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# The Bystander visits the American Embassy in London

The Bystander (Magazine)

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# More Fragments from France : By Bruce Bairnsfather



“Just think, if only you and I was Gort and Ironside! There'd be none of this foot sloggin'. They'd send a lorry for us”

## The "Bystander" visits The American Embassy in London



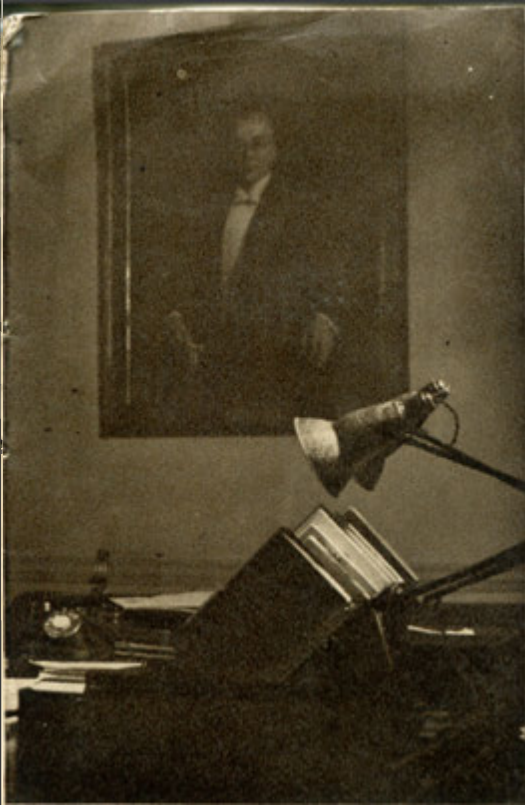
*The Ambassador, Joseph Patrick Kennedy, sits down at his uncluttered desk first thing every morning to go through his personal mail, all of which he sees and deals with himself. But, for the last few weeks, he has been far from this setting, spending Christmas with his family in Florida. He left England early in December, flying to New York, and then posting down to Washington to see the President. There, as former head of the Maritime Commission, he discussed the position of American shipping during and after the war, as well as giving the President information "too confidential for cables," speaking publicly in favour of a third term of office for Mr. Roosevelt, and of the U.S. keeping out of war. After ten strenuous days, Mr. Kennedy left with Mrs. Kennedy for Florida. Rumours of his possible resignation from his London post still circulate, but we hope they are not true. The Ambassador has become extremely popular in Britain since he arrived in 1938. First his smile, then his family, then his own energetic, cheerful, generous personality won this popularity, which deepened and widened as he became better known through a number of fine speeches and addresses in various parts of the country. He was born in Boston in 1888, is primarily a business man, with past connections with finance, banking, shipbuilding, films, theatres. (A January report from New York said he might buy a baseball team, the New York Yankees.) He is a Catholic and a Democrat. In 1914 he married Rose Fitzgerald, daughter of a former Mayor of Boston; her charm and amazingly youthful good looks have brought her innumerable admirers here. Their nine fine children, Joseph, John, Rosemary, Kathleen, Eunice, Patricia, Robert, Jean and Edward, now have an almost proverbial fame*



*The Counselor (American spelling) is forty-North Carolina. After his war service with the was posted to Berne, Sofia, his own Department and Mexico City. Then he came back to affairs at the Department of State for four was appointed to London as First Secretary.*



*Attaché and Personal Secretary to the Ambassador is Edward E. Moore. He has been with Mr. Kennedy as Personal Secretary since the latter got married twenty-five years ago: when Joseph Kennedy married Rose Fitzgerald, he took from the Hon. John F. Fitzgerald, Mayor of Boston, his secretary, Edward E. Moore, as well as his daughter. Mr. Moore has his desk in the Ambassador's outer office*



five-year-old Herschel V. Johnson, from A.E.F., 1917-19, he became a diplomat, of State, Tegucigalpa (Honduras), Washington, to take charge of Mexican years, and after that, in 1934, he He became Counselor here in 1937

