

[Translation]

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LETTER FROM THE NATIONAL CAPITAL

By Diplomaticus

Washington. -- The number of new appointments to leading positions in the diplomatic service of the United States, the announcement of which was made about the close of the year, and the confirmation of which by the Foreign Relations Committee of the Senate was taken up at its meeting of January 10, is extraordinarily large, and in particular, these appointments are really important. But as the material to be treated in this column has also increased greatly in extent during the last few days, we must today restrict ourselves to bringing out merely certain points.

The appointment of the Assistant Secretary of State, George S. Messersmith, as Ambassador in Habana, is an event of special significance, because this Messersmith is a man of extraordinary type. It was Messersmith who brought to a conclusion, so to speak, the reorganization of the State Department. His unheard of power of work and his great initiative are to be thanked for the fact that there are now divisions in the State Department

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which occupy themselves generally with the refugee problem and others the experts of which are now studying, as they evolve, problems which ought not to arise or be ready for discussion until after the end of this (second) World War. Material is being collected in order to be prepared for the "coming rebuilding of the world". It has also been Messersmith who practically put the capstone on the system of the establishment of a diplomatic or consular succession, a thoroughly trained and purely career set of officials for the American Foreign Service. Much should be made of this here in particular because an earlier report in this place might have aroused misunderstandings.

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The expression "he will leave a gap that will be hard to fill" does not apply fully to George S. Messersmith, the new Ambassador, since Messersmith is among those rare men who have no "unfinished work". The man is equipped with an extraordinary talent for organization and a most unusual capacity for work. He has carried out the program which he set for himself - a program that certainly made allowance for suggestions of the President on many points, but it is just as certain that that was done only when those points appeared to be desirable "in the interest of the service" - and he will now find new duties in Habana

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and will set new tasks for himself. We can think of a Messersmith without a program of duties just as little as we can think of a Messersmith without a clear desk. But we also believe we can assume it as a certainty that after the conclusion of the work of reorganization he will gladly exchange his high position in the State Department for that in Cuba.

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