

production. This applied in particular to beer, of which the supply in India during the present war has always been very much less than the demand.

#### CONCLUSION.

60. This Despatch has carried the narrative of events in the India Command up to the point when this ceased to be an operational headquarters for the purpose of conducting the war against Japan in this theatre.

The Despatches of my predecessor coupled with this record have told the story of an uphill struggle. That struggle has been not only against an enemy who attacked us with the advantages of long preparation and special training, but against all the difficulties of staging a campaign on the Eastern Frontier of India.

It has also involved the commencement of the gigantic work of converting India itself into a base, adequate for such a campaign. It is perhaps fitting therefore that this concluding narrative of a series dealing with a somewhat bleak period, should have more to say about the building up of our resources and making our preparation in this theatre, than about actual fighting against the enemy.

We have learnt enough about fighting the Japanese to realise that intense preparation not only in resources and paraphernalia of war on land, sea and in the air, but in training our men to counter Japanese methods of warfare, are necessary if success is to be assured. Indeed, in this theatre our men have to acquire an almost entirely fresh technique in the tactics and stratagems of jungle warfare. Only thus can they gain complete confidence of being able to beat the Japanese at his own game, and so gain the moral ascendancy over him essential to final success.

Our efforts to organise, equip and train ourselves to this end, with a full realisation of the magnitude of the task ahead, have been indicated in the above review of the monsoon period of 1943. Much remains to be done, but the extent of the progress made and the success already achieved are promising for the future.

The continuance of peaceful conditions both internally and on the North-West Frontier, and the failure of Japanese efforts, to incite subversive elements, and to cause unrest in India by propaganda or through agents, are satisfactory features of the period. The continued flow of recruits for the Indian Services, though slightly reduced in volume, is also reassuring, and indeed remarkable, when it is remembered that every man who joins the fighting forces is a volunteer.

In one direction the period has shown a marked change in our favour. That is in the air. The details recorded of the build-up not only of strength and efficiency of aircraft and aircrews, but of the great and varied supporting organisations behind them, constitute an achievement of the first magnitude. Little less noteworthy was continued successful pursuance of our air offensive over Burma in spite of the monsoon, while the Japanese air effort practically ceased during that period.

Yet another feature of major significance and a milestone in the progress of the air

effort in this theatre has been, the integration (brought about with the inception of the South-East Asia Command) of the British and American Air Forces in India. With the successful model of the combined Air Forces in the North African and subsequent campaigns, plans are being laid to make the integration in this theatre so effective that it will become a single striking force under unified control. Similar unified subordinate commands will operate the various branches, *viz.*—strategical airforces, tactical airforces, supply dropping and airborne forces, and photographic reconnaissance.

This re-organisation will be no longer my responsibility; but in so far as I can assist with the development of resources and installations in back areas, and the provision and maintenance of efficient communications and supplies, these matters will be my constant concern.

The Indian Air Force which remains my responsibility (except for those squadrons actually operating against the Japanese) is still in its childhood. It is too early yet to try to foretell on what lines it will be organised, or how it will be officered; but it can only be to its advantage that in its early years its growth was amid the storms of war, rather than in the sheltered atmosphere of peace.

61. I have already submitted a list of the names of those officers and men whom I consider deserving of mention and reward for the services they have rendered during the period covered by this Despatch.

I wish, however, to record my special appreciation of and gratitude for the work done by the following officers:—

Air Chief Marshal Sir Richard Peirse, K.C.B., D.S.O., A.F.C., Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief.

Vice-Admiral Sir Herbert FitzHerbert, K.C.I.E., C.B., C.M.G., Flag Officer Commanding Royal Indian Navy.

General Sir George J. Giffard, K.C.B., D.S.O., G.O.C.-in-C., 11th Army Group (later ALFSEA).

General H. Finnis, C.B., M.C., G.O.C.-in-C., North-Western Army.

Lieut.-General A. G. O. M. Mayne, C.B., C.B.E., D.S.O., G.O.C.-in-C., Eastern Command.

Lieut.-General Sir Noel M. de la P. Beresford Peirse, K.B.E., C.B., D.S.O., G.O.C.-in-C., Southern Army.

Lieut.-General W. J. Slim, C.B., C.B.E., D.S.O., M.C., G.O.C.-in-C., Fourteenth Army.

Lieut.-General H. B. D. Willcox, C.B., D.S.O., M.C., G.O.C.-in-C., Central Command.

Lieut.-General E. L. Morris, C.B., O.B.E., M.C., Chief of the General Staff.

Lieut.-General Sir C. A. Bird, K.C.I.E., C.B., D.S.O., Master General of Ordnance in India.

Lieut.-General G. Wilson, C.B.E., M.C., M.B., Director of Medical Services in India.

62. I also wish to acknowledge the debt I owe to H.E. The Marquess of Linlithgow, Viceroy and Governor-General of India, for the unfailing support which I have had from him on all occasions of doubt or difficulty.

His wise counsel based on his unrivalled knowledge of the strategy and politics of Asia has been invaluable to me.