

This sickness was largely attributed by the medical authorities to the effects of overwork. In addition, Wing-Commander Yarde had to be sent away sick, other officers were in hospital for shorter periods, and when war with Japan broke out Colonel Scott, who had taken Colonel Fawcett's place as the Army G.S.O.A., was in India on sick leave, having been sent there from hospital.

Intelligence.

8. For intelligence I relied almost entirely on the Far Eastern Combined Bureau, known for short as F.E.C.B. This consisted of branches of Naval, Army and Air Force intelligence, and was under the administrative control of the Admiralty, the officer in charge of the Naval Section acting as head of the Bureau. At the date of the formation of my headquarters, F.E.C.B. was somewhat unbalanced in that attention was mostly concentrated on Naval intelligence, while Army and Air intelligence took a minor place, the latter especially being quite inadequate. This, however, was steadily corrected, and I consider that F.E.C.B. fulfilled its functions and showed that a combined intelligence staff of the three Services is a workable proposition. What was needed, however, was a real chief of F.E.C.B., and not merely one whose main duty was acting as head of his own branch. The difficulty was in finding a really suitable individual, and this we had not succeeded in doing at the time war with Japan broke out.

Attachments to General Headquarters Staff.

9. A branch of the Ministry of Economic Warfare known as the O.M. Section, was started on the arrival of Mr. Killery at Singapore in May, 1941. He and his staff were keen and capable, but they had no experience and very little knowledge of how to set about their work. Further, as in the case of intelligence, this is work that requires a great deal of preparation. In consequence of this, but through no fault of Mr. Killery or his staff, the O.M. activities really never got functioning properly by the time that war with Japan broke out. There was also a curious reluctance on the part of many people to have anything to do with these activities, or to help on the work. This was particularly noticeable in the case of intended activities in Siam.

10. Colonel Warren arrived in Singapore early in 1941 to assist in starting Independent Companies. The obvious disadvantage of these Companies is that they form a drain on infantry units, which were already depleted of many of their best non-commissioned officers and officers owing to the expansion and demands of other organisations. As a result, it was finally decided to limit these Independent Companies to two—one for Burma and one for Malaya.

II.—FACTORS AFFECTING THE DEFENCE OF MALAYA AND BORNEO.

11. Air Vice-Marshal Pulford became Air Officer Commanding, Far East, *vice* Air Vice-Marshal Babington on the 26th April, 1941, and Lieutenant-General Percival took over the duties of General Officer Commanding, Malaya, from Lieutenant-General Bond on the 16th May, 1941.

The strength of the Army and of the Air Force in Malaya in November, 1940, is given in Appendices D and I respectively.

In Malaya, as in Burma and Hong Kong, there was a War Committee, which sat under the Governor.

The main reason for the defence of Malaya was to preserve the facilities of the Naval Base at Singapore. The port and rubber and tin production were also important, but on a different plane from the Naval Base. It was, of course, not sufficient to have a close defence of the area round the Naval Base itself. It was of great importance to keep enemy aircraft as far away from the Base as possible, on account of the danger of bombing; this meant extending the defence right up to the Northern end of Malaya. It may be noted that this was not dependent upon the policy of defending Malaya by means of air power. Had the policy been to defend Malaya by means of Army forces, the dispositions might have been different, but it would still have been essential to hold the greater part of Malaya in order to deny aerodromes or their possible sites to the enemy. Singapore Island was to be provisioned for 180 days.

Communications.

12. The main roads in Malaya are well-metalled, and the railways are single-track metre-gauge. Down the centre of Malaya runs a range of hills rising to some 7,000 feet, and there are no east-to-west communications north of latitude 4, *i.e.*, about the latitude of Kuantan. The central backbone of hills dies away soon after crossing the frontier with Siam, and good lateral communications were available in the neighbourhood of Singora, where, also, there were suitable sites for aerodromes. Generally speaking, communications in the west are good and on the east poor.

The defence of the east coast was simplified by the lack of communications, since it was only necessary to hold those places from which roads ran into the interior. This meant that the key points to hold were Mersing and Kuantan. Kota Bharu in Kelantan was held because of the aerodrome at that place and two others a few miles further south, these being necessary in order to enable us to strike, with aircraft, as far as possible into the Gulf of Siam and into Indo China. (See para. 52 below.)

The only existing land communication between Kelantan and the rest of Malaya is the railway, there being no through road. Attempts were made to use the railway for motor transport, but as the rails were spiked and no chairs were available the damage caused to tyres was so excessive that the project was given up as impracticable. This meant that communications with any force at Kota Bharu were precarious, since everything had to move by the single line of railway, which in many parts was highly vulnerable to bombing. I laid down that the road policy in Kelantan should be not to develop any road on or near the coast, but as soon as practicable to construct an internal road running north and south, following more or less the line of the railway.

The only communication overland with Kuantan was a single road, also very vulnerable in places to air bombing.

Co-operation between the services and with the civil authorities.

13. For some time before November, 1940, the relations between the Army and the Air Force were not happy; there was some jealousy