

A Bum?

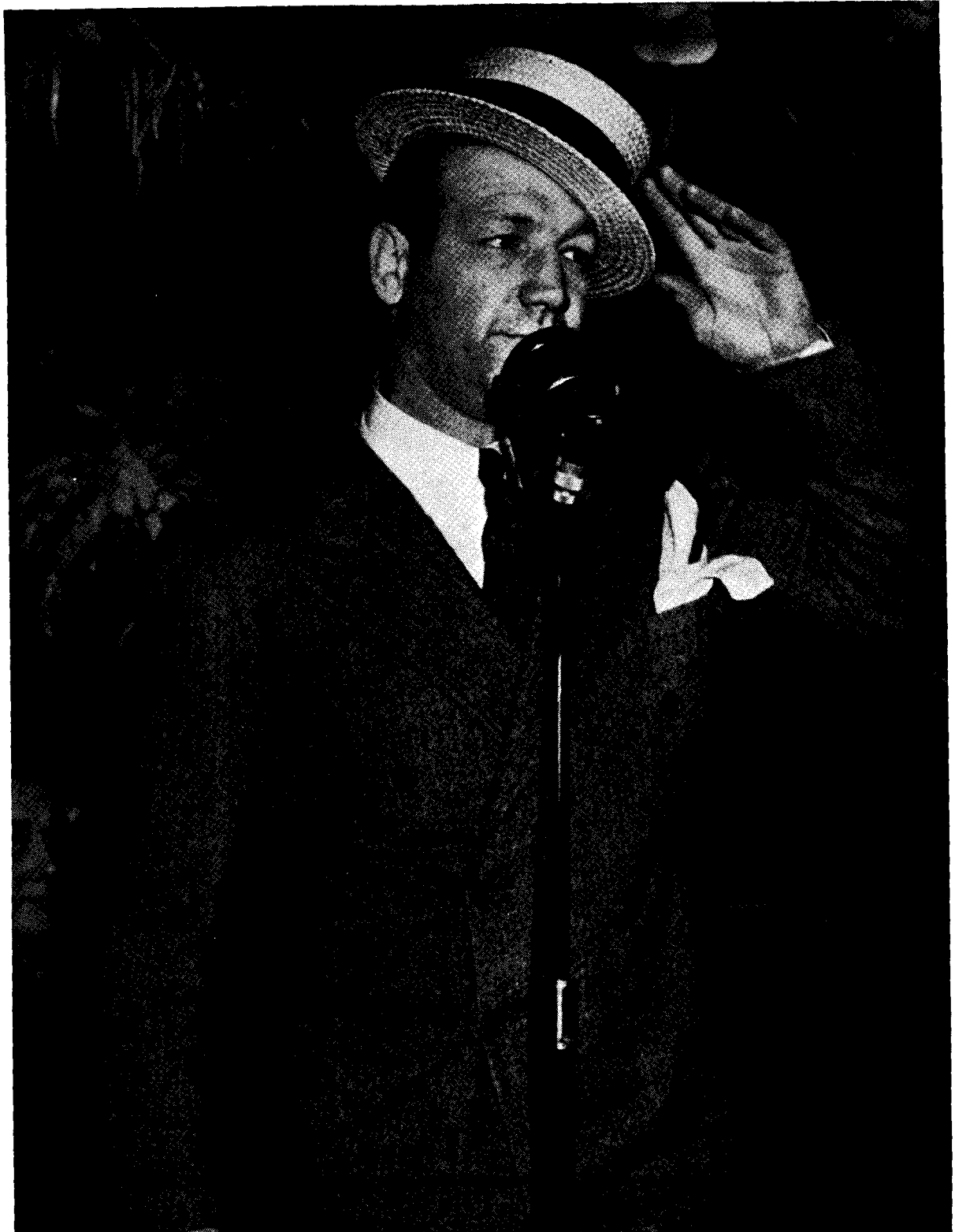
By Kyle Crichton

Herr Rosenbloom is a student of Sam Goldwyn in diction, a rival of Earl Carroll in Hollywood night life and Clark Gable's most distant competitor. Maybe all the rest of us are just crazy

MR. MAXIE ROSENBLOOM has been the light heavyweight boxing champion of the world and is now a character actor in the movies. Between times he has been a bon vivant, a world traveler, a speed demon, a man-about-town. Although it would seem difficult to fashion a word to characterize a man of such dimensions, it has been aptly done by Mr. Rosenbloom's host of friends: they refer to him simply and affectionately as a bum.

