

of men and stocks of essential equipment in India has decreased. A more fluid and economical base organisation should be possible as the war progresses.

192. Energetic action has been taken, now that the pipe line is secure, to reduce the reserve holdings of aircraft and equipment which clog the machinery of supply and absorb so much of the Command resources in manpower and storage space in India. An extensive reorganisation to undertake more maintenance in the field is contemplated, and, it is hoped, will do much to avoid the bottlenecks to which centralised maintenance is prone. Such a reorganisation is only possible if the scales of ground equipment, hand tools and other servicing facilities are adequate and fully maintained. For an Air Force working in the field a generous scale of equipment is essential, and the lack of it was largely responsible for the uneconomical base maintenance organisation which events forced upon South East Asia in its early stages. The saving in man-hours that results from a generous scale of ground equipment is vast. This should always be taken into account in campaigns in tropical countries where sickness and lack of communications militate against units possessing their full establishment.

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IV. Administration.

193. The standard of unit administration in the operational areas was not high. With formations spread over wide areas, and deficiencies in ground officers also in the majority of vital trades, notably among clerical and signals personnel, much of this has been inevitable. Nevertheless a very real need exists for the indoctrination of service personnel in overseas theatres of war with the principles of self-reliance and better improvisation.

194. The principles of mobility and self-help have only resulted from the perception of those on the spot to train personnel in the

rudiments of active campaigning. In so doing they have made the best use of local resources to achieve that standard of morale and well-being which are the prerequisite of good discipline. The posting of a squadron commander from a well-established bomber base at home to an overseas appointment with no preliminary training in his changed circumstances cannot but have an adverse effect upon the well-being of the Unit. The setting-up of Junior Commanders' Courses within the theatre is the best immediate remedy, but the problems of accommodation, and the time absent from units, rendered it little more than a palliative in this theatre.

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V. Air Transport.

195. Finally, the Air Forces, having given a new-found mobility to land warfare, must also take advantage of it. When assessing bids for air transport and air supply, the highest priority should be given to the rapid movement of spares, personnel, and indeed whole R.A.F. units, in order to keep the force working at maximum efficiency. It is bad economy to keep the 15 serviceable out of 20 available aircraft supplying the ground forces when the diversion of one aeroplane to collect A.O.G.* spares would raise the serviceability rate to 18. If full advantage is taken of air transport, the striking radius of the Air Force can be still further extended, and the application of air power to any situation made more rapid and more decisive than hitherto.

K. R. PARK,

Air Chief Marshal.

*Allied Air Commander-in-Chief,
South East Asia.*

Kandy, Ceylon.

October, 1945.

* Aircraft on Ground.