

The late Prince Saionji, who was the last of the *genro* or Elder Statesmen, was known to have exerted throughout his career a moderating influence on Japanese policy. He used his influence as far as he could to advise the Emperor to rely upon cautious and liberal prime ministers. His influence, however, was bitterly resented both by civilian fascists and army politicians; thus his later years were spent in cloistered retirement, often under police protection. In 1930 he was criticized for his stand on the Naval Reduction Conference in London; this criticism was the first that had ever been publicly directed against an Elder Statesman.

#### An Intimate Record

Realizing that he was facing an increasingly hostile political scene, the aged prince asked his private secretary, Baron Harada, a man of lively disposition with a keen ear for gossip whether trivial or important, to keep a journal in which to record not only all the significant conversations that Prince Saionji might have with important individuals, but also to preserve any political information which Baron Harada himself might gather in his capacity as confidential messenger between Saionji in his quiet villa near Shizuoka and the capital. At the end of every week Baron Harada read to Prince Saionji his recording of the week's events and the *genro* corrected or enlarged upon his secretary's record. This journal is a rather intimate and unofficial record, but it has genuine historical value because of the wide circle of officials whom Baron Harada met and because its pages were written with the utmost frankness since they were meant only for Prince Saionji and those who enjoyed his fullest confidence. The journal is further enriched by the comments of the one surviving statesman, Saionji, who in his own career linked contemporary Japan to the early years of the Restoration of the Meiji Emperor.

#### Marquis Kido's Diary

Marquis Kido, one of the accused, was originally a protegee of Saionji, although in later years he, like Prince Konoye, moved away from the spirit and philosophy of the Elder Statesman. Kido served for a number of years both as cabinet minister and as a high official in the Imperial Household and became Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal in 1940. His diary is thus a valuable source of information on inner politics in Japan and its importance increase after his assumption of the post of the Lord Keeper. Yet the diary itself is somewhat disappointing because of the terse and bare form in which it is written. There is no shading or refinement of thought; only a laconic summary of appointments and conversations. Perhaps one reason for Kido's reticence in his diary was the fear that it might be stolen and thus fall into the hands of political opponents. In any case, Kido was reluctant to put on paper his private opinion on men and events. Despite this, however, the document is of the utmost importance to the historian. Curiously enough, he made no effort to destroy it before his arrest on the charge of war crimes in the fall of 1945 even though he had ample time to do so. Kido's diary supplements the Saionji-Harada memoirs and continues beyond it for five years. The two documents should be used together as a means of checking and corroborating each other.