

HOPSON

Today's big act in the three ring circus called Washington has a gaudy ballyhoo splash! MYSTERY! The good old element of secret, cryptic fascination in melodramas of stage and book. The mystery man was on the witness stand, the witness they had so much trouble finding, the millionaire utilities magnate who was as elusive as a subterranean master spy in an Oppenheim serial. So today in Washington, at a Congressional quiz, they started to unravel the mystery of Howard C. Hopson, Vice President of the Associated Gas and Electric, one of the big utilities units of the nation.

Let's so a little unraveling ourselves, and unveil a portrait of the mystery man of money, gas and electric, who has had Washington guessing. He is short, stocky, and baldheaded. He has an imperturbable calm and assurance. Before he ever became a mystery man he was known in the business world as a miracle man -- a wizard of finance.

He is only forty now, and they tell how in six years he ran one-hundred-and-twenty-five thousand dollars into two million.

His career began when he left the Wisconsin farm where he was born and went to Washington to study law. Young men who have graduated in Washington are likely to go to work for the Government. And so did Hopson. He got a job with the Interstate Commerce Commission. In 1908 he entered the employ of New York State and took a post on the Public Service Commission at Albany. That's where he learned about the utilities business. For a dozen years he worked for the state on gas and electric problems, and at the end of that time he knew all there was to be known about utilities - got the knowledge and pulled out. He became the controlling head of the Associated Gas and Electric Company. And, he won his spurs when he gave battle to the Carlyle Utilities interests and to the House of Morgan itself. Financial circles tell how in the face of Morgan he put up a hot fight, and managed to chop the Niagara and Hudson territories in two.

That's how Hopson qualified as a miracle man. His rank as a mystery man he earned when, on various occasions, he was wanted to testify at public inquiries. He displayed a rare talent for dodging government subpoena servers. The Senate

has been after him for years -- all in vain. In the big Finance investigation of 1933 Ferdinand Pecora, the demon Senate investigator tried to get Hopson on the witness stand. He couldn't do it.

That takes us down to the present utilities probe on today, with both the Senate and the Lower House investigating. Both inquiries called for Hopson. And that began a comic opera search for the mystery man of utilities. There he was, there he wasn't. In again, out again -- Mr. "Finnegan" Hopson. Suddenly we heard how they had found him. It was the Lower House inquiry that caught the elusive bird - elusive as gas or an electron. The Senate manhunt still hunted in vain.

He was put on the witness stand today in a loud and hilarious scene. He frankly said yes, it was he who directed his company's fight against the Wheeler Rayburn bill. It was the bitter battle over that bill that brought all the hullabaloo about lobbying -- lobbying which both the House and Senate inquiries are now investigating. Hopson admitted that he had pushed the full business influence of his company in defeating the bill. ^{TP} Except for that he continued his mystery man act of being mysterious today.

They asked him what his income was. That, he shouted, was his own private affair. A member of the committee spoke up and said - it was a public affair, because Hopson was in the business of selling gas and electricity to the public. "The public buys automobiles also," Hopson retorted neatly. Then later he said he couldn't remember just what his present real income was.

That was today's beginning in the solution of the mystery. The questioning of Hopson will continue.

When he left the committee hearing, the Senate inquiry tried to subpoena him. Once more he evaded, ^{pushed} ~~pushing~~ the Senate investigator aside, and jumped into a taxicab. The poor old Senate seems to be out of luck, where Hopson is concerned. This time officials of the Lower House inquiry helped him to dodge.

The mystery man is their star performer right now, quite a prize.

They want him for their own show, and don't intend to let the Senate get hold of him. The Senate is thinking about prosecuting Hopson for contempt.

And I should think they'd have to prosecute the House of Representatives as well - for co-operating with him.

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SENATE

It all would seem to be enough to drive the Senate to drink! so, the lofty law-makers draped their togas around them and passed the Alcohol Control Bill. This is a law designed to give the Government the power to control the sale of intoxicating beverages. It would take the place of the N.R.A. alcohol control, which was knocked out when the Supreme Court made its famous chicken decision, and abolished the whole N.R.A. The House has already passed its own alcohol bill. The Senate bill is different in one point -- concerning sales of beverages in bulk. So the two Houses will have a conference and try to work out an agreement.

