

In Arakan, there was the problem of villagers rendered homeless by military operations, and, at present some 50,000 civilians are being accommodated, supervised, and supplied under the auspices of the welfare organization.

217. *Representation in China.* In November 1943, an officer of the C.A.S.B. was, with the approval of the War Office, attached to the staff of our Assistant Military Attaché at Kunming (China) to advise on Civil Affairs matters generally and, in particular, on political questions arising out of the operations of the Chinese forces over the Burma border from Yunnan.

218. *Future Commitments.* While administering the relatively small area of Burma which is at present under our control, we have also to look forward to the future, when the whole of Burma is re-occupied and returns under British Military Administration.

With this in view, it has recently been decided to combine into a single team the C.A.S.B. planning team and the Government of Burma planning team, for the preparation of a two-year plan covering, from every aspect, the re-establishment of the administrative and economic life of Burma. This will, I hope, ensure continuity, and a fair start for the Administration when conditions permit of the Government of Burma taking over the country from the C.A.S.B.

Tribute.

219. I referred in my introductory remarks on administration to the well known fact that the success or failure of an army is largely dependent on the efficiency of rear organization. It follows, therefore, that the successes which the Fourteenth Army has achieved are attributable, in no small measure, to the magnificent work of the rearward services. I have given some indication of the size and complexity of the problems which have had to be tackled. That they have been, or are being, solved, is due to the skill and determination displayed both by the Administrative Staff and Services of 11 Army Group and its subordinate formations, and the Commander-in-Chief, India, and his staff who not only laid the foundations on which we have built, but on whose administrative support we continue to depend.

Location of Headquarters.

220. I cannot finish this Despatch without referring to the difficulties by which I was continually hampered in commanding and administering 11 Army Group by the decision of the Supreme Allied Commander to move his H.Q. to Kandy in Ceylon in April 1944.*

Before South-East Asia Command was set up in October 1943, the Commander-in-Chief, India, commanded the land forces operating against the Japanese and the roots of the Army, which was predominantly Indian, were deeply embedded in India. It was obvious that, even after the transfer of command to

the Supreme Allied Commander, very close administrative connection between the two Commands would be necessary and indeed orders were issued by the Chiefs of Staff that the forces of S.E.A.C. would be based upon India. It was clear that the relationship between G.H.Q. India and 11 Army Group which was formed to command and administer the British land forces of S.E.A.C. would have to be very intimate.

The formation of H.Q. 11 Army Group was slow, for while it was possible for the Commander-in-Chief, India, to provide some of the officers and clerks required, it was clear that the majority of both would have to come from outside India; and as the needs of other theatres of war were urgent many months elapsed before these officers and men could be sent. It was, in consequence, impossible for H.Q. 11 Army Group to move with H.Q. S.E.A.C. in April owing to shortage of staff, much of whose work had still to be done by G.H.Q., India.

The decision of the Supreme Allied Commander to move his H.Q. in April, therefore, entailed the splitting—difficult for any staff however efficient—of H.Q. 11 Army Group before it was fully formed, because it was necessary for me to be represented at Kandy. I had to send my M.G. G.S., the most senior officer on my staff, as I had no other officer of adequate experience. This was a grave handicap to the efficient formation and training of the staff and to me. I had in addition to send with him some 40 officers and the necessary clerks. As no telephone communications existed—the highest priority telegrams took several hours and letters not less than 3 days—consultation between my main H.Q. at Delhi and the Advanced H.Q. at Kandy was slow and difficult.

In addition to the work at Delhi, I had of course continually to visit the forward troops and the Commander, Fourteenth Army, to control operations. I could only make occasional visits to Kandy, a journey to which from Delhi or Calcutta took more than 12 hours, except in the fastest aircraft. I was compelled to do much unnecessary travelling.

I pointed out on several occasions the very serious disadvantages of trying to control operations in Assam and Arakan from a H.Q. more than 1,500 miles from either area, without telephones, with slow telegraphic and long, and at certain times of the year unreliable air communication; further that the Air Commander responsible for the support of the Army would not be at Kandy. I continued to press for the establishment of H.Q. 11 Army Group at Calcutta. In August it was at last agreed that H.Q. 11 Army Group should move to the Calcutta area but much time had been lost and the move could not be completed until the beginning of December, at which moment operations would be in progress.

Acknowledgements.

221. My thanks are due to many officers for their ungrudging assistance, but it is not possible to mention more than a few of them.

* *War Office footnote*—The views of the Supreme Allied Commander and his reasons for the move to Ceylon are set out in Part A., paragraphs 12-14 of his Report, "South-East Asia, 1943-1945."