

EMBASSY COUNCILOR.

Suggestion to State Department in Regard to Ex-Gov. Lind.

To the Editor of The New York Times:

In the official announcement issued yesterday by the State Department in reference to the mission of ex-Gov. Lind to Mexico, it is stated that he "has been sent to Mexico as the personal representative of the President to act as adviser to the Embassy in the present situation."

It is obvious that under existing conditions it would be both inconvenient and injudicious to appoint a successor to Henry Lane Wilson, with the plenary authority of an Ambassador; but, indirectly, that is precisely what has been done in the appointment of ex-Gov. Lind. The recognized distinction between a Minister Plenipotentiary and an Ambassador is that the former is the representative of his Government, and the latter is the "personal representative" of the sovereign, or head of the State, the only difference between an "Ambassador Extraordinary," an "Ambassador Ordinary," or "Special Ambassador" being that the first has a permanent mission, while the second, or third, has been appointed merely for the performance of extraordinary functions. Thus, ex-Gov. Lind as the "personal representative" of the President, attached to the Embassy, is virtually an Ambassador.

An illustration of this argument may be found in the appointment of John Hays Hammond as the "personal representative" of the President of the United States at the coronation of King George V., as, although that appointment, like ex-Gov. Lind's, did not call for confirmation at the hands of the United States Senate, Mr. Hammond was officially recognized and given the rank and precedence of Special Ambassador. Nor can I recall any instance in which the personal representative of a sovereign, or head of a great State, charged with the performance of diplomatic or political duties, has not been recognized as an Ambassador, "Special," "Extraordinary," or "Ordinary."

At this grave juncture in the affairs of Mexico and that country's relations to the United States, it would be manifestly unwise to place considerations of diplomatic etiquette, or the exigencies of an established protocol, above the grave issues now hanging in the balance; but, in view of the general attitude and public declarations of Provisional President Huerta and of the position taken up by the United States Government in regard to the question of official recognition, it must be assumed that the Acting Chief Executive of the Republic of Mexico will not be likely to ignore any pretext to impose obstacles to the successful issue of any measures of a mediatory character.

In these circumstances, the terms of the appointment of ex-Gov. Lind are calculated to produce difficulties as well as a possible conflict of authority, unless his official duties are exclusively confined to measures of a consultative or purely advisory nature. Provisional President Huerta has already declined to discuss certain pending matters of importance between the two countries on the ground that as his Government was not officially recognized by the United States he could not deal with such matters. It is therefore not improbable that he might adopt a similar attitude if approached by the "personal representative" of President Wilson, without the presentation of formal credentials. The description of "Personal Representative of the President," as embodied in the official announcement, might also lead to confusion in the event of the necessity for conferences or official correspondence with the duly accredited diplomatic representatives of other countries, not to mention the matter of official rank, both within and beyond the diplomatic circle.

It is not likely that, in the present distressed condition of affairs in Mexico City, any diplomat of authority will be found to interpose difficulties in the way of ex-Gov. Lind during the fulfillment of his delicate mission; but it is quite within the bounds of probability that circumstances may arise in which the question of status may be raised to the prejudice of this country's interests. In any event it would be desirable, while still not too late, for the Government to define more clearly Mr. Lind's precise rank and position. The title of Councilor of Embassy, for some years past adopted in the British and other foreign Diplomatic Services, would give him precedence over the First Secretary of the Embassy, and at the same time would remove the possibility of all doubts or objections in the matter of rank or authority. Moreover, the conferment of that title need not necessarily create a precedent or involve legislative sanction, as might be the case if it were sought to introduce a new permanent rank into the Diplomatic Service.

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