

Monday, Dec. 09, 1946

## FOREIGN RELATIONS: To England

After weeks of mulling over the biggest vacancy in his diplomatic corps—the ambassadorship to Britain—Harry Truman made up his mind. The man he picked for the job: progressive but otherwise acceptable 64-year-old O. (for Oliver) Max Gardner, a safe, colorful candidate whom the Senate was likely to confirm with little or no fuss.

From a law practice in Shelby, N.C., Gardner swam naturally into Democratic politics. After serving as Lt. Governor from 1916 to 1920, he ran for Governor for a second time and won in 1929. His 1920 race with Cameron Morrison, which he lost by less than 100 votes, has been called one of the dirtiest in North Carolina political history. Morrison constantly attacked him as a liberal who supported women and Negro rights.

Gardner was a leader in race relations and progressive worker rights programs. To the horror of local Southern politicians, he once had himself photographed with a young Negro girl who had won an essay contest. Gardner, who was a strong supporter of education, is credited with the consolidation of the University of North Carolina system in 1930. He was also involved in the suffrage movement and in the registration of male Negro voters. His advocacy of a workers' compensation act, minimum wage laws, and child labor laws chagrined many of his fellow textile plant owners throughout the South.

In 1933 he went to Washington, built up a practice as a corporation lawyer, and became a friend of Franklin Roosevelt. Among Government jobs he faithfully served at: adviser on the Office of War Mobilization and Reconversion Board. Among jobs he was mentioned for but did not take: president of the New York Stock Exchange, governor of Puerto Rico. Max Gardner, big, pink, amiable and a man who can make friends with anyone had experienced enough with the stock market while serving North Carolina during the Great Depression.

Last winter he settled comfortably down into the job of Under Secretary of the Treasury, asked to be excused from serving as a member of the British-American commission on Palestine. Now Max Gardner may have to grapple with that problem.

He will find it not too hard to get along with Britain's socialist Government. "Government planning," he once said, "is just a common-sense approach to a constructive postwar economy." Two of his great assets for the socially exacting, financially burdensome job at the Court of St. James's: he is social-minded, extremely likable, and he is wealthy.