

38

ROMAN ALPHABET URGED UPON JAPAN

THE NEW YORK TIMES, SUNDAY, APRIL 7, 1946.

Education Mission Finds Use of Ideographs a Handicap— Emperor's Place Scored

By **LINDESAY PARROTT**

By Wireless to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

TOKYO, April 6—A drastic overhauling of the Japanese educational system from primary schools to universities, including schools to universities was recommended to General Douglas MacArthur in a report of the United States education mission to Japan, made public today. Making one of the most sweeping departures from the traditional Japanese cultural system, the commission called for the abolition of the Chinese-derived ideographs from the Japanese written language and the substitution of the Roman alphabet as a measure to eliminate what it termed one of the hardest grades in Japanese progress.

The mission of twenty-seven



ROMAN ALPHABET URGED UPON JAPAN

Continued From Page 1

in the democratic tradition," but he pointed out that many reforms, such as language reform, might take years to complete.

The central theme of the report was the creation of democracy in Japanese education by the establishment of local control over schools, as well as by the severe limitation of the powers of the Ministry of Education to dictate textbooks, plan curricula or hamper the autonomy of teachers. The plan proposes that the Ministry be confined largely to administrative duties and that control of teaching be vested in the prefectures, each with an Allied civilian educator as a full-time adviser.

The report made a long series of specific recommendations, including a widespread campaign for vocational training as a means of procuring manpower for the rebuilding of Japan, adult education in the prefectures and co-education in the primary schools.

Other recommendations included the establishment of new "lower secondary schools" and particularly the elimination of the Imperial influence in the schools.

In this connection the report said:

"The ceremonial use of Imperial Rescripts and the practice of obiesance before the Imperial portraits have in the past been a powerful influence for the regimentation of student thought and feeling; they have served the purpose of a militant nationalism. They should be discontinued. The ceremony connected with the use of such instrumentalities we consider undesirable in the development of personality and incompatible with public instruction in a democratic Japan."

The mission took issue with the Ministry of Education in recommending the abolition of Chinese characters and the substitution of the Roman alphabet. The most recent proposal from the Ministry was a curtailment of the Chinese "kanji" and an increase in the use of phonetic characters. This the American mission apparently considers unsatisfactory.

Declaring that much useful time of Japanese students was wasted in memorizing the Chinese characters, the mission proposed the "prompt establishment of a Japanese committee of scholars, educators and statesmen to formulate

means of adapting the Roman alphabet to Japanese sounds and its introduction into the schools, newspapers, magazines and books." The present system, the mission asserted, "constitutes a formidable obstacle to learning."

Faith in the People

The report expressed a considerable measure of faith in the Japanese people and in Japanese teachers, placing the blame for the failure of Japanese education on a "nineteenth century pattern, highly centralized, providing one type of education for the masses and another for the privileged few."

"On the whole, we have had revealed to us," the report said, "a varied picture of a people bewildered by the turn of events, but earnest in their striving to use an emerging freedom to forge the instruments of a democratic society. The teachers of Japan, in so far as their views have been represented to the mission, are critical and restless and looking for leadership outside of the Ministry of Education."

The report, which is by far the most sweeping examination made since the surrender of the entire Japanese educational system, placed considerable emphasis on the training of teachers and on adult education. Teacher-training in normal schools and colleges should be broadened and a new program established, the report said.