

New Japanese Constitution Reduces Once-Powerful Emperor Hirohito To Figurehead

Emperor Hirohito, whose power over the Japanese people probably is most responsible for the meekness of Japan's surrender, in his new role is little more than a symbol of the state, shorn of all powers in the Government.

Under the new constitution, which became law May 3, the Emperor is no longer ruler of Japan.

He no longer is an officer of the Government and has no independent authority.

He can act only with the advice of the Cabinet operated by Parliament.

And no action order of the Emperor any longer has legal force unless undertaken within the scope of his limited powers and upon the express approval of either the Cabinet or Parliament.

These conditions, which are the key to the new status of the Emperor, are designed primarily to preclude the possibility of any group or clique making a puppet of the Emperor and running Japan's affairs from behind the scenes—as happened so many times in the past.

The Emperor's powers, according

to the new Constitution, are limited largely to what officially is designated as "attestation." Rather than originating ordinances and edicts, the Emperor henceforth will merely attach his signature to what has been worked out by the Cabinet or Parliament.

This is seen in the first official pronouncement of the Emperor under the new Constitution when he issued an order convoking the new Diet for May 20. Instead of issuing the edict with the customary wording, "I hereby sanction," he observed his new position by saying, "I hereby, in accordance with the new Constitution and new national Diet law, . . ."

Thus the Emperor, who formally took Japan into the war under what his subjects believed to be his "divine rights," now legally is little more than a figurehead. From the standpoint of the powers which the occupation has left him, he actually exercises less than those of the British monarch.

While this revolution has been accomplished adequately on paper, its assimilation by the Japanese people is likely to be more difficult.

A directive from Washington to Gen. Douglas MacArthur last April instructed him to make an effort to popularize and "humanize" the Emperor. And it was shortly thereafter that the Emperor began a series of unprecedented public appearances in Tokyo and in outlying rural areas.

Observers who went along on some of these tours were impressed by the fact that while some Japanese gaped in frank astonishment, the vast majority showed a humble deference accorded no other ruler or dictator in modern history.

School children shed tears en masse as the Emperor passed among them. Others merely bowed low and kept their faces hidden in a manner of worship which could be attained only through centuries of deeply in-

grained education.

The occupation authorities have worked hard to change the fundamental thinking of the Japanese about the Emperor. The new Constitution has removed the Emperor from any legal claim to sovereign power. But in the thinking of mass Japanese who either have not read the new Constitution or at least seem incapable of understanding its reforms, the Emperor today is still the ruler of Japan.

This was particularly the feeling in Tokyo May 3, when the Emperor made a brief appearance during the ceremony commemorating the inauguration of the new Constitution.

Even doggedly anti-imperial Communist leaders removed their hats, coats and umbrellas in the drenching rain and raised their voices with the others in stirring Banzai cheers, while the somewhat incongruous figure of the Emperor clutching his umbrella in one hand raised a hattered felt hat and smiled mutely up on the crowd.

But, as in the case of other reforms undertaken by occupation authorities, a start has been made. The status of the Emperor represents a reform on the top echelon of Government and society. It may take years for the reform to work its way down to a point where Japan's shopkeepers, farmers, and fishermen can be said to have shifted the base of their thinking.

Veterans Administration estimated the World War II veteran population for March 1 at nearly 14,500,000 and the total veteran population at approximately 18,378,000.

Veterans receiving compensation, pensions or retirement pay from Veterans Administration may authorize VA to deduct their National Service Life Insurance premiums from these payments.

Four Million Workers Were Qualified For SS Benefits By Jan. 1

By January 1, 1947, more than four million workers in the United States had completed the ten years of service in jobs covered by the Social Security Act, necessary to attain permanent insurance status under Old-Age and Survivors' Insurance provisions.

Marshall Barney, manager of the Rocky Mount office of the Social Security Administration, called attention to the fact that any wage earner who works in 40 calendar quarters, in each of which he has been paid wages of at least \$50, attains, thereby, permanent insurance rights under the Act.

Figures released by the Social Security Administration show that in the whole country there are some four million men and 800,000 women who will have gained permanent insurance status in 1946 through the completion of 10 years of work in commerce or industry. The year 1946 was the first year in which it was possible for them to attain fully insured status—permanently—under the Act, since the old-age and survivor's insurance program completed its tenth year of operation December 31.

In addition to the 4,800,000 workers mentioned above, two other groups will have permanent insurance rights by the end of the year. There are around 1,800,000 persons who will reach 65 within the next ten years, and who will have permanent insurance rights by virtue of having served in covered employment at least half the number of calendar quarters between January 1, 1937, and the time they reach 65.

Other persons who are permanently insured include about 1,400,000 men and 200,000 women who have

gained fully insured status and are now aged 65 or older. About half of them are drawing benefits.

Workers who are permanently insured will have at least minimum insurance protection for life, regardless of their future work history. Workers who are fully insured, but not permanently insured, can maintain their status by continued work in jobs covered by the Social Security Act. When their records show 10 years of such employment, they will be permanently insured. The covered employment does not have to be continuous employment.

As long as a worker continues in jobs covered by the Act, no matter what his age, he continues to contribute a percentage of his wages to the fund from which benefits are paid. His employer makes a matching contribution. As long as a worker continues in covered jobs, he may continue to build up his benefit amount. If a worker under 65 leaves covered employment, his benefit amount will decrease.

First Ghost: "Where are you? I can't see you."

Second Ghost: "I know. . . my sheets haven't come back from the laundry yet."

ANNUAL JUNIOR ORDER MEETING IN GREENVILLE

Greenville, May 22—Members of the Junior Order in the Twenty-First district will gather here at 8 o'clock on the evening of Wednesday, May 22, for the annual district council meeting.

Present at this meeting will be State Councilor L. R. Scarborough of Rocky Mount, State Vice-councilor Walter Crisman of High Point and State Secretary Forrest G. Shearin of Scotland Neck, in addition to the local and district officers.

The meeting will hear an address by the State Councilor who will bring to the session a report on his activities for the past nine months and also a report will be made by the State Secretary on the status of the organization in North Carolina. A full scale meeting is planned and one important feature for the district will be the election of officers.

Father: "Son, now that you're out of medical school you will take over my practice. But, remember, don't cure Mrs. Gotrocks' stomach ailment. That'll what put you through college."

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Public address by

P. D. REES

Representative of Watchtower Society

SUNDAY, MAY 25th

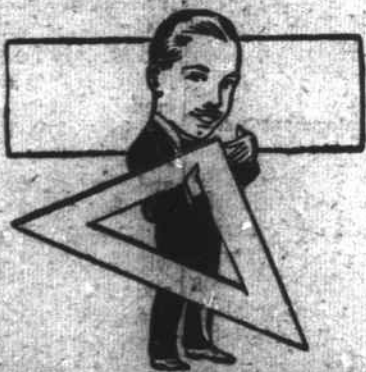
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