

still able to laugh at it and face the end unflinchingly.

I gave him his wish, and I have never regretted it. I shall do the same again if necessity arises, un-

til the law makes it possible for incurable sufferers to be relieved painlessly of their misery.—*Anon, condensed from Smith's Weekly, Australia.*

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A NEW OIL KING

UNLESS you happen to live in Pittsburgh, or are in the oil business—where his name is a legend—it is an odds—on bet that you never heard of Michael L. Benedum. He is one of the nation's dozen wealthiest men, one of the largest, if not *the* largest, income taxpayer in America, and by all odds the most successful oil wildcatter in history.

Benedum has created a dozen multi-millionaires, made hundreds of men and women independently wealthy. He controls 15 or 20 major corporations, but holds no corporate office of any kind, except president of one oil company and director of a Pittsburgh bank. He has never bought a ticket on a horse race, tossed a chip on a roulette table, owned a share of stock on margin, or even bet a nickel on a game of penny ante, and he regularly denounces gambling to his associates. Yet he is the greatest gambler in America, casually tossing as much as three million dollars into a wildcat prospect before a well ever sinks into the earth. And that is the wildest kind of gambling, for on more than one occasion he has staked his hopes on hunches that would make a dream book lottery player's system seem like conservative finance.

A few years ago the government sued him and the Tex-Penn Oil Company for 79 million dollars in the back income taxes. His attorney was the same man, John W. Davis, who had represented him against Standard Oil when both were youngsters. While the suit was in progress Benedum received a wire from his friend, Amon Carter of Texas, reading, "Congratulations on having Uncle Sam think you are worth nine million dollars." Evidently a clerical error had caused the omission of the word "seventy." Mike wired back, "don't insult me: it is seventy-nine." Eventually the Supreme Court decided that Benedum owed no back taxes.

Although his fortune is so enormous that he could not possibly spend it, Benedum is wildcatting today with the same eagerness that he showed 40 years ago.—*Ted Leitzell, from Ken.*