HURRIED ARRANGEMENTS were made to carry out the change in the form of government that the sad circumstances had made necessary. His late majesty's cabinet called a meeting of the privy council of state to be held at the palace on that day at noon. To this meeting the princess regent, now Queen, by hereditary right and the provisions of the superseded constitution of 1865, as well as by the direct provisions of the constitution of 1887, was summoned to be present in order to take the oath of office and to be sworn in as sovereign, as provided for in the constitution which had been forced on her late royal brother at the point of the bayonet during the uprising of 1887, at the instigation of the same Thurston and his associates.

At this meeting her troubles began. Naturally and properly opposed to a constitution promulgated by her late brother under compulsion of force, to which she had never consented, and feeling secure in her right to ascend the throne under the provisions of the superseded Kamehameha constitution, she hesitated to sign the constitution or to take the oath which might bind her to acknowledge the validity of that document. The chancellor of the Kingdom, Chief Justice A. F. Judd, advised her to sign it, as the oath was merely the same as in the previous constitution, and hinted to her that the then ministry could not hold office under the commissions signed by the late King. Thus induced, she reluctantly but finally signed the document and took the oath.

Picture the scene: The dead body of her brother and late sovereign still on board of the Charleston, no definite arrangements yet made to bring it ashore; men at work in the very palace where they were draping it with mourning; no relatives near or far save a child niece 8,000 miles away in England and an invalid husband who died a few months later; a subtle tempter promising—you shall do as you want if you willingly give in on this one point; and a grief-stricken and lonely woman in the first pangs of mourning, bereavement, and the bewilderment of a sudden change called upon to assume the duties of head of the nation.

Could anyone doubt the result? The chief justice's advice was followed. The oath was taken to support the Constitution of the Hawaiian Islands, and immediately on the adjournment of the Privy Council, the politicians both in it and out of it were at work. The chief Justice at once stepped up to Her Majesty and whispered to her that if the ministry resigned, as they could not legally hold their portfolios unless commissioned by her, she should ask them to hold their portfolios until after the funeral. This was indeed a most remarkable action of the chief justice toward a woman thus suddenly called on to attend to matters of the most important and serious nature possible, as well as a singular prejudgment of matters which have to, and did, come before him in his official capacity as head of the supreme bench.

For not without a struggle did the late King's cabinet give up the reins of power, bowing only to the decision of the supreme court. It was appealed to, as provided for in the Constitution. It will be remembered that Mr. J. A. Cummins was the minister of foreign affairs and nominal premier in this cabinet which was now compelled to retire. This fact accounts for much which happened later, as will be related in due time. Considerable feeling ran through the community at the time of the discussion, on the claim of right by the late King's ministers to hold office in defiance of the Queen. The Thurston faction saw that their power was slipping surely and slowly from them, and they made every effort, privately and publicly, to prevent the Queen from acting contrary to their wishes and plans.