

shelter. Where none could be constructed, the policy was to provide accommodation in open spaces outside the town, where it was expected that the population would move as soon as bombing started. Compulsory evacuation was not enforced.

Denial Schemes and Evacuation.

65. A denial scheme was prepared early in 1941 for the event of an invasion of Malaya, and necessary instructions issued. This scheme was directed principally to the destruction or removal of everything that might facilitate the movement of invading forces. It included such things as the removal of food stocks, or their dispersal amongst the villages, the destruction of any form of repair workshop, as well as the demolition of bridges and the removal or destruction of all forms of vehicle or boat. The plan did not envisage a complete "scorched earth" policy. (*See para. 119 below.*) For instance, in the case of tin mines it was only laid down that essential parts of the machinery of dredges were to be removed and brought away. A plan for the denial of British-owned tin mines in the Kra Isthmus was also worked out by the O.M. Section of the Ministry of Economic Warfare, including arrangements with Commander-in-Chief, China, for the evacuation of British personnel by sea after the denial scheme had been carried out.

66. Originally, civil officials were ordered to remain at their posts in the event of invasion. This, however, was modified in December 1941, enabling those who were suitable, physically and otherwise, for service with military units to be withdrawn, so that they could be used for defence. This also applied to a proportion of the civil medical staff.

67. The problem of British families in Singapore and Malaya generally was somewhat involved. In the case of the Navy, families were permitted for those stationed ashore, *i.e.*, officers in the light cruisers were not allowed to bring their families out to Singapore. In the Army and Air Force, families were allowed in those units which were considered to be the permanent garrison in Singapore, which in practice meant the units existing before September 1939. Units which arrived since that date were counted as reinforcements, and families were not allowed in their case. This gave rise to anomalies, because some of the units, *e.g.*, Headquarters, Malaya Command, and the Royal Air Force Depot at Seletar, had expanded very considerably since September 1939, although they were still counted as part of the permanent garrison. In the case of the families of civil officials and civilians there were no restrictions. Apart from 50 W.R.N.S. at the Naval Wireless Station and a number of nurses, many women were employed in the different services for clerical, cipher and other duties, including intelligence work in F.E.C.B. Had all these been sent away, it would have meant a large increase in the number of men absorbed. As it was, we were short of women to fill suitable posts and thus relieve men for the fighting units.

On the other hand, the presence of large numbers of women and children led, in January 1942, to hurried evacuation, with consequent loss of personal belongings and discomfort, and, later, to casualties. (*See para. 121 below.*)

Service and Civilian Communities.

68. Relations between the Services and civilian communities were better up-country than in Singapore.

The view held in the Colonial Office was that rubber and tin output was of greater importance than the training of the local forces; for instance, a telegram, dated the 31st December, 1940, to the Governor, states: "The ultimate criterion for exemption should be not what the General Officer Commanding considers practicable, but what you consider essential to maintain the necessary production and efficient labour management."

Attitude of Non-British Population.

69. With regard to the other races in Malaya, the most numerous were the Chinese. Many of them had no particular roots in Malaya. There was difficulty in filling the Chinese companies of the Volunteers up to establishment, nor could we get a sufficient number of Chinese motor drivers. This may have been partly the fault of the British, and there was not sufficient contact between the British and the leading men of the Chinese community. My experience of the Chinese under air bombing was that they were calm, and with no tendency to panic.

There were several thousand Indian labourers in Malaya, mostly Tamils, who worked on the rubber estates. So long as they were kept free from agitators, these Tamils were a law-abiding community.

Some probable fifth columnists were marked down at Kuala Lumpur and rounded up at the start of the war, but there was very little fifth column work or treachery. There was no difficulty in recruiting for the two battalions of the Malay Regiment, and young Malays who had been specially trained in technical schools worked well in the aircraft maintenance unit on Singapore Island, and were not unduly worried by bombing.

VII.—NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES.

China.

70. The late Major-General Denny was appointed Military Attaché in Chungking shortly after my arrival in Singapore, with the intention that, when war with Japan broke out, he would become head of the British Military Mission with the Chinese, this being known as 204 Mission. Chiefly owing to his work, seconded by Wing-Commander Warburton and backed by the Ambassador, Sir A. Clark Kerr, our relations with the Chinese were very satisfactory, and considerable progress was made in plans for co-operation, and, to some degree, in their execution.

Co-operation as regards air consisted mainly in the preparation of aerodrome sites and the dispatch to China of stocks of aviation petrol and, finally, bombs, all for British squadrons which it was hoped to send up later. (*See para. 26 above.*) The aerodrome sites were in three groups: the first in the area north and west of Kunming, the object of which was largely to protect the Burma Road; the second, an area north of Hong Kong, from which it was hoped to assist in the defence of that place; and the third, an area further east, from which it was hoped that one day it might be possible to deliver air attacks on Japan. It was only in the first group that these preparations could be called complete when war broke out. Transport was one of the main difficulties, and it: