

# Counsel for Inquiry

James Lee Rankin

NY-12/11  
WHEN James Lee Rankin was Solicitor General of the United States in the second Eisenhower Administration, he made his mark with his concern for the moral implications of the law. In 1958, after violence led to a halt in school desegregation in Little Rock, he presented the Government's case

Man  
in the  
News

to the Supreme Court. Speaking softly but with conviction, he told the Court: "No court of law in this land can recognize that you can ever bow to force and violence. We have paid too great a price to come this far along the road of lawful action."

The Court agreed, and desegregation in Little Rock went ahead—peacefully.

He was less persuasive in presenting a Government case testing the use of anonymous informants in the industrial security program, and the court ruled against the Government. Under questioning by the Justices, Mr. Rankin could not conceal his personal doubts about the fairness of such proceedings.

Chief Justice Earl Warren thus knows first-hand the quality of the man he named yesterday as general counsel to the special commission investigating the assassination of President Kennedy.

Mr. Rankin was born July 8, 1907, in Hartington, Neb., and went to school in Lincoln, the state capital. There the short, slender lawyer established his practice after being graduated from the University of Nebraska Law School in 1930.

## Worked With Brownell

He was active in Republican Presidential campaigns and went to Washington when an old friend from Lincoln, Herbert Brownell, became President Dwight D. Eisenhower's Attorney General in 1953. His work as Assistant Attorney General won his appointment as Solicitor General in August, 1956.

Some were surprised when, after eight years of Government service, he moved to New York rather than lingering by the Potomac or returning to Lincoln. He won admission to the New York bar on motion—that is, on the basis of a record so impeccable that the regular bar examination is waived—and established an independent practice here two years ago.

The office suite on the top floor of the Bar Building on West 44th Street reflects the man, dignified but not imposing. There is plenty of steely gray in his hair. His manner is direct in a way that is friendly rather than curt. The



United Press International

Stresses spirit of the law

face is open, confident and strong.

"We're enjoying New York," he said recently. He and his wife, the former Gertrude Carpenter, whom he has known since they were children, live on Sutton Place, which they chose because of the East River view.

## A Lover of Horses

Mr. Rankin has not been active in Republican politics here, beyond a public recommendation to Governor Rockefeller to reconsider his refusal to call a special session of the Legislature on reapportionment.

It is a long way from the Rankins' ranch near Fort Pierre, S. D., where they keep the Morgan horses he loves to ride. Last summer he hoped to spend a month there, but it turned out to be only a week.

For exercise in the city, he likes walking some 15 blocks to work, and sometimes back. There is a touch of nostalgia when he talks about the Morgans; he enjoys spotting some of the breed among the horses used by the city's mounted police.

The Rankins have three children, James Lee Jr., studying law at the University of California at Berkeley; Roger Carpenter, with the Army in Buffalo, and Sara Elizabeth, a junior at the University of Nebraska.

They had planned to spend 10 days at Christmas in Buffalo with their first grandchild, Roger Todd Rankin. But Mr. Rankin said yesterday, "If we get up there, it will be a very short affair now."

248