

one's neighbours on either side, to avoid having to peer at the cards placed before them on the table⁷. (Place-cards, incidentally, should be handwritten.)

(I) ORDER OF PRECEDENCE

Precedence is determined first by rank; ambassadors accordingly come before Chargé d'Affaires, ad interim; then come ministers, counsellors, secretaries, and so on. Among persons of equivalent rank, precedence is determined by the date of arrival at one's post. Thus the ambassador whose arrival dates back the furthest occupies a higher place at a diplomatic reception than one more recently arrived.

In all social activities at the post, a spouse is accorded, as a courtesy, the same precedence as the employee, or vice versa as the case may be. The Office of Protocol of the receiving country has a complete list of the diplomatic corps and can answer any inquiries as to the order of precedence of the dignitaries and members of the government of the country. The most senior of the ambassadors is called the dean of the diplomatic corps, except in countries where the dean is traditionally the apostolic delegate. The dean usually represents the corps as a whole at official ceremonies in the capital.

CONCLUSION

If in doubt as to questions of protocol when entertaining or attending official functions, it is better to make inquiries than to commit a faux pas. Information can always be obtained, either at the mission, usually from the secretary to the head of mission, or directly from the Office of Protocol of the receiving country, whose staff will be pleased to help solve the problem.

It is important to remember that one should entertain well or not at all; establishing good relations in a foreign country calls for the best possible effort.

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Examples of table plans will be found in *Manuel pratique de protocole* by Jean Serres.