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President Roosevelt signed a bill to restore pensions to Spanish War veterans while ex-President Hoover, - looking jauntier than usual, at the Waldorf in New York has been conferring with Republican big wigs.

SHIPS

Uncle Sam, the big-ship-and-passenger-man -- that's the plan we hear about today. Italy has her Tex, France has her Normandie, England will soon have her Queen Mary and maybe your Uncle will have not one but two giant liners to top them all. That's the plan presented today to the Department of Commerce by Paul W. Chapman, former head of the United States Lines. He wants the U.S.A. to build two super liners far exceeding any others, more than twelve hundred feet long, fifty thousand tons, cost for the two -- fifty million dollars. Each capable of carrying five thousand passengers on each Atlantic crossing.

This comes in the face of plenty of arguments pro and con - mostly con, that those giant liners are not economically sound and cannot possibly make money. Many American ship authorities are saying our best plan is to go in for the smaller type of liner. On the other hand some government officials are said to be in favor of the super liners because of the value that such stupendous ships would have in time of war, and for national pride -- ballyhoo.

PLANE

Out in mid-Pacific a giant plane is flying westward. The big Pan-American Clipper ship, which took off from Honolulu today bound for the Midway Islands. Those dim bits of coral land are thirteen hundred miles northeast of Hawaii. But that isn't all. The Clipper ship with its mighty motors roaring is winging on to the Wake Islands. No plane has ever landed there before they say.

The important point of it all is that the Clipper is reaching further and further westward across the Pacific, pioneering and trail blazing along the air-mail route that is intended to reach from California to China. The present voyage of the big bus is a ten thousand mile run, outward bound from California and return.

DICKINSON

At Detroit the jury said "Guilty!" So ends the case of the murder of Howard Carter Dickinson, New York lawyer and nephew of the Chief Justice of the United States.

In the court proceedings the sordid story was rehearsed over and over, of how the prominent attorney went to Detroit to work on a case and fell into the company of a man and three women of not the loftiest reputation. He was out driving with them, and was killed.

Confessions were repudiated, confessions that it was a robbery, the man committing the murder with the connivance of the girls. Conflicting arguments were presented to judge and jury. The Prosecuting Attorney said robbery and murder. The defense lawyer for the assused man contended that Dickinson had shot himself -- either accident or suicide. The defense attorney for the women argued that he didn't know which theory was correct, but that behind it all was some secret business that has not been made public, some mysterious affair in which the women had no part.

But the verdict is "guilty" -- life imprisonment, the extreme penalty under the law in Michigan.

SUIT

That was a strange story -- the marriage annulment decided some weeks ago, in which the wealthy Clendenin H. Ryan, Junior, sued his wife, an Austrian countess. He said she had married him in a mere fortune-hunting game when she was in love with another man. The court upheld this contention.

But that's not today's story. Strange as was the annulment case, we have a tale still stranger -- growing out of it. A woman who was a maid to the countess is suing for breach of promise. And the story she tells is this:- An investigator was employed to get evidence against the countess. He went to the ~~xxx~~ maid. All he wanted to do was to persuade her to tell him things that could be used in court. One means of persuasion that he used was courtship. He wooed her, and promised to marry her. "I love you. Won't you marry me? And what did the Countess do? All in one breath it seems. In that way he got the evidence he wanted. Then he went his way, and the annulment suit proceeded in the courts.

It was all in a day's work for him, but it was more than that for the maid. Now she's suing him for breach of promise. Can you beat it?

