

Ex 2348

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Extract from
Interrogation of Hideki TOJO
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p. 5-6

A. Yes, Imperial Conferences /Cozen Kaigi/ were held with important Ministers of State, depending on the problem to be discussed. In cases involving the prerogative of military command, the Army and Navy Chiefs of Staff also attended; also the President of the Privy Council.

Q. How often were these held during a year?

A. Some years there were none. On years when important matters had to be decided, sometimes there were two or three.

Q. Was there any provision in the constitution or in the laws authorizing those to be held?

A. No.

Q. Then they were only a matter of custom?

A. Yes, when some important matter had to be decided. The Imperial Conferences, however, had no responsibility as such. Those who attended, the Chiefs of Staff, the Cabinet Ministers, President of the Privy Council, each had responsibility in his capacity of Chief of Staff, Cabinet Member, or President of the Privy Council but not in his capacity as a member of the Imperial Conference.

Q. How long had this custom existed?

A. For a long time back - since the Russo-Japanese War, I suppose. It was a gathering of individuals holding positions of responsibility to effect an interchange of views.

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Q. Who called these Imperial Conferences?

A. They could be requested of the Emperor by one of the Chiefs of Staff, or by the Prime Minister, or by any other Minister of State if the matter were important enough. The Imperial Conferences theoretically had no presiding officer but in fact the Prime Minister acted as presiding officer. Of course matters were not officially decided here. After discussion they were again brought up at the cabinet meeting where official action was taken. The Emperor, although he attended, did not officially approve or disapprove or order the actions taken.