

MAN OF THE WEEK

Martin Dies

His Committee's Show Rivals 'Tobacco Road' For Run Record

By CAL TINNEY

At last there is no question but what the Dies investigation is a success. Any doubt about that was knocked sky-west and crooked this week when even Mrs. Roosevelt said as how she would like to testify before it.

Martin's showmanship has impressed even Gypsy Rose Lee, of strip-tease fame. "Why not the Congressman and me form a vaudeville team?" she sez. "With my act and his publicity we could bring back vaudeville."

Soon the Dies committee members are going off in groups of two or more to hold hearings at widely separated points in the country. Making it the first Congressional investigating committee ever able to form road companies.

As for Martin himself, it has got so he is liable to pop up any place—Chicago, Detroit, Hollywood, New York. It used to be you only had to have the American flag for scenery at an Americanism rally. Now you have to have the American flag and Martin Dies.

He Likes to Talk

Well, he's good-looking scenery—tall, blond, and broad-shouldered. Two hundred and five pounds would make a fat man out of some fellers, but on Martin's six-foot-three frame it just hides his ribs.

He has fists the size of Virginia hams, and lungs that make the loudspeaking apparatus perfectly superfluous whenever Martin exercises his tonsils.

He likes to speak. In fact, the first thing that reporter friends of mine in Washington told me about him was "Martin never makes a speech without astonishing Martin. He listens with rapt attention and is his own best fan."

Even in private he's a long ways from tongue-tied. Ask him if he thinks his investigating committee is doin' any good and his comeback is, "We're getting the newspaper lineage, don't we? Well, that's what it takes to put the skids under these un-American groups. Just publicity and more publicity."

It Rhymes With "Spies"

Wendell L. Willkie, the conservative, New Deal hating utilities hi-mogul, ain't so sure that "investigations with an eye to newspaper deadlines" are a good thing for keeping human rights intact. But Martin goes right on.

They told me he always wore a colored shirt, and a small black bow tie. Well, he had on the shirt but he had shucked off the tie when I interviewed him out at his two-story domicile in Washington.

"I'm just wore out," he told me. "Been



MARTIN DIES

staying up nights working on this stuff. Don't you see?"

I told him I saw, and asked him if his wife was much help to him in his work. "In every way," he exclaimed. "By keepin' my home, by lookin' after my children, by encouragin' me, by saving money—she runs practically all the finances of the family. Otherwise we never would have anything. Don't have much as it is."

Martin told me he was thirty-eight years old, that his name's pronounced to rhyme with "Spies," and that he's of German descent on his maw's side. "So I can't be against Fritz Kuhn for racial reasons."

Down in Texas, where he was born, Martin's paw and maw separated when he was a boy. "So I lived with my mother on her farm near Greenville part of the time, and with my father in Washington the rest of the time," Martin told me.

Martin Dies Sr. set his rope-tied valise down in Washington in 1907, and stayed ten years. "Father voted against United States entry into the World War," Martin told me. "That ought to be enough to show you he was no dumb-bell."

Martin admits he's had an interesting life. F'rinstance, how many other guys met and fell in love with their wife-to-be when he was only eleven, and lived to marry her and have three boys? "Well, that's all happened to me," Martin sez.

He was in school at Greenville, Texas, when he met the future Missus, then he went lopin' around to schools here, there, everywhere. Finally, because he wanted to be a Congressman, he went to the Hickman College of Expression, in Washington, D. C.

Course, you have to be a lawyer first before you can be a Congressman. At least that is the unwritten law in Texas. So Mar-

Congressman Who Likes To Talk Wants Job To Be Permanent

tin Dies Jr., aged twenty, got his disabilities removed, and took the Texas bar examinations, after which he started in law practice at Marshall, Texas, to support hisself and his bride.

"Did you want to be a Congressman ALL this time?" I asked him, "or did you have your lucid moments?"

"I never had any lucid moments," Martin stated, "and in 1930 I was elected to Congress."

It soon got to be plain to folks in Washington, however, that the brawny Texan didn't have to know anything about a subject to make a speech on it. Shucks, he could approach any subject from the "God and country" angle.

Uvalde Jack Garner sez "The kid's got something," and helped him land a seat on the powerful rules committee. In fact, they ain't enemies yet, Jack and Martin. Remember when Martin tried to throw a monkey-wrench in Mr. Roosevelt's wage-and-hour bill? Well, you can find folks who say Jack handed Martin the monkey-wrench.

Martin was given his "House Committee for Investigating Un-American Activities" last year. Mebbe it was because of the little dough—he only had \$25,000 to book witnesses with—that the committee got such bad reviews then.

Wants Permanent Bureau

The committee meetings became hearings for "publicly sifted hearsay." One correspondent wrote, "Some Congressional committees smell, some are foul and some stink—the Dies committee stinks."

Then last February Martin got a \$100,000 appropriation, and there began a parade of guest stars—Earl Browder, Fritz Kuhn, ex-Communist agent Walter Krivitsky, and others—that saved the show—and Martin Dies.

Some of the revelations have been so startling that on at least two occasions Chairman Dies nearly swallowed his gum.

"Shucks, this ought to be a permanent committee," Martin sez now. "Sort of a continuing spotlight on all quacks and racketeers."

The show's got only till January 3 to run if the House don't angel it again. But the House will—the signing of the Russian-Nazi pact scared up too much new plot material for 'em to consider ringin' down the curtain now.

Whatever else Martin is, he ain't no fortune teller. He told me a year ago: "There is absolutely no doubt but that France and England will form an alliance with Germany and Italy to fight Russia."