

DUTCH QUEEN SIGNS AWAY AN EMPIRE

In the Royal Palace in Amsterdam, a new state is born. There to inaugurate it comes its first chief of state, Mehamad Hatta, Premier of the United States of Indonesia (once Holland's biggest and most prosperous colony) now an independent nation. In the Civic Hall, before members of the States-General and the diplomatic corps, Holland's Premier Willem Drees reads out the transfer of sovereignty.

To sign the new statute, that ends 340 years of Dutch rule in the Pacific, comes Queen Juliana. The Queen becomes head of the newly-formed Netherlands-Indonesian Union - a partnership based on the example of the British Commonwealth of Nations. The fact that today a free Indonesia is linked in a free association with Holland is probably UNO's biggest contribution yet to the world's well-being. That is the significance behind this solemn ceremony.

Thus comes into being the United States of Indonesia. Premier Hatta - accepting the transfer of sovereignty - assumes control over 72 million people in a strategically-vital part of South East Asia.