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RESERVE COLUMN

SPECIAL -- NOTE TO EDITORS: This is an extra release to be held as reserve and used when or if a regular release is delayed in the mails. It is a companion piece to the recent extra reserve column dealing with the foremost foreign ambassadors in Washington. Both columns, in their quick appraisals of personalities supply valuable morgue material.

THE WASHINGTON MERRY-GO-ROUND

(Trademark)

By Drew Pearson and Robert S. Allen
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THE SLOW MERRY-GO-ROUND OF THE DIPLOMATS IN THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE;
CORDELL HULL, BENIGN AND KINDLY, STRONG ON IDEAS, WEAK ON EXECUTION;
UNDER SECRETARY PHILLIPS, STRONG ON EXECUTION, LACKING IN INITIATIVE;
HOW SUMNER WELLES AND THE REST ARE HANDLING AMERICA'S FOREIGN PROBLEMS.

WASHINGTON -- For almost one year Cordell Hull's State Department has been keeping its nose to the ground, doing as little as possible and doing it as quietly as possible.

This reticence followed the terrible fiasco of the London Economic Conference and all the ballyhoo of preparing for it in Washington.

But now our diplomats have decided it is safe to poke their noses above ground and, like the groundhog, are showing themselves occasionally. At last, Mr. Hull's reciprocity treaties have begun to take shape, and, a working agreement between France and Britain makes Germany's return to the disarmament discussions possible.

Japan once again has reared its head in China. Another abortive naval conference looms on the horizon. Cuba and Mexico retain their status as perennial problems.

All of these problems are being handled by one of a unique collection of diplomats, the most cosmopolitan ever assembled under any Administration. Here is a look-see at some of them.

CORDELL HULL came into office with the opportunity of being the most outstanding Secretary of State in recent years. So far, however, he has been a blank and an enigma. He has a benign manner, a kindly disposition, an unconquerable inability to express himself on any one point in less than a thousand words, and the vindictiveness of the Tennessee mountain clans from which he sprang.

His ideas are superb, his execution atrocious.

Secretary Hull lives on the memories of the Pan-American Conference at Montevideo, where he was a hero. And any ambassador who comes

to see him finds the conversation, sooner or later, drifting around to "the spirit of Montevideo".

Most ambassadors, however, do not come to see Mr. Hull. They find him too loquacious. When they want something done, they see Under-Secretary Phillips or, on Latin-American affairs, Sumner Welles.

WILLIAM PHILLIPS, Under Secretary of State, is an accomplished diplomat. His clothes are well-cut, his ties, shirt and handkerchiefs harmonize, his voice is soft and agreeable. He can say nothing in several languages. Phillips' chief characteristic is to take no responsibility under any circumstances. When he says, "I don't know", the cadences of his voice vary according to whether he is Acting Secretary of State or just the Under Secretary.

Of human passions he shows nothing. Whatever feelings he may have are carefully suppressed by the dignity of his office.

While this fear of responsibility makes him incapable of showing any initiative, he is an excellent executive. There are few men in the State Department who can take orders with the same precision, and execute them as punctiliously.

SUMNER WELLES, Assistant Secretary of State, is the most forthright executive in the State Department. He has under his suzerainty the twenty republics of Latin-America, and the path in front of his door is worn with their goings and comings. Despite a conservative -- almost Tory -- background, Welles is a liberal and is opposed to championing the rights of American bankers and big corporations in the Western Hemisphere, whose destinies in part he controls.

He sold President Roosevelt on the "good neighbor" policy, and, when it comes to Latin-American affairs, he is the State Department. Certainly, Mr. Hull would not think of over-ruling him, and on most policies this also applies to the President.

WILBUR JOHN CARR, the oldest Assistant Secretary of State, is the only man in the Department who has worked his way up from a clerkship to a position of major importance. For nineteen years he supported an invalid wife on an infinitesimal salary and rose from Clerk to Chief Clerk, then to Director of the Consular Bureau. His wife died, and seven years later he married again, this time to a lady of wealth. Wealth is the first requisite of success in the State Department and from that time on Carr was made.

Carr has not only wealth but experience and a reasonable amount of brains. The result is that he runs most of the administrative bureaus of the State Department and runs them fairly well. He is slow, meticulous to the last T, and has a habit of getting his desk piled so high with papers that the Under Secretary of State once ordered him to clean them off. He is cursed from every side. It is Carr here and Carr there, and Carr's to blame for anything happening anywhere, but if he passed out of the picture the State Department would look years before it could replace him.

JOSEPH CLARK GREW, American Ambassador to Tokyo, has recovered from the blight cast upon his reputation as Under Secretary of State, and is now ranked as one of the ablest of career men. A wealthy descendant of the Boston Cabots, related by marriage to the House of Morgan, Grew prepared for a diplomatic career by tiger shooting in Manchuria, elephant hunting in India, and a clerkship in the American Consulate in Cairo at the age of twenty-four.

As Under Secretary of State, Grew was in constant hot water, but as Ambassador to Japan he has handled a delicate diplomatic situation with consummate tact and skill.

HAL SEVIER was appointed by Jim Farley to be Ambassador to Chile, and the State Department has been regretting it ever since. Sevier's qualifications for office were the fact that his wife was a member of the Democratic National Committee from Texas, and that he had antagonized various Chileans while serving in that country as the representative of George Creel, during the World War. Before his appointment, Sevier's name was not listed in "Who's Who", though his wife's was. Following his appointment, his wife's sketch has been removed and his inserted.

ALEXANDER W. WEDDELL has spent a lifetime in the Consular Service and was not elevated to the important post of American Ambassador to Argentina until after he had married a wealthy St. Louis widow and contributed heavily to the Democratic Party. His wife he met while she was on a world cruise and he was Consul General at Calcutta.

Weddell has come in for indirect State Department censure on various occasions, one of them being when he arrived from Argentina to describe Roosevelt as a "mystic", and to predict that Argentina would sell wheat to the United States. The last thing the Roosevelt Administration wanted the American farmer to think was that the domestic market would be invaded by Argentina.

NELSON JOHNSON, American Minister to China, is one of the few men in the career service who has reached the top without having his path plentifully lubricated with money. Johnson lives only on his salary, and now that, after forty years of bachelordom, he has married he must live as meagerly as the Chinese. He has spent some twenty years among the latter, but, unlike most people who have been close to the yellow race, he has not soured on them.

Before leaving for China to become Minister, a friend showed Johnson a toy air-plane which looped the loop, dipped and circled automatically. Johnson was as pleased as a small boy. A few days later, when the friend went back to the store to get another plane, the dealer was sold out. He explained that the new Minister to China had purchased his entire stock.

Johnson appreciated the Chinese sense of humor. He was preparing for his new job.

MICHAEL MC DERMOTT, Chief of the Division of Current Information is an amiable Irishman, naive and idealistic enough to believe that the Hand of God guides the Secretary of State, which makes him suffer inward agonies in dealing with agnostic newspaper men. Despite the fact, that under the New Deal some fifty or more skilled reporters have been hired by the Government to disseminate news to the press, McDermott remains probably the most efficient press relations officer of them all.

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