

## CHAPTER XXII

### THE KATO MINISTRY

The Kato Cabinet was organized in June 1924. The most prominent feature of the ministry was that Mr. Korekiyo Takahashi, former Premier and President of the Seiyukai Party and Mr. Ki Inukai, President of the Kakushin Club, became Ministers of slight importance under Premier Viscount Komei Kato. This was welcomed by the press as a sign of the improvement of Japanese politics, citing the instances that M. Poincare, former President of the French Republic, was the Premier under President Millerand and, Mr. Balfour, former Prime Minister, became a Minister in the Lloyd George Cabinet. The Kenseikai returned to power after the elapse of ten years and the appearance of the cabinet on a coalition basis was welcomed by the people who were sick of peers' cabinets, such as Admiral Kato's Cabinet which was formed after the Washington Conference, and the Yamamoto cabinet headed by Admiral Yamamoto, the creator of the Imperial Navy, which collapsed after the Toranomon incident in which a fanatic attempted to assault the Prince Regent while he was going to the Imperial Diet towards the end of 1923 and, the Kiyoura cabinet, the forerunner of the present Kenseikai ministry.

The appearance of the Kato cabinet was the natural consequence of the overwhelming victory of the Kenseikai Party in the elections. The new strength of parties on June 26 1924 when the extraordinary session of the Imperial Diet was opened was as follows:

### THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Government parties:	
Kenseikai Party .....	155
Seiyukai Party .....	101
Kakushin Club .....	29
Semi-Government party:	
Chusei Club .....	42
Opposition:	
Seiyu Honto .....	117
Neutrals:	
Unattached .....	12
Industrialists .....	8

### THE HOUSE OF PEERS

Kenkyukai .....	174
Koyu Club .....	47
Koseikai .....	43
Sawakai .....	36
Doseikai .....	24
Independents .....	23
Imperial princes .....	15
Unattached .....	86

How many seats in the House of Representatives were occupied by journalists or publicists is seen from the following list published in the June number of the "Shinbun oyobi Shimbun Kisha" (Newspapers and Newspapermen).

Masazumi Ando, Tokyo, Neutral
ex.
Takehiko Imai, Chiba, Seiyu, n.
Masajiro Kimura, Chiba, Seiyu, f.
Sei-ichi Aoki, Gumma, Seiyu, n.
Masao Kanda, Tochigi, Neutral,
n.
Saburo Hosoume, Yamagata, In-
dust., f.
Ghuji Machida, Akita, Kensei, f.
Tōmko Kudo, Aomori, Honto, n.
Takeshi Azuma, Hokkaido, Seiyu,
ex.

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| <p>Shimpel Yamamoto, Nagano, Neutral, n.</p> <p>Mototaro Furihata, Nagano, Kensei, ex.</p> <p>Gonzo Terajima, Toyama, Kensei, n.</p> <p>Akira Habu, Fukui, Kensei, n.</p> <p>Gohei Matsuura, Shizuoka, Honto, ex.</p> <p>Shoju Koyama, Aichi, Kensei, ex.</p> <p>Chogo Shimizu, Okayama, Honto, n.</p> <p>Seiji Hayami, Hiroshima, Kensei, ex.</p> <p>Toranosuke Akita, Yamaguchi, Neutral, f.</p> <p>Migiji Kodama, Yamaguchi, Neutral, f.</p> <p>Yejiro Miyoshi, Tottori, Neutral, n.</p> <p>Kiyoshi Akita, Tokushima, Kaku-shin, ex.</p> <p>Yoshiyasu Norimoto, Nagasaki, Honto, ex.</p> <p>Hajime Mori, Nagasaki, Honto, f.</p> <p>Kozo Makiyama, Nagasaki, Honto, ex.</p> <p>Yeitaro Nishi, Saga, Kensei, f.</p> <p>Kaneshiro Takagi, Kumamoto, Honto, ex.</p> <p>Ichimasa Terada, Kagoshima, Honto, n.</p> <p>Keikichi Tanomogi, Tokyo, Kensei, ex.</p> <p>Kishichi Kokubo, Ibaraki, Seiyu, ex.</p> <p>Dokei Yamada, Gifu, Kensei, n.</p> <p>Yoshio Uehara, Kanagawa, Neutral, n.</p> <p>Seizaburo Tuchiya, Chiba, Seiyu, f.</p> <p>Masayoshi Kono, Ibaraki, Kensei, ex.</p> <p>Tetsuo Kudo, Aomori, Neutral n.</p> <p>Gi-ichi Masuda, Niigata, Neutral, f.</p> <p>Riyel Inoge, Fukui, Neutral n.</p> <p>Shinojo Nagano, Yamaguchi, Neutral, n.</p> | <p>Seigo Nakano, Fukuoka, Kensei, ex.</p> <p>Takejiro Nishioka, Nagasaki, Neutral, n.</p> <p>(ex. for ex-M.P.; n. for new M.P.; f. for formerly M.P.)</p> |
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Thus, of the total of 464 seats in the House of Representatives, 120 seats are occupied by journalists and publicists. This shows that the influence of the press is rising enormously. Fifty-five of these are graduates from Waseda University, which has a peculiar position in the journalistic world, sending out many journalists and writers. Most of them belong to the Kenseikai Party, of which the late Marquis Okuma President of the university and formerly Prime Minister was a strong leader.