**Military Attaché** and **Military Attaché for Air** is Brig.-General Sherman Miles, son of General Nelson Miles, of Civil War fame. He was in mid-ocean on his way to take up his appointment when war was declared, had been O.C. Field Artillery Command of the U.S. Army at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. With him here is Captain Alan G. Kirk, U.S. Navy, who commanded a battleship before he came to London five months ago as Naval Attaché and Naval Attaché for Air. (As the U.S. Air Force is part of the Army and Navy, it has no Attaché of its own.) It was Captain Kirk who went on board the Ark Royal to prove it hadn't been sunk

Photographs by Tunbridge-Sedgwick



Conference in the Ambassador's office brings a good many of the Embassy staff together, and the Ambassador, perching on the side of his desk, cracks them a joke. Looking up at him are Alan N. Steyne, Second Secretary and Consul; Walton C. Ferris, Consul; Edward E. Moore (see left); Harvey Klemmer, Attaché and Assistant Commissioner of U.S. Maritime Commission; Homer S. Fox, Assistant Commercial Attaché; Dr. Alexander V. Dye, Commercial Attaché; Franklin C. Gowen, Second Secretary and Consul; John G. Erhardt, First Secretary and Consul-General; Lloyd V. Steere, Agricultural Attaché. Mr. Klemmer, as a shipping expert, went to the U.S.A. with Mr. Kennedy to help with the discussions on the future of American merchant ships now immobilised by the Neutrality Act

**Second Secretary** is Franklin C. Gowen, of Philadelphia, who sits opposite Mr. Moore in the Ambassador's outer office, at a neatly-appointed desk on which he often has a vase of flowers (see the solitary chrysanthemum appearing right.) He has been in London for several years, before which he served in Rome and other posts in Western Europe. (More pictures on the next two pages).

# The American Embassy (Cont.)



*Arriving for work: some of the staff live at Headley Park, near Epsom, where the whole Embassy might go if London were bombed. They commute daily between Headley Park and Grosvenor Square by Embassy bus. A skeleton staff is always on duty at Epsom*



*A.R.P. is in charge of Major McDonald, U.S. Army Air Corps, and Assistant Military Attaché for Aviation at the Embassy. With him in the bombproof, gas-proof shelter in the basement are three secretaries, Miss Robinson, Miss Geiger and Mrs. Griffith. The very comprehensive fittings of the shelter include an air-purifier on the Maginot Line system, which can be worked by ordinary electricity, a small internal electric plant, or by a hand pump*

*Photographs by Tunbridge-Sedgwick*

*Visas are asked, demanded, begged, pleaded and prayed for from the Immigration Visa Section which can only say "No" when the quotas are full. Since the war this department has been hard pressed, 30,000 refugees having applied for visas, apart from the normal applications. In the past year about 4000 visas were issued, now they are being given at the rate of about 1200 a month. 400 letters a day come in, and in November applications from refugees alone were over 6000. To deal with all this, the department has a staff of 30, including Consuls (see far right)*



*The whole staff, including the Ambassador himself (on the steps) was grouped in front of the Embassy for a presentation picture for Mr. Kennedy before he left for his Christmas visit to America. The Embassy and Consulate-General occupy three floors of the large modern neo-Georgian No. 1, Grosvenor Square, on the corner of Grosvenor Street. Above the Embassy are private flats*



*Mail out: the diplomatic bags, ready for dispatch to the Department of State at Washington, D.C., were being looked over by N. D. Borum, Administrative Officer of the Embassy and Consulate-General, and Frank W. Gurney, courier*



*Mail in: the mail-room clerk sorts the morning delivery, which includes a half-pint bottle of milk for the Treasury*

*The Consul-General and First Secretary, John G. Erhardt, calls his colleagues, John J. Coyle, Vice-Consul; Charles A. Converse and Edward S. Manney, Consuls, into his office to consult upon the knotty problems of American citizens abroad or would-be American citizens who seek entry to the United States*



*Consuls in Conference: John G. Erhardt, John J. Coyle, Charles A. Converse, Edward S. Manney*



*Press Attaché and Secretary to the Ambassador is James Seymour, telephoning, smoking, and talking at his desk on the right. J. C. Stark is chief of the London Bureau of the Associated Press of America. Virgil Pinkley is European manager of the United Press. John J. Kennedy, no relation of the Ambassador, is his special assistant, went to America with him in December*

*Press Conference: James Seymour, J. C. Stark, Virgil Pinkley, John J. Kennedy*

