

day. The full link to Myingyan started operation on the 26th March, with an initial lift of 200 tons per day, rising to 380 tons per day by the 1st April. During April the capacity rose until by the end of the month 575 tons per day was reached. In four months 25,688 tons of stores had been lifted from Kalewa to Alon and Myingyan, with a record day's lift of 1,147 tons.

322. In January, Railway Operating Construction and Maintenance Companies were concentrated at Manipur Road, awaiting call forward by Fourteenth Army, to start traffic on such stretches of the Burma Railways as proved possible. At the same time plans for getting in locomotives were made—a matter of some difficulty, as the only methods available were road and air transport. The problem was solved with the aid of our American allies, as will be described later. During this month, too, the Movements and Transportation staff attached to Fourteenth Army became part of the new provisional Movements and Transportation, Burma, organization, while its composition remained much the same.

323. At the end of January I sent a signal to the War Office, H.Q., Supreme Allied Commander, South-East Asia and the Commander-in-Chief, India, giving my views on the future organization of my lines of communication. These proposals were, of course, modified as the situation developed. The basis of my proposals was the progressive establishment of districts, each coming direct under my command, as L. of C. Command would not be able to exercise effective control as the lines of communication extended. Coincident with the formation of the districts would be the handing back of territory to G.H.Q., India. I saw the development in seven main phases. Phase I was the establishment of 505 District for the administration of North Burma, and part of Central Burma. Phase II would consist of the handing back to G.H.Q., India, of the whole of 202 Area, except for some territory round Imphal which would pass to 505 District, and part of 404 Area including Silchar. Geographically this roughly amounted to handing back the Province of Assam with Shillong. Phase III, which was to be simultaneous with Phase II, consisted of the raising of 404 Area to District status. The importance of the Southern L. of C. had greatly increased, as will be seen later, with the development of the Akyab and Kyaukpyu air supply bases. Phase IV would consist of the abolition of L. of C. Command as such and Phase V of the abolition of Advanced Echelons North and South, with consequent saving in staff. Phase VI consisted of the establishment of 606 District in South Burma in due course, and Phase VII of the eventual handing over of 505 and 606 Districts to the H.Q. appointed for Burma when operations there concluded.

324. During January certain changes in organization of the Supply and Transport system took place, whereby a basic allotment of Supply and Transport units to formations was fixed. By this time we were suffering from a severe manpower shortage in R.A.S.C. and R.I.A.S.C. personnel. I obtained War Office approval, however, for the disbanding of two Anti-Aircraft regiments and so was able to transfer some 400 gunners to the R.A.S.C.,

converting them to form supply and petrol platoons.

A serious shortage nevertheless still remained, and in February India Command agreed to the dilution of static supply units in rear areas with civilians, thereby releasing soldiers to reinforce forward supply units. This scheme was extended later to include all supply units, and a considerable number of educated Burmese civilians in the liberated areas volunteered for such employment. In addition, several entirely Burmese small supply units were formed, which proved particularly useful as Local Purchase sections. The men in these units were enrolled in the Burma Army Service Corps.

325. A change took place during February in the system of working the L. of C. Transport Column. This organization has already been referred to on more than one occasion. Some indication of its size is given by the fact that during the previous month (January) it operated some thirty General Transport companies on the 320 mile stretch of road between Dima-pur and Kalewa. Up till February, the L. of C. Transport Column had worked on the "Round the Clock" system. In order to provide sufficient drivers for day and night running, it was necessary to reduce the number of load vehicles operated by the companies. This, together with certain other disadvantages, resulted in the tonnage lifted being less than the maximum which could be achieved. The rapid advance of Fourteenth Army, the lengthening of the road L. of C., the increased allotment of vehicles, and the desirability of having a more flexible organization, rendered it necessary to introduce a new system of working.

326. Under this new system, all General Transport companies operated their full scale of vehicles, that is 120 instead of 99 under the "Round the Clock" system, and they were not divorced from their own workshop sections. A Commander, R.A.S.C./R.I.A.S.C. Transport Column was provided at a scale of one for every six companies, thereby relieving the H.Q., L. of C. Transport Column of duties which had hitherto made it top-heavy. Finally, the companies, as far as possible, worked through the daylight hours only, the loading and unloading at depots being done at night. This system proved a success: the average time of "turn-rounds" remained unaffected, but the tonnage lifted increased and vehicle maintenance improved. The "turn-rounds" for the vehicles of the L. of C. Transport Column for the various sections of the road were as follows:—

Manipur Road—Imphal/Palel, two days.
Imphal/Palel—Moreh, two days.
Moreh—Indainggyi, two days.
Indainggyi—Kalewa, one day.
Kalewa—Shwebo, three days.
Shwebo—Monywa, two days.

327. While on the subject of road transport, I would like to add a few remarks on the work of the R.E.M.E. and I.E.M.E. Services. Most of the road from Imphal to Kalewa especially the mountain stretches, was very bad and vehicles, especially the larger 5 and 10 tonners inevitably sustained considerable damage. This was in spite of the careful driving of their Indian drivers, to which General Symes,