



# Capital Whirl

by Hope Ridings Miller

## Colleagues Call to Wish Senator Rayburn Happy Birthday on 60th Anniversary

Messenger boys up around Capitol Hill had one of the heaviest schedules of the year yesterday. And the reason was House Speaker Sam Rayburn—or, rather, his sixtieth birthday.

From early morning until dusk, telegrams (some of them the singing kind), letters and presents were pouring into his offices by the dozens. Colleagues called in droves to wish him many happy returns of the day, and his telephone was ringing continually until nightfall.

One of the first messages to reach him came from the President and was accompanied by two dozen of the biggest, reddest roses you ever saw. The greeting read as follows:

"Dear Sam: Many happy returns. It must be awful to be so old. I don't get there for 21 more days. F. D. R."

In the House, a few minutes before the joint session, Speaker Rayburn's ears grew pinker by the moment as Majority Leader McCormack and Minority Leader Martin gave forth with a verbal feast of love, followed by a volley of prolonged applause from every member on the House floor . . . Touching and simple was the Speaker's reply . . . A man of action, rather than a man of words, he knows how to turn out the fine phrases as well as the next statesman when the occasion demands . . . And it did yesterday.

Later, after the President's speech, a number of friends stopped by his office to wish him "Happy Birthday" . . . and stayed to eat a sandwich with him . . . Among those in the group were Cabinet Members Francis Biddle, Frank Walker, Jesse Jones and Claude Wickard; William Knudsen, Edward Stettinius, Sidney Richardson, of Fort Worth, Tex.; William Kittrell, of Dallas, and several others.

By the time Speaker Rayburn brought down his gavel to call the House in order half an hour before the President arrived to give his message before the joint session, galleries were filling with well-known Washingtonians . . . Only section where empty seats were in evidence was the one reserved for the Diplomatic Corps . . . Shortly before noon, Chief of Protocol George T. Summerlin invited the envoys present to take leave of their wives and go down on the House floor where a couple of rows had been reserved for them; but if the whole lot had stayed in the diplomatic gallery, not all the seats there would have been occupied.

Arriving early and finding her usual place on the front row of the diplomatic section was Senora de Espil, looking very best-dressed in a natty tailored suit of variegated spring blue and gray, worn with a navy blue blouse and perky hat of the same shade . . . Just across the railing, over in the executive gallery, Mrs. Jesse Jones was the first arrival. She and Senora de Espil exchanged greetings, chatted briefly, and then settled down to await the President's arrival. Both were busy meanwhile. Senora de Espil read her favorite morning newspaper; Mrs. Jones improved each shining moment by knitting as if that particular sock had to be finished within the next hour.

I didn't see the Belgian Ambassador, but Countess van der Straten arrived shortly before time for the President's speech. Mme. Hassan, wife of the Egyptian Minister, and Mrs. Leighton McCarthy were the only other diplomatic hostesses I saw.

Meanwhile, the executive gallery soon was filled to the last inch of space. On a front row sat Mrs. Henry Wallace. Mrs. Frank Knox and Mrs. Henry Stimson were side by side. Mrs. Claude Wickard, Mrs. Henry Morgenthau, Mrs. Sumner Welles, Mrs. Stanley Reed and Miss Grace Tully were other familiar faces in the sea that took over the executive gallery. Mrs. Adolf Berle, arriving after most of the other official hostesses, found there was no room for her in any section, except the half-empty diplomatic one. Mr. Summerlin ushered her in there a split second before the Senate came in for the joint session.

Down on the floor of the House, meanwhile, the handful of diplomats took in every detail of the Congressional proceedings; applauded the President's remarks time and again, and seemed to like the show from first to last.

"Wonder what Jimmy Byrnes is doing back there with the diplomats?" somebody asked in the press gallery. Speculations were running rife when it turned out that Justice Byrnes was not among those present after all. Instead, the man mistaken for the Supreme Court Justice was Norwegian Minister Munthe de Morgenstjerne. I never noticed before that the two men look almost enough alike to pass for twins.

To mention but a few others I saw here and there—on the House floor or in the balconies—were Miss Vera Bloom, who with her father, Foreign Relations Chairman Sol Bloom, had open house for diplomats in his office both before and after the President's speech; Mrs. A. Mitchell Palmer, sitting with Mrs. Robert Reynolds (Evalyn McLean); Mrs. Robert Low Bacon, Marilyn Maloney, daughter of Senator Maloney, who follows current events avidly and if possible, personally; Mrs. James M. Helm, and Mayor LaGuardia.

About The Town: Scheduled to arrive in Washington on Sunday are those widely publicized honeymooners, the Pat Di Ciccios. The former Gloria Vanderbilt and her husband will stay at the Mayflower. . . . Watch the Sunday papers for an engagement announcement that will take one of Washington's loveliest young ladies out of circulation . . . The young man hails from New Jersey and is a graduate of the University of Virginia . . . Creating quite a ripple in certain Washington circles the past two days was Fannie Ward, whose name and fame swept the theatrical horizon half a century ago . . . Amazingly young looking for her considerable years, Miss Ward nevertheless is not nearly so old as rumor would have it . . . Time and again, I heard age 83 tied up with her name . . . Well, that's going a bit too far. Who's Who in the Theater sets her birth date as 1872. Figure it out for yourself.



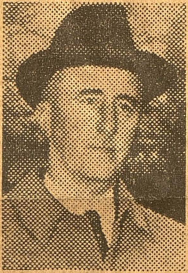
Speaker Rayburn



Mme. Espil



Mrs. Wallace



Minister Morgenstjerne



Justice Byrnes