Mr. Rosenbloom established himself as a great motion-picture star by the immortal scene in *Nothing Sacred* when he called his cousin Moe in Canarsie by phone from California. "Hello, Moe!" he yelled. "Is that you? I can't hear you." Moe now wants to come out to Hollywood and make personal appearances.

At any rate Maxie is now one of the most active of Warner stars, and one who watches keenly as the "B" pictures rush by will see the great man engaged at his art. But this is only one facet of his personality. Not content with his cinema fame, Mr. Rosenbloom has pushed his cauliflower ear and distinguished countenance into other enterprises and has become part owner and chief entertainer of his own night club. The elegant Hollywood bistro is known as Slapsie Maxie's Place and is the first night club in the world built in an areaway. In its original state it was so small that a customer not only would have been unable to swing a cat within its hallowed walls but would have been fortunate to escape without personal injury. The spectacle of the waiters getting from one paying guest to the next by walking over the interven-



WILL CONNELL

Doing all right for himself after a careless and colorful reign as light heavyweight champion is Slapsie Maxie Rosenbloom, head man of Hollywood's zaniest night club and between times actor, radio personality and man-about-town. Below, a sample of the Rosenbloom genius: he prepares for his leading role in the skit entitled "Rifka and the Seven Schtoonks"



ing tables gave a fetid air of neighborliness to the joint. In this setting Mr. Rosenbloom entertained his customers with songs that displayed his impeccable diction and revealed a voice that seemed to come up out of his innards as if edging its way over cobblestones.

But if Mr. Rosenbloom's personality is best observed at his night club, his international prestige arises from his motion pictures, which are coming so fast that Maxie can't remember the titles. He works at his club till two and three in the morning, sits around and gasses with the boys till four and is on the lot by nine next morning. This gives Mr. Rosenbloom's acting a quality of fantasy that ends slightly this side of illiteracy. People as far away as Java think it is genius. Some of his more recent triumphs

have been *Broadway Cavalier*, *Always Leave Them Laughing*, *Women in the Wind*, and *One Exciting Night*, for which he was loaned to Universal.

All has not been beautiful at the night club, however. In despair at the patrons who came and sang (to the tune of *Rosalie*), "Rosenbloom, you're lousy; Rosenbloom, you stink," the master instituted for a time a cover charge of ten cents "to keep out the riff-raff" but soon relented of his daring and reduced the figure to five cents when the institution threatened to become too exclusive.

His foils in this venture have successively been the fabulous Joe Frisco, Cully Richards and now Dave Waldron. Business after two years is still terrific, with as many as two hundred eager spenders milling around the sidewalk on a Saturday night, eager to get inside and insult the owner. On behalf of Mr. Rosenbloom it may be said that he takes all such joviality in good part, having been called a tramp in assorted languages through the years and finding the honor rather a source of revenue than a handicap in his profession.

And this typically American triumph has resulted entirely from Mr. Rosenbloom's ability to bash the beak of his fellow man while confined within the limits of a 20-foot roped enclosure. At the time last July when he fought a draw with Bob Pastor in Los Angeles, Maxie had been nineteen years in the ring and had taken part in more than four hundred bouts. Before drawing with Pastor, he had licked Lou Nova and Roscoe Toles, a record for an old man.

As an example for the (Continued on page 56)

Mail-Order Government

By Harold L. Ickes

SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR

AMERICA has been the laboratory for the testing of many political theories. Some of these have proved to be sound, some amusingly bizarre and some dangerous. At the moment we are in the process of determining how our institutions will stand the latest test to which they have been subjected; whether the theory of government by mail order will prove to be as satisfactory to those who are engaged in advancing it as the mail-order business has been found to be profitable to those who merchandise standardized articles produced in mass profligacy in regimented factories.

It has long been realized that, on occasion, members of legislative bodies yield all too readily to the demands of pressure groups. Lobbyists have become an accepted parasitic growth upon legislative bodies. The loosing of an avalanche of chain letters or telegrams, many of them faked, in support of or in opposition to a pending measure is not a new phenomenon.

