the impassive granite of the great tragedian's face.

Acheson would need a lot of practice before a mirror to match the trained Lewis eyebrows.

Every time you draw a breath Uncle Sam spends several hundred dollars. The taxpayer has one alternative—rather a grim one.

It's funny how kids take advantage of the fact that it isn't human to be perfect.

The 25 minutes it takes to cover a roll call of the U. S. House of Representatives is cut sharply when there's a double-header in town.

Horses and elephants can sleep while standing up—like father with a two-week-old son.

WASHINGTON LETTER

By Peter Edson
NEA Washington Correspondent

Poor Peacetime Market Slows Advent of Age of Magnesium

WASHINGTON—(NEA)—After an extremely slow start, the long-predicted age of magnesium is beginning to arrive. There is not an actual shortage of the metal today. But if a war were to break out at any time soon, the United States might face severe shortages.

Development of the B-36 inter-continental bomber, now being investigated by Congress, is one of the main factors in this changed situation. The original B-36 was designed to weigh 70 tons, empty. By the use of nearly 10 tons of magnesium—more than has ever been used in any other plane—this weight has been reduced to 67 tons. Range and altitude performances have thereby been extended greatly, giving the plane its present capabilities.

"All-magnesium" planes have been built on an experimental basis, but none has been perfected. That an all-magnesium plane will be built eventually is conceivable. Up until now, use of magnesium has been confined largely to wheels, seats, housings, miscellaneous parts and trim.

Weighing only two-thirds as much as aluminum and one-fourth as much as steel, magnesium has often been referred to as "revolutionary" in its possibilities. It is the sixth most abundant metal, being an element in one of the salts in sea water. Process Developed by Germans

The Germans first developed processes for its extraction. But because it has been hard to purify and because the technology of rolling and casting it has been developed slowly, its use has been retarded. Like aluminum, magnesium has had to be sold.

In World War I the metal was used principally for flares. During World War II the U. S. government made a tremendous expansion of magnesium production capacity. Defense Plant Corporation spent \$370,000,000 to build 13 plants for operation by 11 different companies.

In addition, Reconstruction Corporation loaned \$28,000,000 to Henry Kaiser interests to build a magnesium plant at Permanente, Calif. Dow Chemical Co., principal U. S. producer, spent \$17,000,000 to enlarge its own facilities and several other plants were built by private capital.

After the war, a Ford plant at Dearborn, Mich., was dismantled. A plant at Austin, Tex., was given to University of Texas for other uses. A plant at Lake Charles, La., has been leased to Southern Alkali of Pittsburgh, but it could be reconverted to magnesium production.

The Kaiser plant is idle but could be put into production of "goop" for magnesium bombs in a matter of weeks. Months would be required to make it produce magnesium metal.

The huge, \$140,000,000 Basic Magnesium Plant at Las Vegas, Nev.—one of the costliest mistakes and worst scandals of the whole war-production effort—has been turned over to the Nevada State Colorado River Commission for \$1 cash plus \$25,000,000 rentals, when or if collected from possible tenants. But Basic Magnesium will never make any money.

CAN RE-OPEN 11 PLANTS
Eleven of the government-built magnesium magnesium plants are now held by the Federal Works Agency in the National Industrial Plant Reserve in stand-by condition. They can be re-opened and put into production when needed. Their total rated capacity is 200,000,000 pounds a year.

Today only the Dow Chemical plant at Freeport, Tex., is in operation. It makes magnesium from sea water by an electrolytic process. During the war the government enlarged the Freeport plant and only recently these government facilities were sold to Dow so that it could operate the entire plant as one unit.

Even this Dow plant was closed for some time after the war and Dow's stockpile of metal went begging for lack of customers. Magnesium came into limited use for truck and bus bodies, ladders, canoes, piano frames, wheelbarrows and lawn mowers. But it had no boom like aluminum.

Dow's present capacity is about 45,000,000 pounds of magnesium a year. That will be enough to meet 1949 demand. Assuming continued peace, Dow officials estimate demand may be 75,000,000 pounds by 1952 and 200,000,000 pounds within 10 years.

The real bottleneck in magnesium production is the lack of rolling mill capacity. Engineers say that a market for 50,000,000 pounds of sheet a year would have to be assured before any private company could afford to build a mill for continuous operation. Sheet sales last year were about 10 per cent of the amount.

This situation is now being pointed to as an example of a case in which the government might build the plant for lease until private operators could afford to take it over, to develop the industry.

Parleys May Come and Parleys May Go, but—



Squirrel Hunter Bags 5-Foot Mountain Lion

HOLLISTER, Cal. — (AP) — Joe Serpa, 45, hunted for squirrel with a .22 caliber pistol Tuesday, but instead he bagged a five-foot

mountain lion. Serpa told authorities he was hunting in Brown's Valley near here when his dogs jumped a female mountain lion and treed her, while he followed on his horse. Still on horseback he fired 18

ineffective shots, number 14 making the kill. Local residents said the 82-inch lion was the first one killed here in many years. Serpa is a member of the San Benito County Rodent Control Squad.

SALEM 'BANDITS' RAIDED
SALEM — (AP) — Fifteen slot machines were confiscated from a locked storage room in the Eagles Club here Wednesday night by Marion County deputies and city police.

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