



CHANCERY - PARIS

A DIPLOMATIC MOVE

Some of you may have noticed that the Chancery in Paris moved recently. The bald announcement that the address is now 35 avenue Montaigne, Paris, 8e, telephone BALzac 99-55 will certainly not convey to many minds the anguish felt by those involved in the move.

At about the stage where the plasterers were working, people began to drop down to inspect the new building with particular reference, naturally, to the office which had been assigned to them. Back they would come and the interrogation would start. What colour will my walls be? I don't see any phones installed. Must I have a room which looks out on the courtyard? Can't you put me somewhere else? I don't like grills and bars. (referring, no doubt, to the windows).

Eventually, of course, each one became resigned to his or her fate and the hectic business of packing to move began. It was just another case of cleaning out the old attic, only on a somewhat larger scale. Old bottles (medicine and even larger types) came out from lower drawers of filing cabinets. Discoloured paper, pencil stubs and urgent tags littered the floors.

During all this activity we were not really sure we could move as scheduled. It would have helped to know when the workmen would finish the task on which they had laboured so lovingly for so long. Finally, like a ship leaving shore, the telephone service was cut in the old Chancery and we had to move whether we liked it or not and whether the new building was available or not, and so, on Friday January 10, the staff went home and left the baby to admin. to play with.

The following morning vast luggage vans arrived and hordes of workmen began to carry hundreds of boxes crammed with the thousands of articles needed to operate an Embassy. As offices were gradually emptied strange things came to light - behind a bookcase a beautiful mirror we had never seen and cupboards previously unknown.

Communications, of course, felt that since they are such sensitive members of the Embassy, they required special attention. Various plans were discussed as to how they could be moved in absolute secrecy, and some wild talk (1) about dis-

(1) Fractured French?