

(c) The Y.M.C.A., which had remained open throughout the battle, also had an average daily attendance of a thousand. I wish to pay tribute to the Reverend Walter Corbett and his wife for the devoted service they rendered to the troops.

(d) I also wish to mention the splendid work of the Women's Auxiliary Service (Burma). This Service operated mobile and static canteens in the forward areas and on many occasions worked right up with the leading formations. The value to morale of a women's service operating canteens in the interests of the troops in forward areas and under monsoon conditions was inestimable.

160. *Indian Troops.* The discipline and fighting spirit of Indian troops has been throughout of the highest quality.

The re-opening of leave on a large scale, and the improvement in economic conditions in the villages, did much to relieve the Indian soldier's mind, but there are still complaints of the irregularities of the postal services, the failings of the family allotment system and graft and exploitation by petty local officials.

The Commander-in-Chief, India, has taken all possible steps to put these matters right.

161. *African Troops.* The morale of both East and West African troops has been satisfactory. They require more training. Owing to the shortage of formations, they had to be committed to action before they were entirely ready for war.

Supplies, Transport and Maintenance.

162. *Movements and Transportation.* A full description of the lines of communication was given in my first Despatch. The main tasks of the Movements and Transportation Directorates during the period of this Despatch were:—

(a) The maintenance of Fourteenth Army in Assam and Arakan.

(b) The building up of stocks on both the Imphal and Arakan fronts for the post-monsoon offensive.

(c) The movement of formations under the relief programme.

163. *Tonnages Handled.* (a) *Assam Line of Communication.* The average monthly tonnage of stores for Fourteenth Army, excluding P.O.L., carried between June and November was 31,200, an increase of some 3,000 tons over the monthly average for the previous six months. This increase was creditable in view of the difficulties caused by the monsoon. The completion in August of the American 6-inch pipeline from Calcutta to Dibrugarh has released wagons needed formerly for aviation spirit. I hope that the Assam line of communication will now be able to carry all the traffic, and that the tonnage which can be handled in railheads and depots will be the limiting factor, rather than the capacity of the river, rail and road systems of the lines of communication.

(b) *Chittagong Port.*

The average monthly import of stores, excluding bulk P.O.L., was 51,000 tons. This figure is lower by 10,000 tons than the

average of the previous three months, and is explained by the smaller number of ships using the port. On the other hand, the average tonnage discharged per ship per day increased.

(c) *Arakan Ports.*

The average monthly imports into Cox's Bazaar, Ultaklali and Maungdaw totalled 23,600 tons, which was an increase of 4,500 tons over the average of the previous three months. This increase in tonnage, in spite of the difficulties of working in the monsoon at these small ports, is noteworthy.

164. *Opening of Maungdaw Port.* A new channel into the mouth of the Naf River was discovered, and it was found possible to bring ocean-going ships for the first time to Maungdaw. This saved much overland transport.

165. *Monsoon Reliefs.* The following is a summary of the major moves completed, or in process during the monsoon:—

(a) *Divisions.*

- (i) One division from Assam to India.
- (ii) One division from Ceylon to Assam.
- (iii) One division from India to Assam.
- (iv) One division from India to Arakan.

(b) *Brigades.*

- (i) Six brigades from Assam to India.
- (ii) One brigade from Arakan to India.
- (iii) One brigade from India to Assam.
- (iv) Two brigades from India to Arakan.
- (v) One brigade from Ceylon to Assam.
- (vi) One brigade from Ceylon to Arakan.

The details of these moves are given in Appendix "A", as the times and methods are interesting and instructive.

166. An interesting experiment in transportation was the use made of "jeep trains" by 36 British Division in their advance down the railway.

This new method of haulage was first tried in July on the Myitkyina - Mogaung section of the line, as no locomotives were available. It was found that a jeep, fitted with flanged wheels, could draw some 40 tons of freight and "jeep trains" have since formed part of the transportation organization in that area.

167. *Air Supply.* When discussing "Organization" in my first Despatch, I stated the need for a permanent organization to handle the movement by air of troops and supplies, and I mentioned that my proposals were, at that time, being considered by the Air Commander-in-Chief, South-East Asia Command, and the Commander-in-Chief, India. The last six months has seen the birth of the Army Air Transport Organization, with headquarters at Comilla alongside the recently formed Headquarters, Combat Cargo Task Force. These two Headquarters, the one Military and the other R.A.F. and U.S.A.A.F., worked as a whole, the Army staff being under command of 11 Army Group and the Air staff under Eastern Air Command. The main duties of the Commander of this new organization were:—

(a) To control all the Rear Airfield Maintenance Organizations in South-East Asia Command.

(b) To ensure that the requirements of forward formations for air supply or air