What is new is the discovery that has been made recently of the tremendous potentialities of the radio, combined with a concentrated newspaper attack, for devil-brewing a turbulent mob spirit that will express itself in an unprecedented flood of communications directed at a particular point with respect to a particular proposal. In the light of recent experiences, those interests that heretofore have relied upon the hoarse whisperings of professional lobbyists to persuade the congressional mind to a bit mellower attitude, will probably proceed forthwith to revise their technique. If they want quick results, even startlingly overwhelming results, the thing for them to do is to persuade our simple-minded columnists that American institutions are in danger, while at the same time enlisting the services of a demagogic voice to whip up mob frenzy over the air.

A Mob Without Form

It is to be doubted whether the pages of American political history can disclose a more bitterly contested sham battle on a falser front than the one on which the curtain was run down last April in Washington when the President's bill to reorganize the executive departments was defeated. The very dishonesty of the attack required the stimulation of a state of frenzy of sufficient intensity to deaden all power of reason and overcome any desire to be fair or just or even decent. America went berserk on an emotional debauch, as a result of which we were given an example of irresponsible and vindictive mob rule that may well cause concern to responsible and sober-minded citizens.

On this occasion the mob was all the more dangerous and sinister because it was not one of flesh and blood assembled at a given time and place, if we except the cheaply pathetic "Paul Reveres" who, under the false stimulation of intellects stronger, if less honest, than their own, ingloriously marched on to

Washington only to sneak dejectedly away again. And yet while the mob was not one of flesh and blood, it did not lack the dreadful characteristics of a veritable lynching bee. The ominous result was to disclose that to arouse mob spirit—that miasmic, bloodthirsty, degrading emanation out of the dim past before man even began to think that he was civilized—does not require physical contact with others who are like-minded in a surging, uncontrollable mass of humanity with a common object of wreaking some unreasoned vengeance. It was demonstrated that mob spirit can be whipped up and touched off through the printed word or by radio. Blind hate can be brewed by hysterical columnists through the newspapers and by unscrupulous demagogues over the air. For the sake of the country it is to be hoped that Frank Gannett, a more or less well-known reactionary lord of the press, and those who carefully conceal their identity in his swaggering shadow, may not live to discover that they have by their own devilish petard hoisted themselves and the American institutions which they pretend to revere.

After its drunken frenzy over the exceedingly mild and altogether harmless reorganization bill of the President, America probably found little to ad-

mire in itself the morning after as it regarded its own bleary-eyed appearance in the mirror. There is reason to believe that it felt more than a little ashamed of itself. And yet this unlovely episode of the supersession by lynch law of long-established procedure in the Senate and House of Representatives was not without its comic relief.

The March of the Wooden Soldiers

Featuring this charge of the light-headed brigade, bent upon "saving" the Constitution, despite the fact that no danger threatened it, was the march of the wooden soldiers of the newspaper columns. Something perhaps should be said in extenuation of the misguided zeal of the embattled columnists. After all, their columns must march almost daily without a breathing spell for factual preparation and with no time off for mental fog. Even the bravest of the columnists, like that indomitable Irish flyer, Douglas Corrigan, sometimes lose their sense of direction and mistake Ireland for California.

To the credit of the fraternity, let it be recorded that three famous writers, Walter Lippmann, Arthur Krock and Heywood Broun, did refuse to tilt their lances at straw men and did struggle

valiantly, even if vainly, to deflect with facts the mad march of some of their misinformed and misinforming fellow columnists.

Facts were as nothing before the mad march of the wooden columnists. Theirs was not to reason why, theirs was to stop Roosevelt or die. They performed prodigies of Don Quixote valor. Tossing about seasick in oceans of black ink, they outdid one another in eruptive exaggeration of an imagined danger to our institutions. General Hugh S. Johnson, who can fight for or against the New Deal with equal fervor and apparently equal mental confusion, let loose floods of uncontrollable tears upon many a shoulder that was not quick enough to evade the salty deluge. He was the leading hysteric in a highly hysterical group that was staging a serio-comic farce portraying a threatened "dictatorship." He demonstrated that one could be "hard-boiled" to the point of almost complete vaporization.

While Mark Sullivan, David Lawrence, Paul Mallon, "Croak" Carter and others could not put on as diverting a show as the Spaniard of old, they equaled, and in some instances excelled, him in other respects—Mark Sullivan in pontifical gloomings and the others in gross misstatements as to the objects

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One of those who have, in Mr. Ickes' opinion, "by their own devilish petard hoisted themselves and the American institutions they pretended to revere" is strongly anti-New Deal newspaper publisher Frank Gannett