

Geneva Diplomats Mourn Loss Of Mexican Envoy Moved Here

Dr. Castillo Najera Noted for His Work With League.

Follows Members of Other Delegations to Washington.

BY ALBIN E. JOHNSON.
Special Dispatch to The Star.

GENEVA. Europe's international colonies, which converge at Geneva, lost one of its most popular members when Senor Dr. Castillo Najera, Mexican Minister to Paris and delegate to the League of Nations, was promoted to represent Mexico City as Ambassador at Washington.

One of the leaders of the Latin American group, an accomplished diplomat and statesman, a sincere protagonist of the League idea, Najera almost since the very day of his arrival upon the Geneva scene, late in 1933, has been a big figure in League circles, particularly in questions dealing with the troubled South American affairs. In going to the United States he is joining an already large group of foreign notables who have passed on and off the Geneva stage—Ferdinand Verkerke, Czechoslovakian Minister at Washington; John Pelenyi, Hungarian Minister at Geneva; White Irish Free State Envoy Extraordinary; Eero Jarnfeldt, who has just succeeded Mr. L. Astrom as Minister for Finland; Salvador de Madariaga, ex-Ambassador of the Spanish Republic; Signor Augusto Rosso, Ambassador, and Signor Andrea Ferrero, secretary, of the Italian Embassy; E. d'Arcy McGreer, secretary of the Canadian Legation, and many others. Even the Japanese Ambassador and Chinese Minister, Hiroshi Satto and Akira Sato, are "graduates" of Geneva, having served on various delegations at one time or another.

Exceeded by None.

But, without exaggeration, it can honestly be said that none of his predecessors who have taken the route that leads to Washington have exceeded Castillo Najera in popularity, and it will be a long time before another statesman enters the League spotlight to outshine him. Lavish praise—but ask any of Najera's colleagues of the past two years what they think of him.

In handling the Leticia Commission, which adjusted the quarrel between Peru and Colombia, and as president of the Chaco Commission, which is still seeking to end the intestine strife between Paraguay and Bolivia, Senor Najera has been able to preserve a united front of South American and Latin American states almost continuously. He also served as president of the extraordinary assembly recently convened to deal with the Chaco affair, presiding with such skill that the League was able to obtain a practically unanimous agreement upon applying the arms embargo and in determining the "aggressor."

Senor Najera has not even among presiding officials who at various times have directed the destinies of league commissions, conferences and assemblies chiefly because he has a complete disregard for the so-called niceties of parliamentary procedure. Not that he rides rough-shod over verbose delegates, but because he believes in getting things done. There perhaps never has been seen on the Geneva stage as forceful a chairman as Najera. No delegate—not even the clever French diplomats or suave British spokesmen—has cluttered up conferences over which the Mexican Minister to Paris presided, with technicalities or inconsequential side issues.

Popular With News Men.

Najera also has been exceedingly popular with the newspaper men who frequent Geneva, so popular, in fact, that he was made one of the few honor guests of the Cercle de la Presse shortly after his first visit to the League. On leaving for his Washington assignment he was again feted, diplomats, League officials and members of the Geneva Latin-American colony joining the International Association of Journalists in a farewell banquet.

Frensis Gilbert, the State Department's liaison officer with the League, in paying tribute to Najera, said: "My personal feelings for Senor Najera go far beyond mere official sentiment. He has, I feel, permitted me to share his friendship. I have, moreover, discovered through this friendship that Senor Najera, coming from a great country neighboring my own, possesses a peculiarly clear understanding of our institutions and our ways. It is such an understanding which he carries with him to Washington, and which, added to his great personal qualities and distinguished diplomatic attainments, presages for him eminent success. I am certain that this will be of outstanding value not only to his country but also to my own, and I therefore, somewhat selfishly perhaps, am unable to share entirely in the regrets at his leaving us here in Geneva."

Aside from his official qualifications, Najera's popularity in Geneva arose from the fact that he was what is known as a "regular fellow." A bon vivant, he was a familiar figure at the many out-of-the-way auberges and village restaurants which surround Geneva—mostly across the frontier in France—where statesmen and newspapermen gathered to wine and dine. With a command of at least three languages, he is a fluent linguist.

Poet of Ability.

Belying his looks Senor Najera is a poet of no mean ability. Besides publishing a volume of folklore poems and of his own people he has translated from the French into Spanish a "100 years" anthology of Belgian poetry. He was at one time Mexican Minister to Belgium before being transferred to the

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Castillo Najera, a caricature by A. Derso, famous European artist, and sketched especially for The Star.

Before entering upon a diplomatic career Senor Najera was recognized as one of Mexico's leading surgeons. He also, for a time, was chief of the Mexican Department of Public Health. Poets and surgeons, however, are not unknowns in international diplomacy. Jose Vasconcelos, Portuguese representative on the League Council and since 1934 a colleague of Najera's in Latin American affairs, was Portugal's leading surgeon and a professor of surgery at the National University; Senor de Madariaga, leading statesman of the Spanish republic, has written books in three languages.

And, last but not least, as a tip to newspaper men in Washington who will find Senor Najera a distinct addition to the diplomatic colony of the Nation's Capital, the new Mexican Ambassador likes good beer and good bridge—and he has more than a speaking acquaintance with good wines.

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Vaudeville entertainment and dancing will be attractions at an all-members jamboree at the Central Young Men's Christian Association tomorrow at 8:15 p.m.

Joe Mills, local sandlot player who will be given a tryout with the Washington American League club this Spring, will be a guest of honor. Joe Judge and other base ball notables will attend.

Entertainers will include Arthur Godfrey, radio announcer; Marie Fowler, night club and radio singer; Harry Havelin, magician, and Mrs. Adelaide Hibbard, dramatic reader. Dancing in the gymnasium will complete the celebration. Only Y. M. C. A. members and their woman guests will be admitted. There will be no admission charge.

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