The previous cabinet headed by Viscount Kiyoura walked out after seeing the result of the general election and arranging the national felicitations for the wedding of the Prince Regent and Princess Nagako Kuni, for which, it was declared, the cabinet appeared. The formation of the Kato cabinet was so quick that the Premier stated that it was done in twenty minutes.

The Kato cabinet set up as its platform three items, the enforcement of universal manhood suffrage, the retrenchment of finance and stricter discipline in officialdom. Regarding the universal suffrage question, the entire press of the empire, without exception, insists upon its realization. In 1922, when Admiral Kato's cabinet was in power, the newspapers of Tokyo and Osaka declared their resolution for the universal suffrage to be realized soon. However, this was regarded as too precocious in Japan, but the Government established a commis-

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sion for an investigation of the question.

The Kenseikai is under an obligation to carry this out, because it has professed its views on the matter so frequently. The announcement of its policy in regard to the franchise reform was one of the reasons of the universal support of the press on its appearance.

Viscount Komei Kato, the new Premier, is a diplomat-statesman who has had a brilliant career since 1899, when he was appointed secretary to the late Marquis Shigenobu Okuma, then Foreign Minister in the Kuroda Cabinet. The year of 1888 was memorable as in that year William II, the ex-Kaiser, assumed the throne in Germany. In 1918 the Kaiser, who for thirty years had been the most powerful monarch in the world, fled for refuge to Holland, in an automobile, and subsequently was dethroned. Viscount Kato saw the rise and fall of Germany as a diplomat and is appointed Premier just when a man of strong character is needed by the entire nation. It was due to his farsighted views that Japan sided with the Allies against Germany in the world war. The attitude taken by him in this matter as Foreign Minister in the Okuma Cabinet was severely criticised in the 34th session of the Imperial Diet which was convened after the close of the Japanese operations against Germany. However, the fact proved later shows that he was not a whit wrong in the policy he pursued. It is small wonder that he knew the real strength of Great Britain, as he stayed long in London as Minister and Ambassador to the Court of St. James. He, therefore, is regarded as a statesman who has a never changing feeling of friend-

ship towards the British people. It was he that paved the way for the conclusion of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance in 1902. The Viscount was appointed Minister to Great Britain in 1894 and remained in the post until 1900 when he returned home, being replaced by the late Count Tadasu Hayashi. The same year he became Foreign Minister, when the Ito Cabinet was organized in October. The cabinet was shortlived and resigned in May, 1901. The Anglo-Japanese Alliance was concluded by the Katsura Cabinet, (which succeeded the Ito Ministry) and, through the efforts of the Premier, the late Marquis Jutarō Komura, Foreign Minister, and the late Count Hayashi, Japanese Ambassador to Great Britain. However, it would not have been effected but for the efforts of Viscount Kato as Ambassador to Great Britain and later as Foreign Minister. The appointment of the Viscount as Premier emphatically proves that, although the Anglo-Japanese Alliance was ended in 1922, in spite of the desire of the Japanese Government as well as of Mr. Lloyd George to prolong it, but simply because of the meddling of the United States, which threatened Anglo-American friendship, the key-note of Japan's diplomacy has not changed and still exists in the maintenance of the friendship between the island empires of the East and West.

The life of the new Premier could make a chapter in success books. He was an ordinary clerk when he entered the Mitsubishi after graduating from the Tokyo Imperial University in 1881. While counting figures at his desk in the Mitsubishi branch in Hokkaido, his steady work attracted the eye of the late Baron Yatarō Iwasaki. Thus he was adopted by the latter and

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married the eldest daughter of the richest man in Japan.

