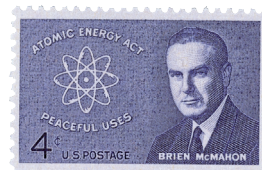


This Day in History... July 28, 1952

Death of Brien McMahon

Connecticut senator and chairman of the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy Brien McMahon died on July 28, 1952, in Washington, DC.

McMahon was born on October 6, 1903, in Norwalk, Fairfield County, Connecticut. After graduating from Yale law school he practiced law, and then became a city judge in 1933. He went on to serve as a special assistant to the attorney general of the United States and later assistant attorney general of the US, in charge of the Department of Justice Criminal Division.



Stamp issued on the 10th anniversary of McMahon's death.



In 1953, Eisenhower gave his Atoms for Peace speech, urging the use of nuclear power for peace, rather than destruction.

At the Criminal Division, McMahon work several high profile cases. Among these was the prosecution of Louis Piquette, lawyer to gangster John Dillinger. He also worked on cases against criminal "Baby Face" Nelson. The case that propelled him to the national stage was the Harlan County Coal Miners' case, which was notable as the first to try to protect unions under the Wagner Act.

In 1944, McMahon was elected to the US Senate. He was re-elected in 1950, and served until his death. McMahon served as chairman of the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy. In 1945 he introduced a bill that would put control and development of nuclear technology into civilian, rather than military, hands. President Truman signed the Atomic Energy Act of 1946 (sometimes called the McMahon Act) establishing the United States Atomic Energy Commission (AEC). The AEC directed the development and use of atomic energy for both military and civilian purposes.

In 1949, the AEC created the National Reactor Testing Station to study the possibilities of nuclear energy. Located between the towns of Arco and Idaho Falls, Idaho, the facility successfully achieved its first peacetime use of nuclear energy to power four light bulbs in 1951. Four years later, on July 17, 1955, the plant supplied nuclear power to Arco, a town of about 1,000 residents located about 20 miles from the facility. This event made Arco the world's first city to be run entirely on atomic energy.

In 1952, McMahon proposed the creation of an "army" of young Americans to serve as "missionaries of democracy." The proposal served as one of the inspirations for the Peace Corps, established in 1961.

Also in 1952, McMahon launched a campaign to run for president. His slogan was "The Man is McMahon" and his slogan "to insure world peace through fear of atomic weapons." However, he was soon diagnosed with cancer and died on July 28, 1952. A school in Norwalk, Connecticut and a residence hall at the University of Connecticut were named in his honor.



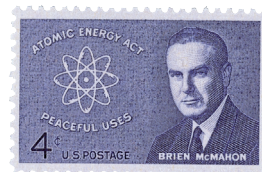
McMahon proposed an idea similar to the Peace Corps nearly a decade before it was created by JFK.

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