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Nazi Minister Here Is Diplomatic Mystery

By L. S. WILLIS

Philadelphia was just a flag station to Germany for thirty-three years, but it suddenly has become so important to Adolf Hitler that an Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary has taken over the consular offices here.

He is Erich Windels, Minister to Canada until the outbreak of the war and a major figure in the German Diplomatic Service. The reasons for assigning him to Philadelphia are mysterious and possibly significant.

Windels, a genial, middle-aged man with a friendly smile and sharp gray eyes, slipped so quietly into the city last January that his arrival went unnoticed.

MOVED HEADQUARTERS

One of the first acts was to move the consular headquarters here from an office shared with the North German Lloyd to a new and less public location at 15th and Locust Sts.

Until Windels' arrival there was no representative of Germany here except an honorary Consul. Since the war started, trade between the United States and Germany has dropped to almost zero. Yet the German Government has seen fit to install one of its major diplomatic figures permanently in Philadelphia.

"Why were you sent here?" Windels was asked.

"I cannot answer that," he said with a smile. "Our Governments do not usually give us reasons—just orders."

SAYS DUTIES ARE ROUTINE

How does he spend his time?

"Just routine matters. Just the ordinary duties of running a consular office. I have a thick book here on what a Consul does, if you're interested.

"However, Philadelphia is such an



ERICH WINDELS

important city, even aside from its large German population, that it should have had more than an honorary Consul here. Doubtless, the reason was economy."

He did not explain why Germany no longer found economy necessary.

Windels' first appearance in Philadelphia was on January 4, when he took a suite at the Drake, where the French Consul lives. He remained a few weeks, then left to mingle with socially prominent Americans at Pinehurst.