

## HIRANUMA

The particulars with regard to him are on p. 322 of the Summary. Additional document specially relative to him is Exh. 2229, speech as premier in March 1939.

He was the founder and president of the Kokuhonsha, a rightist society (Exh. 164), and at the same time vice-president of the Privy Council from 1926 until he became president on 13 March 1936. For that purpose he was compelled to resign from the Kokuhonsha which was dissolved. He remained president of the Privy Council and also a cabinet councillor until he became premier on 5 January 1939. During all his service in the former capacities we submit that the positions he held not only gave him the opportunity of passing judgment upon all the principal decisions taken, especially with regard to international agreements, but gave him the power to register his objections, if any, to the general policies pursued. As he continued to hold his offices he must be taken to have accepted them. In particular on 13 September 1932 (Exh. 241) he approved the proposed agreement between Japan and Manchukuo, based on recognition of the latter's so-called independence. On 3 July 1935 he approved a similar agreement for a joint economic committee (Exh. 850). On 25 November 1936 he approved the Anti-Comintern Pact (Exh. 485). On 20 January 1937 he approved the bill relative to the formation of a South Seas government Department (Exh. 909A). On 6 November 1937 he approved the admission of Italy into the Pact (Exh. 492). On 2 November 1938 he agreed to the final withdrawal of Japan from the League of Nations because of the attitude of the League to the "China affair." On 22 November 1938 he approved the cultural agreement with Germany, the political influence of which was mentioned at the meeting. As a cabinet councillor he was there to advise on the whole of the early stages of the China affair, and could have made his protest, but he



retained his offices. In Exh. 2265 Kido records a talk with him on 26 December 1938 about a plot to establish the puppet government of China, and he insisted that Konoye should remain premier to see it through.

His premiership from 5 January to 30 August 1939 was chiefly remarkable for the negotiations for a military alliance with Germany and Italy, which only fell through because of the German-Russian Non-Aggression Pact, which caused his resignation.

At the outset Shiratori reports him to Ciano as openly in favour of it (Exh. 499A). On 22 February he attended as premier a Privy Council meeting which approved the admission of Hungary and Manchukuo to the existing pact. On May 6th Ott reports that he has reconciled the conflicting views of Itagaki and others in his cabinet and that the treaty may therefore go through. He seems to have wanted the alliance to be directed mainly against Russia (Exh. 501).

In the speech to the Diet above-mentioned (Exh. 2229A) he said that those who resisted Japan in China must be exterminated.

During this period the 5-year plans, the narcotisation of China, the consolidation of pro-Japanese regimes there, the interference with the trade of other countries, and the Chinese aggression generally (see e.g. Exh. 998 and 272) made steady progress. The hold of the government over means of propaganda was strengthened by the Motion Picture Law (Exh. 155).

Other major events of this period were (1) the forcible occupation of Hainan Island in February in spite of protests from the United States, Britain and France (Exh. 613A). (2) The aggression against the U.S.S.R. and Mongolian Republic in May (Exh. 766).



In June occurred the mistreatment of British subjects in Tientsin (Exh. 1003). In fact, the Hiranuma cabinet was no less aggressive in every direction than its predecessor.

Hiranuma returned to office as Minister of State in the 2nd Konoye cabinet, on 6 December 1940, becoming Home Minister on 21 December until the formation of the 3rd Konoye cabinet on 17 July 1941, when he again became Minister of State until its fall on 17 October. He was not included in the Tojo cabinet. By joining Konoye (whose appointment he had supported, Exh. 532) he adopted the Tri-Partite Pact which he had tried to negotiate himself, and while he held office he was responsible for the whole of the aggressive preparations acts, and resolutions of that long period. In particular he attended almost all of the many Liaison Conferences in the first six months of 1941 (Exh. 1103), and the Imperial Conference of July 2 (Exh. 588, 779 and 1107). Whether he continued to attend Liaison Conferences after July we do not know, because publication was stopped. He did not attend the Imperial Conference of September 6th, but as a member of the cabinet was responsible for its momentous decision. We would again point out that the subsequent attempt of some members of the Konoye cabinet to recede from this was not a matter of principle but purely of expediency, owing to the doubts of Oikawa, the then Navy Minister as to the success of war. We do not know Hiranuma's part, if any, in this discussion. He attended the fateful ex-premiers meeting of November 29th (Exh. 1196). He made no protest against war. On the contrary he said that public sentiment must be braced up to face it.

His next appearance is on 17 July 1944, when a meeting of ex-premiers was held at his house to consider replacing the Tojo cabinet, not to bring the war to an end, but "to build a powerful national cabinet which will surge forward unswervingly."



(Exh. 1277). The next day, Tojo having resigned he attended the official conference to choose his successor (Exh. 1278). He advocated a military man, suggested Admiral Suzuki, Kantaro, and finally recommended Terauchi, Koiso, Hata or a naval man.

When Koiso resigned he again attended the Conference (Exh. 1282) and said they must fight to the end. He wanted to recommend the principal ministers as well as the premier. He strongly opposed any advocacy for peace. He again recommended a military or naval man, finally proposing Suzuki, Kantaro, who had expressed his readiness to die fighting for the Emperor.

In our submission Hiranuma was a member of this conspiracy and every phase of it, from start to finish.