

(d) Where necessary, military demands on indigenous production of articles essential to the civil population, of which there was a shortage, should be diverted elsewhere

(e) The fullest possible use should be made of the Central Provision Office's stocks as well as of the productive capacity in Eastern Group countries in order to relieve India.

(f) Sufficient transportation facilities whether by rail, road, inland water, or coastal shipping, should be reserved in order to maintain India's internal economy and productive capacity at suitable levels.

The above recommendations were accepted and telegraphed with observations in greater detail, by the Governor-General to H.M. Government (India Office) on 21st October, 1943.

24. The following short-term improvements on the Assam L. of C. were immediately considered:—

(a) Increasing the number of train paths in Assam by various improvements in operation. One of these was supervision by military personnel* and, another, the relaxation of certain running precaution involving abnormal risks.

(b) The immediate increase of locomotive and rolling stock on the Bengal and Assam Railway by transfers from other parts of India—the latter to be replaced by fresh stock from the U.S.A. on arrival.

(c) The speeding up of river transportation by installation of navigational lights and by night running.

(d) The despatch by air from Calcutta to Assam airfields of stores destined for China.

			I.A.	R.I.N.	I.A.F.	Total
June	...	...	50,713	594	2,750	54,057
July	...	...	50,161	630	2,574	53,365
August	...	...	41,354	544	1,936	43,834
September	...	...	39,705	604	1,609	41,918
October	...	...	33,879	627	1,367	35,873
November	...	...	35,597	582	1,564	37,743
TOTAL			251,409	3,581	11,800	266,790

The causes of decline are thought to be several. Clearly, the manpower of the races and tribes which furnished the bulk of recruits before the war had been heavily tapped since 1940, and the increasing opportunities for well-paid employment in civil labour conflicted with the attractions of service in the fighting forces.

Another complication was the ever-increasing demand for educated recruits to be trained as technicians. All services have required them, but priority was accorded to the Indian Air Force for the dilution scheme designed to conserve British manpower. Though the scheme helped the Air Forces (and their need was paramount) it tended to restrict the flow to the Indian Army of much-wanted educated personnel especially clerks.

Similarly the Royal Indian Navy suffered in the recruitment for its more highly educated categories. It obtained, however, the men it needed for its lower grades, and was able to take a higher proportion of these from Southern India.

* See also paragraph 27 below under 'Transportation Road and Rail.'

25. Progress in Manpower and Recruiting.

I now come to the actual progress that has been achieved in pursuance of existing plans or policy.

It has been remarked above that one of the main headings under which limitations existed in regard to the total war effort of this country is manpower.

The problem became more complicated as the drain on the United Kingdom and India increased.

The shortage of officers in the United Kingdom coincided with heavily increased commitments due to the setting up of the South East Asia Command, and the formation of the Headquarters of the 11th Army Group and the Fourteenth Army. At the same time there was a decline in the intake to our officers' training schools in this country. As a result, when the period ended there was an acute shortage of officers for both the British and Indian Armies. (The officer situation in the Air Forces is dealt with separately in that portion of this Despatch relating to Air Force Administration.)

With regard to British other ranks, the supply from the United Kingdom was up to expectations apart from technicians. We were thus able to build up strength in the majority of arms, and in some cases even to increase their reserve.

As regards Indian other ranks, there was a decline in recruiting particularly during October and November.

The following are the figures:—

Recruitment for the Women's Auxiliary Corps (India) averaged 400 per month in the first half of the period but fell to about 300 per month later. Here accommodation difficulties entailed the cessation of the publicity campaign and the intake fell as a result.

26. Line of Communication Development.

The last two Despatches from the India Command give details of the efforts made since early 1942 to build up our lines of communication in the extremely difficult zone comprising Assam and North Eastern India generally. During the period under review, progress was severely handicapped by the monsoon. This was only to be expected, but nevertheless much was done under adverse conditions. The post of Inspector of Transportation, Assam, was created to supervise the working of the Assam line of communications. Also a Joint Transportation Committee, representing all branches and departments of the Government of India concerned, was set up to initiate, supervise and progress transportation projects of all kinds arising from the needs of the South East Asia Command. The rail