

NEWS NARRATIVE

The figures in brackets at the ends of paragraphs refer to volumes and pages of *The Public* for earlier information on the same subject.

Week ending Tuesday, October 31, 1911.

The Chinese Imperial Government Yields to the National Assembly.

The Chinese revolution has gained strength. Provincial capitals and other large cities in mid and south China continue to fall into the hands of the revolutionists, often without effort at defense on the part of the Imperial officials. Nanking, Shanghai and Canton are openly friendly to the revolution, though not actually under insurgent leadership. The Tartar general, Feng-Shan, was assassinated when he arrived at Canton to assume the post made vacant by the assassination of his predecessor, also a Tartar general, last April. General Li Yuen Heng, leader of the insurgent forces, has informed the foreign consuls that he has been proclaimed President of the Republic of China. On the 27th the insurgents received their first check while fighting the Imperialists before Hankow. After forcing the insurgents back in two engagements the Imperial troops captured the railway station north of the city, but did not take the city itself, as was at first reported. [See current volume, page 1099.]

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The National Assembly (or Imperial Senate—the incipient parliament of China under the ten years' Imperial program), which was opened for its second session on the 22nd, as reported last week, immediately proceeded to formulate demands for radical reforms. On the 25th the Assembly impeached Sheng Hsuan Huai, head of the ministry of posts and communications, for the part he had played in obtaining Imperial control of the railways. The government surrendered on this point and dismissed Sheng; and also in further compliance with demands ordered Prince Ching, president of the cabinet, before a board of inquiry. As a further concession the Imperial government recalled to power Yuan Shi Kai, the creator of the modern Chinese army, regarded as probably the ablest man in China, and has put him in charge of the war and peace operations. The dispatches say of Yuan Shi Kai that "he is likely to prove more friendly to the rebels than to the government. His endowment to power is not ascribed to his love of an imperialistic policy but to the desperate need of a savior for the Empire. He numbers his friends strongly among the anti-Manchus and many believe that secretly he sympathizes with the revolutionists." On the

29th the second army of the Yangtse campaign, comprising 20,000 soldiers, gave the Regent the option of accepting immediately their demands for a complete constitutional government, failing which they threatened to attack the capital city of Peking. The National Assembly in secret session endorsed these demands, and then formally presented them in a memorial to the Regent, Prince Chen. The demands were specifically as follows:

Full power to parliament to revise the constitution. Army and navy must not be used in internal troubles without consent of parliament.

Emperor must no longer have absolute power of life and death.

Pardon for political exiles.

A responsible cabinet, with a premier to be chosen by parliament.

Royalty to be ineligible to the cabinet.

Parliament to share the treaty making power and have full power over the budget.

Throne to have no power over taxation unless authorized by parliament.

No appointive members in the upper house of parliament until the reforms are completed, and the army and navy to have a full voice in their shaping.

A telegram received on the same day from Admiral Sah in the Yangtse stated that the navy would mutiny unless political changes should be made. The Imperial government has appeared to accede to all demands. An Imperial edict was issued on the 30th apologizing for the past neglect of the Throne, and granting an immediate constitution, with a cabinet from which nobles shall be excluded. This edict which purports to be from the hand of the little five-year-old Emperor Hsuan-tung, is in part as follows:

I have reigned three years and have always acted conscientiously in the interests of the people. But I have not employed men properly, as I am without political skill. I have employed too many nobles in political positions, which contravenes constitutionalism.

On railway matters one whom I trusted deceived me. Hence public opinion was antagonized. When I urge reform, officials and the gentry seize the opportunity to embezzle. Much of the people's money has been taken, but nothing to benefit the people has been achieved.

On several occasions edicts have promulgated laws, but none of them has been obeyed. The people are grumbling, yet I do not know. Disasters loom ahead, but I do not see. . . .

All these things are my own fault, and I hereby announce to the world that I swear to reform, and with our soldiers and people, to carry out the constitution faithfully, modifying legislation, promoting the interests of the people, and abolishing their hardships, all in accordance with their wishes and interests.

The old laws that are unsuitable will be abolished. The union of the Manchus and Chinese mentioned by the late Emperor, I shall carry out now.