When one speaks of Viscount Kato, he is sure to remember the so-called 21 demands presented to China by Kato, then Foreign Minister in the Okuma Cabinet. However, the Sino-Japanese treaty concluded as the result does not contain the points on which China did not agree. The treaty deals with all the questions regarding Shantung and Manchuria. Afterwards young Chinese arose against the treaty and maintained an antagonistic attitude towards Japan until now. Certain nations helped these Chinese in their movement. The American publicists branded Japan as militaristic and imperialistic in connection with the question. However, most of them were possibly ignorant of the contents of the treaty. They know only that the treaty was concluded through Japan's threat or ultimatum. But they scarcely know that the treaty provides for the extension of the term of the lease of Port Arthur and Dairen and the terms of the South Manchuria Railway and the Antung-Mukden Railway. How important Manchuria is to Japan is explained by a staff correspondent of *Le Matin* to the Washington Conference, who said that the loss of Manchuria is harakiri to Japan. If the treaty had not been concluded, Japan would have lost her control over Manchuria.

Minister Kato urged Premier Okuma to resign when the scandal case happened. The case was connected with the bribery of members of the House of Representatives by a certain Minister of State. Kanetake Oura, Minister of Home Affairs, who was involved in the case, resigned and Kato insisted upon the resignation of the entire

cabinet. However, Okuma did not listen to him. Thereupon Kato resigned himself. The Okuma Cabinet was then reorganized and Viscount Kikujiro Ishii became Foreign Minister.

The resignation of Kato is interpreted by political writers in various ways. One says he saw that there were many difficulties to be encountered by the Okuma Cabinet, especially due to the opposition by the people to the Government's Chinese policy and due to the programme of the Naval increase. Others suspect that he was ambitious to keep the way open for his appointment as successor to the Okuma cabinet as Premier by leaving the cabinet before it collapsed. Kato was President of the Doshikai, which later changed to the name of the Kenseikai, succeeding the late Prince Taro Katsura, and the Doshikai was the largest party in the Lower House. However, Kato is said to be too honest a man to plan such a design.

At any rate, when Okuma decided to resign in July 1916 he recommended Kato, President of the Doshikai, to the Emperor saying that Kato was a talented statesman and was able to hold the premiership. This, however, was opposed by the genro, especially the late Prince Yamagata. Yamagata held the view that at the time of the great war, the President of a political party should not be Premier, because fair administration could not be expected from any party Government. The genro then recommended General Terauchi, Governor-General of Chosen, to be Premier and the Terauchi Cabinet appeared in October of the same year. In reality, Yamagata did not like Kato, as the latter was straight in asserting his views. The formation of the Te-

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rauchi Cabinet was the centre of a general attack and many criticisms were passed upon Premier Terauchi in the Diet. Terauchi had no party support and his cabinet was considered as a non-Constitutional government.

The Terauchi Cabinet sang a swan song in 1917 holding itself responsible for the rice riots which broke out in different localities on account of the abnormal rise in the price of rice. The Hara Cabinet came in and when the opposition presented a universal manhood suffrage bill Premier Hara dissolved the Diet, declaring that the Government would ask the people's views on the question. The result of general election was the overwhelming victory of the Seiyukai.

The Seiyukai had a dominant power in the political world for a long time but it sank after a split in the party, to fall to the second party in the elections in May last. The Kenseikai, after the elapse of about ten years, came again to be the first party and its President has been appointed Premier.

The Seiyukai is a landowners' party in its final analysis, therefore

it is small wonder that the party has often been involved in scandal cases. The right of exploitation, the right of coal mines or the right for the construction of local railway lines have always been what the members of the Seiyukai were striving to get from the Government of their party. The people were long sick of the party, although it had a strong power in the provinces. The result of the recent elections shows that the Seiyukai still enjoys popularity in the farming districts, while it failed to get the support of the urban citizens. The Kenseikai secured a sweeping success in Tokyo in the elections.

As the result of a split in the Seiyukai, an entente cordiale was effected in the relationship between the Seiyukai and the Kenseikai Party and a kind of a coalition cabinet of the Kenseikai, the Seiyukai and the Kakushin Club has been organized.

It is interesting to note that the late Mr. Hara, the Premier from 1918 to 1921, was President of the Osaka Mainichi between 1897 and 1900 and Premier Kato was President of the Tokyo Nichi-Nichi between 1904 and 1908.