



Pearl Harbor. Tojo (right) moved faster than than Matsuoka's envoys.

Tojo on Trial

The courtroom, for a change, was crowded last week. And the defendant, bald Hideki Tojo, made the most of it. He smiled broadly for the benefit of spectators and the judges on the 11-nation war crimes tribunal. And when, at last, he was called to the stand he blew his nose with dramatic gusto before walking 20 paces to the witness chair.

Then his lawyer, George Francis Blewett of Philadelphia, began a two-day task of reading the 65,000-word statement which Tojo had written to defend his position in waging war.

The document proved that The Razor, as his underlings called Tojo, was still as sharp as he was at the peak of his power. Most of the statement concerns the four years—1940 to 1944—when Tojo, as premier and war minister, was as responsible for Japan's part in the war as Hitler and Mussolini at the other end of the Axis.

Defense. Without hesitation, Tojo accepted full blame for plunging Japan into war. But it was, he insisted, a "defensive" war, and "in no manner a violation of international law."

The violators of international law, Tojo argued, were American fliers who bombed Japanese cities. That was his defense for the execution of Gen. James Doolittle's "30-seconds-over-Tokyo" fliers.

He explained the sneak attack on Pearl Harbor as a case of faulty timing. According to the timetable, Tojo said, Foreign Minister Yosuke Matsuoka's envoys were to have delivered notice to the White House before Jap planes struck at Pearl Harbor. Said Tojo: "It was but natural for us to place full faith in our diplomatic officials in executing a function of such vital importance."

Main Event. The trial of Tojo and 24 other Japanese leaders on war crimes charges began in April 1946. Most of the way the dull proceedings have played to empty benches. The 19 months of preliminaries were but a boring prologue to the big show—Tojo's fight to escape the gallows.

With his life at stake, Tojo is a picture of confidence, far removed from the dejected figure who tried to kill himself soon after Japan's surrender. Before the end of the trial, probably in April or May, he expects to make his point and win acquittal. But to do it he will have to ride out associate prosecutor John W. Filhelly's cross-examination, expected to be one of the most searching in the history of trials.