

attacked with success; and a constant reconnaissance of the Bay of Bengal, over enemy aerodromes in Burma and of the Port of Rangoon was maintained as far as possible. Air information was, however, severely restricted not only by the weather but by shortage of long-range aircraft. During this period the enemy air force was almost completely inactive.

#### EVENTS DURING MONSOON FROM JUNE TO OCTOBER.

22. On the eastern front of India there was little military activity during the monsoon period. Some good patrol work in difficult conditions was carried out in the Chindwin valley by troops of the 23rd Division and local levies. The rains were exceptionally heavy, and all northern Burma and Assam are highly malarial during the rainy season. It seemed at one time that the enemy intended to move from the Chindwin and Myitta valleys into the Chin Hills, which were held only by local levies whom we could not support in the absence of communications. The Chins became alarmed by Japanese threats and depressed by shortage of food, and there was a danger that they might come to terms with the enemy. The danger was averted by vigorous bombing of the enemy and the dropping of supplies to the Chins.

I had determined in June to re-occupy Fort Hertz (Putao) in the extreme north of Burma, in order to protect the landing ground there and to raise and support Kachin levies to operate between Myitkyina and Fort Hertz. There was no road from India to Fort Hertz, and a detachment could only be flown in by air. It was September before this was possible and it had to be preceded by a small detachment dropped by parachute to prepare the landing ground.

#### INTERNAL SITUATION.

23. Reference has already been made to the disturbances organised by Congress in August and their effect (see paragraph 13). Internal trouble of a different kind necessitated the use of troops and the declaration of martial law in part of Sind north of Hyderabad. A fanatical sect of Moslems known as the Hurs had long terrorised a considerable district through which the main line from the port of Karachi runs. On the 16th May, 1942, a gang of Hurs derailed the mail train from Karachi and then attacked it. It was impossible to tolerate such dangerous lawlessness on one of the principal lines of communication in India. Since the police and civil authorities were unable to deal with the situation, a military force was sent and martial law declared. Major-General R. Richardson, M.C., was appointed Military Administrator. Under his able direction the situation soon improved, but so deep-seated was the terrorism of the Hurs, and so difficult the country, which contains large areas of marsh and of desert, that the troops were still employed at the end of the year.

A company of a Parachute battalion was employed for some time in operations to round up bands of Hurs, probably the first use of parachutists in civil disturbances.

Recruiting was not affected by any internal trouble, and some 60,000 recruits continued to be enlisted each month.

24. In July a small expedition to Datta Khel in Waziristan became necessary to deal with

tribal disturbances inspired by the notorious Fakir of Ipi. The operations were short and successful. On the whole the situation on the N.W. Frontier during 1942 was noticeably stable.

#### REORGANISATION OF COMMANDS.

25. During the period covered by this review it became necessary to reorganise the system of Military Commands in India. Three Armies were constituted to deal with the threats of invasion of N.W., N.E. and Southern India, while a Central Command was created in order to relieve the Army Commanders of large areas with internal security problems only, and of a considerable amount of responsibility for administration and training. Lt.-General N. M. S. Irwin took over command of the Eastern Army, Lt.-General Sir Noel Beresford-Peirse that of the Southern Army, and Lt.-General H. B. D. Willcox the Central Command.

#### OCEAN BASES.

26. When Japan entered the war, and especially after the loss of Singapore, the Navy felt the need of additional bases in the Indian Ocean. Bases were selected at Addu Atoll in the Maldiv Islands, Diego Garcia in the Chagos Archipelago, Seychelles and Mauritius. India was made responsible for the garrison of these and also of Cocos Island and Rodriguez (East of Mauritius). The defences of Addu Atoll were originally designed on a considerable scale, but were later reduced. Scrub typhus and malaria caused a very high sick rate in the garrison and labour units working on the airfield and defences; but this showed signs of improvement by the end of the year as a result of jungle clearance.

After the occupation of Madagascar I suggested that Mauritius, Rodriguez and Seychelles could better be garrisoned from E. Africa. This was accepted and on the 1st September these places passed to the E. African Command. I returned the Mauritian garrison from Diego Garcia to Mauritius during September and replaced it by Indian troops.

#### PREPARATIONS FOR OFFENSIVE.

27. Even before we had been driven out of Upper Burma, I had in April issued instructions for the re-conquest of the whole of Burma to be planned. An estimate was to be made of the troops required, of the measures for their maintenance, and of the special training and equipment necessary; airfields and the maintenance arrangements for a large air force were to be planned, since air superiority was the first requisite for operations against Burma by land or sea.

Planning has continued ever since, and has shown the difficulties of the problem and the extensive preparations required. There is no connection by rail or road between India and Burma, and the country through which routes must be made to support an invasion is extremely unfavourable—high hills, dense jungles and fever-ridden valleys, with no local supplies available and a very limited population to provide labour. Moreover, the rivers and mountain ranges all run from north to south. Communications in this direction, therefore, that is with the grain of the country, are comparatively easy; whereas movement from west to east, against the grain, is very difficult. Any advance that we make from Assam