

urgently required in Malaya as V.A.D.s, car drivers, for work in offices, and for other war work. For these reasons I recommended to the War Office at the request of the C.-in-C. Far East that officers' families should be allowed to enter Malaya at my discretion. This request was refused though they were allowed to visit Malaya for limited periods.

78. *Furlough*.—In peace-time the normal period of service in Malaya was limited to three years. By 1941 many officers and men had already exceeded that period, some by a considerable margin. In order to avoid, as far as possible, deterioration in efficiency I authorised, with the approval of the C.-in-C. Far East, leave ex-Malaya for all ranks for limited periods and provided that no more than a fixed proportion of each unit was absent at any given time. Unfortunately, owing to expense and difficulties of travel, only a few were able to avail themselves of this privilege.

79. *Administrative Inspection*.—In September, 1941, I made an administrative tour lasting eight days of the principal depots, hospitals and other installations in Malaya. Questions of policy were settled and contacts established with the civil authorities. I was satisfied that, as far as lay within our power, everything possible was being done to ensure the maintenance of the essential administrative services should hostilities break out.

#### SECTION X.—CIVIL DEFENCE.

##### *The Civil Population.*

80. *European*.—The European Civilians in Malaya fell into two main categories, the Officials and the Unofficials. Most of them were men of energy and ability but there were some who, after many prosperous years in Malaya, especially during and after World War I, had lapsed into an easier routine. To this the climate partly contributed. This class was gradually disappearing, their place at the beginning of World War II being taken by a splendid type of young man who came out to join the Civil Service or to take up other appointments in civil life.

The picture, so often portrayed, of the "whisky-swilling planter" was a gross misrepresentation of the conditions under which Europeans in Malaya lived at the time of World War II. That the consumption of alcoholic liquor was fairly high is not to be denied, any more than it can be denied in other tropical countries, but there was little drunkenness and the vast majority of Europeans lived very normal lives. The standard of living, however, as a result of the natural wealth of the country and of the climatic conditions, was exceptionally high—possibly too high for the maintenance of a virile European population.

I felt that in some quarters long years of freedom from strife had bred a feeling of security. This frame of mind was voiced in one of the local newspapers which wrote, when the decision to defend Penang was first announced: "There are not a few who view with concern the disturbance of the restful and placid atmosphere of Penang which will result from the military invasion." Even in 1941 there were those who found it difficult to believe that an attack on Malaya was within the bounds of practical politics. It should be stated, however, that most of the Unofficial Europeans were

engaged, directly or indirectly, in the rubber and tin industries which, by order of the Home Government, were working at maximum pressure. Bearing this fact in mind, the European community of Malaya, taken as a whole, shouldered its responsibilities as war approached in the same loyal spirit as was evident elsewhere in the Commonwealth.

81. *Asiatic*.—The bulk of the Asiatic population consisted of Malays and Chinese in approximately equal proportions. In general, the Chinese were to be found in the towns and larger villages while the Malays inhabited the country districts and the sea-boards. The reason for this was that the Chinese, being more industrious by nature and more commercially minded, had gained control of a great deal of the business of the country while the Malays, a more easy-going and less ambitious race, were content to live on the natural products of the soil.

82. The Chinese themselves were of two categories—those who were and those who were not British subjects. For practical purposes the political sympathies of the Chinese population could be divided into four groups:—

(a) The pro-Kuomintang. This was probably the most powerful group.

(b) The pro-Wang Ching Wei, i.e., those who were in sympathy with Japanese aims. A small and not dangerous group.

(c) The pro-Communists, predominantly Chinese of the working classes. The most active and vocal group.

(d) The pro-British and Independents, the former being genuinely loyal adherents of the British Empire, and the latter those who wished to be left alone in the pursuit of fortune and their own self-interest. This group formed the large majority but unfortunately was only too prone to dragooning by (a) and (c) above.

The temporary reconciliation between the Kuomintang and the China Communist Party following the invasion of Russia by Germany resulted in the formation in Malaya of a "United Front" which, on the outbreak of war with Japan, absorbed all Chinese with the exception of Group (b).

As will be readily understood from the above summary, the Chinese population taken as a whole lacked homogeneity and centralized leadership.

83. The Malays were divided into four classes, i.e. the Ruling class of Malay Nobles, the "Intelligentsia", the artisan and clerical class, and the peasant.

The Ruling Classes naturally felt that there should be an ever-widening control by the Sultans. Among the "Intelligentsia" were signs of a movement towards Nationalism. The other two classes were not in the broad sense politically minded.

The remainder of the Asiatic populations, totalling less than 20 per cent. of the whole, consisted of Indians, Eurasians, Japanese, etc.

84. The Indians, the great majority of whom were Hindu by religion with an active proportion of Sikhs, were divided politically into—

(a) Indian Nationalists who, through the Central Indian Association of Malaya, were bidding for control of the Indian population of the country on a strongly Nationalist basis.