

HOW THE GOVERNMENT OF KOREA HAS BEEN STAFFED



When we arrived in Korea, most of the former government officials were present for duty. All officials in higher positions were Japanese. Both Japanese and lower Korean officials were members of the Japanese Civil Service System. This system was composed of 4 ranks, each depending upon the individual employee's relation to the Japanese Imperial Court. Highest officials, including the Governor General and Vice Governor of Korea, were appointed directly by the Emperor of Japan -- and in his presence. Lowest officials were appointed by Japanese Bureau Heads in Korea.

Immediately upon establishment of Military Government in September 1945, the enormous task of replacing all Japanese government officials in Korea with Korean nationals was started. For the first few weeks after the beginning of this program, so many applicants for government positions appeared at the Capitol that it was impossible for the few Military Government officers present to interview more than a small part of each day's gathering. Some persistent and hearty individuals spent several days in the Capitol grounds -- in order to keep their place in line on the reception list.

Since the Japanese had held all positions of importance in Korea for the past 40 years, and, because the policy of Military Government excluded the use of the few Koreans who had held high positions under the Japanese--the number of eligible applicants for Government positions who had any qualifications as government administrators were extremely limited. This situation resulted from Japanese aggression, thru no fault of the Koreans -- and even today, is one of the major problems in establishment



of the Korean Government.

It was imperative in the beginning for Military Government to relieve all Japanese officials in Korea as rapidly as possible, and send them back to Japan. This meant actually the selection of thousands of untrained, inexperienced Koreans -- on a temporary trial basis in less than six months -- to staff one of the most complex governmental structures in the world; and, a government in the process of change from highly centralized imperialism to a form of democracy.

To eliminate former Japanese imperialistic ideas in Korea -- including the selection of government officials only on a basis of their loyalty to the policies of Japanese militarism -- Military Government has established an entirely new Civil Service System in Korea. This system provides for the classification of positions rather than individuals, and is therefore similar to the United States Civil Service. Important Korean customs have been preserved, however, to insure efficient administration of the system by Koreans.

Since it is obvious that many mistakes and unwise selections were made by hurriedly replacing all Japanese officials by Koreans, Korea Civil Service has been working full time every day since the occupation to investigate all temporary appointees, and remove those considered disloyal or incompetent. This is an enormous task which will continue for some time to come.