the capable Ambassador Phillips to return from his work in Italy.

Ambassadors in posts are unique. Work done in them can be accomplished by any other means. Career diplomats privately smile at the efforts of the European charge d'affaires, for instance. Without pressurizing their letter of appointment, they cannot secure full information. They have no access to government heads, and can be ignored in a manner that is not possible with an ambassador.

There is one compensation about this unprecedented lack of governmental representation. It gives President Roosevelt an equally unprecedented opportunity to fill those four vital positions with the best men available.

For the first time in many years the President feels no pressure on him to name either distinguished friends or ambitious party men. Today he is entirely free to appoint as ambassadors, trained diplomats or strong, honorable, private citizens.

Mr. Roosevelt can make a free choice for two reasons. First, it has only been in this past campaign that several rich men with ambassadorial ambitions have not contributed to the campaign fund. They did not like it, and it was illegal. The Hatch Act bars individual contributions in excess of $1,000. Secondly, the war has desolated these ambassadorial posts of their glamour and substantial power and discomfited them. Where there is not actual peril, the American ambassador lives in an unsympathetic environment and his once-glorifying social life is practically banished.

These two reasons give hope that the President will choose career men, who should fill the posts, anyway. The real hope, however, should be that he fills the posts quickly. To have these four important positions vacant under normal conditions would be bad enough, but to have them vacant in so critical a period as the present is without precedent and seems without excuse.