



SENATOR ROBERT S. KERR
"The Big Boom from Oklahoma"

In the April 9 issue of the *Saturday Evening Post*, the featured article was entitled, "The Big Boom from Oklahoma" with the following brief sketch to introduce the material, "The richest—and loudest—man in the United States Senate is a multimillionaire teetotaler named Robert S. Kerr. A frank report," authored by Marquis W. Childs, "on an aggressive optimist whose political foes call him everything from 'opportunist' to 'sorgumpackin' Bob."

Pictorially the *Post* points up Senator Kerr's family portrait, a shot taken with Senator Vandenberg and Vice President Barkley, his visit to an oil drilling operation and a remarkably similar, informal shot to the one taken above for *Sooner Magazine* during Senator Kerr's recent visit to Oklahoma City.

Childs says, "If he had chosen his own background for a political career, Kerr could hardly have done better. He was born in a fourteen-foot-square log cabin without a window in it; it stood southeast of where the town of Ada now stands. . . . The cabin is still standing, and Kerr, who has a strong belief in his destiny and his lucky star, is not unaware that presidential candidates in the past have been helped by a log-cabin origin. . . ."

"It was a rugged pioneer existence. The elder Kerr, self-educated and a Bible scholar of considerable reputation, wanted learning for his children. When Bob was growing into adolescence, statehood was the thing everyone talked about. His father told him that he could be governor someday if he wanted to badly enough. Bob never forgot that. On a borrowed \$350, he went to Oklahoma University at Norman one year (1916). He wrote his father that he was going to play football."

Kerr's father objected strenuously and the report continues, "That ended football, and the year at Oklahoma U. ended Kerr's formal schooling."

The story traces Kerr's activities in the army in 1917 and his return to study law which culminated in his passing the state bar examination. He soon became interested in oil operations which eventually led to the tidy financial sum he now

has. Says Childs, "At fifty-two, Kerr is worth about \$10,000,000 and he has amassed it all during the past two decades. This makes him perhaps the richest man in the United States Senate, although there are formidable runners-up. . . ."

The report goes on, "Kerr was moving closer to his political goal, the governorship. Luckily he was never at a loss for words, and he had a powerful voice. His large and expansive optimism was hard to resist. He was made Democratic national committeeman for Oklahoma; this was a tribute to his ability to raise funds."

Childs covers the race for the governorship in 1942 and Kerr's career in office. He also reviews the keynote address in 1944 at the Democratic national convention, and the bitterness of the senatorial campaign of 1948.

The author reports, "On the day he was sworn in as Oklahoma's new senator, Democrat Robert S. Kerr was taken in tow by a Republican senator who volunteered to introduce him to his colleagues on the minority side. They came to Senator William Jenner, of Indiana, who looked somewhat embarrassed.

"I don't know," Jenner said, "whether the senator from Oklahoma will want to shake my hand or not."

"I certainly do want to shake your hand," said Kerr in his habitually booming voice. "I want to shake the hand of the man who did more than any other person to elect me to the Senate."

"It was Jenner who ordered a Senate subcommittee into Oklahoma last fall to investigate reports that Kerr was spending large sums of money in his campaign. . . ."

"In early December the senator-elect and his wife flew to Washington. They had what might be described as an outside housing problem to solve. Kerr is six feet three; his wife just under six feet; their oldest son, Bob, Jr., (arts and science junior) six feet four; Breen, who is twenty in January, is six feet six and a half, and the only daughter, Kay, is six feet. The youngest child, Bill, eleven, has had to carry a notarized birth certificate for the past year and a half in order to be admitted to the movies for half price. . . ."

"Don't you realize," one of his conservative

A Triple Play

Log Cabin To Governor To Senator

colleagues said to him in the course of an argument over Federal taxation, "That you paid out in taxes the last year more than your father made in his entire lifetime?"

"That's about right," Kerr replied. "But even after I paid those taxes I kept more than my father made in his whole life."

"And somehow that sums up this dry, Baptist multimillionaire New Dealer who has always driven hard for the main chance. Bob Kerr is convinced that the country will hear a lot more about Oklahoma and about Bob Kerr."

The Rank Is Permanent

Velma L. Richardson, '28ba, dietitian in the Women's Medical Specialist Corps, United States Army, of Lynwood, California, who has held the temporary rank of captain, has been promoted to a permanent captaincy.

Captain Richardson is stationed at Letterman General hospital, San Francisco. She previously has been stationed at Wakeman General hospital Camp Atterbury, Indiana; Pratt General hospital, Coral Gables, Florida; McCornack General hospital, Pasadena, California; Kirtland Field, New Mexico, Base hospital; and Camp Campbell, Kentucky, Station hospital.

As a civilian, Captain Richardson was dietitian of Parkland hospital, Dallas, Texas; City Memorial hospital, Nachogdoches, Texas, and supervisor of the WPA school lunch program in Oklahoma City.

► James H. Bragg, '36ms, director of photographic service, and Charles N. Hockman, '49ed, motion picture producer for the extension division, were in Kansas City, Missouri, April 10-12 putting sound on the women's physical education film and discussing scripts for films for the Oklahoma Planning and Resources board.

► Burton H. Gildersleeve, associate professor of finance, attended a meeting of the Southwestern Social Science Association in Fort Worth April 14-15.