BARBARA

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A minor automobile accident is hardly news, when one car ~~xxx~~ brushes against another, and there's no more than a smashed windshield, nobody hurt. Even when such a trifling motor mishap occurs to a fabulous golden heiress, it isn't anything to attract attention -- unless that heiress happens to be the Countess Haugwitz-Reventlow -- Countess Barbara, former Princess Barbara, the doubly titled Babs. Her former princely ~~xxxx~~ husband, wreathed with legends of marrying money, killed in an automobile crash a week or two ago. *And now Babs herself in an auto crash.*

Well, today's story goes on with
~~and~~ the Countess herself, questioned by the reporters about matters of marriage and finance; ~~and~~ giving sprightly replies. Did Prince ~~Mid~~ Mdivani leave her a legacy said to be from four hundred thousand dollars to a million? And she replies that she's not interested, doesn't care about any money he may have bequeathed to her in his will. What's a few hundred thousand or a million to the Woolworth heiress? Just a bore.

And they asked her had she made a settlement of big money on the Count, her present husband. And she replied, "Oh, that's far too personal to answer." And, I think we will agree it was rather personal -- how much an heiress gives a Count

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when she marries him. ^H The world seems to be interested in the financial affairs of the late Prince who married into the House of Woolworth. There have been rumors that he lost his money. But that's denied. It is denied by the Spanish painter Sert, who married a sister of the Prince. He declares that Alexis ^{Mdivani} ~~and~~ lost nothing at all, that his fortune was intact when he was killed in the motor accident, a fortune between four and five million dollars. Not bad for an impoverished Russian exile who married one American heiress and then another -- and then died a victim of his love for motor speed on the road.

And, while we're on the subject of speed and auto accidents, have you read the thrilling - hair raising article on that in the new Reader's Digest. Don't miss it!

GOLD

Here's a story in which everything comes out right.

Every snarl, every complication, every suspense -- ends happily.

Bill Borthwick was an old Cornish miner, prospecting for gold in

the South Seas. For years he thought he'd find a strike in

Australia, but he never did. Then he tried New Zealand. No luck.

He drifted into the islands of the ^{Pacific}~~South Seas~~, always hunting. Never

losing his hope of finding gold. At last he came to the Fiji

Islands. That was several years ago. There he made a strike.

At least -- Bill Borthwick was sure he had. He was convinced

there was gold in them ^(Fidelity Fiji) ~~their~~ hills. He found traces of ore in the

rocks. And, he knew. That is -- the old Cornishman knew gold,

but he didn't know Scotsmen so well.

His find was on a cattle ranch owned by a party of canny Scots. They knew about those traces of gold in the rock, but they were too canny to pay any attention to such ill^lusions. They looked with scorn at the old prospector who went snooping around digging. Presently they were annoyed. His mining operations were disturbing their cattle. ~~so~~ They threw him off the place, kicked him out.

So Bill Borthwick departed from the Fiji Islands in glum disappointment.

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Back in Australia he told his story, which attracted the attention of Ernest Theodore, a former public official of Queensland. He decided to investigate those tales of ^{Fugitive} Fiji gold. He formed a syndicate which put up the money. When anybody appears with cash in hand, no Scotsman is ever scornful. The thrifty Fiji Island Caledonian cattle ^{ch}rangers made no complaint when they were paid plenty for their land. They, in fact, are the only ones that don't come out so well in this happy-ending story. But when a Scotchman out-Scotches himself, that is a happy ending.

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The syndicate had a long battle against the rocks, but now they've struck it rich. In the past several months they have taken a gold profit of four million dollars out of those South Sea stones. So everything turned out well for them.

One of their difficulties was to get the native Fiji Islanders to dig in the mines. The frizzly-haired black Melanesians were afraid to go underground. They believed that all of the ~~spirits~~ spirits of evil live below the surface of the earth. And they didn't want to get tangled up with those spirits. But they were

finally persuaded, and found that no South Sea devils were there.

A happy ending for them. .

And as for Bill Borthwick -- he ~~was~~ got his ^{too.} The syndicate put up handsome money for him. At seventy he is finally a successful mining man.

So everything came out okay. Let's end on a happy ending. If we went on to another story it might not turn out so well, ^{S.} ~~and~~ --

SO LONG UNTIL TOMORROW.

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