Among the causes were insufficient experience in processing, climatic conditions, lack of suitable machinery and packing material, and the difficulty of getting really suitable hygenic conditions in Indian factories.

The absence of suitable packing material in India also handicapped production of the light scale and composite rations. I therefore asked the War Office if the U.S.A. Forces " K " and " Mountain " rations could be provided for the India Command. These are extremely well packed, and are suitable for British Troops in a tropical climate. They are also suitable for air supply dropping.

In the meantime the existing special pack rations produced in India were found for various reasons to be unsatisfactory, and were revised.

The following are now prepared in this country:—

A 24 hour ration designed for assault troops and issuable up to 48 hours. Each day's ration is self-contained, in a carton, wrapped and sealed in wax proof paper.

A light scale ration designed for L.R.P troops and long distance patrols. These also are put up in daily self-contained packs.

A complete non-cooking ration with separate scales for British and Indian Troops.

31. *Remounts and Veterinary.*

A great increase in animal reinforements was required in the cold season 1942-43 for the Eastern Army, and a heavy toll was taken by disease, especially surra.

In the period now under review, the extensive conversion of the Army in India to a mixed animal and mechanical transport basis caused a further large demand for animals. In fact by the end of the period, the number of animals in the Army in India exceeded any previously recorded figure even before mechanisation began, and it was expected during 1944-45 to amount to some 125,000 animals. My Director of Remounts visited South Africa to contact Union Defence Force officials and the Remount Purchasing Officer there, since that country is now our main source of supply.

Imports from South Africa during the period came to 2,415 mules and 850 donkeys, while over 4,000 animals were bought in India. Arrangements were also made to import 1,500 mountain artillery mules from the U.S.A. under Lease-Lend arrangements.

During a period of twelve months in Assam and nine months in Arakan a total of 9,418 animal casualties occurred Of these 34 per cent. returned to remount depots after treatment. The above total casualties exceeded our total purchases of mules and donkeys, etc., in South Africa for a corresponding period by 996.

The Chinese Forces in India received 422 horses, ponies and mules during the period. This made the total of animals issued to these forces 6,526, against their combined demand for 8,690.

Surra has continued in forward areas and during the period of this Despatch, in the 4th Corps area, 828 horses and mules were cured while 375 died of the disease. About a thousand were usually under treatment at any one time. Surra was also detected in Arakan in the middle of August, but only sixteen deaths occurred, while some 200 cases were generally under treatment.

32. *Ordnance Services.*

Advanced ordnance and ammunition depots were established at Gauhati and Kanglatongbi (near Imphal) and an advanced ammunition depot at Palel. These were in addition to the base and advanced depots already at Manipur Road. In Arakan, the existing ordnance field depot at Chittagong was expanded into advanced depots for ordnance and ammunition. Two new ordnance field depots were formed for divisions operating forward of Chittagong, and a further one at Comilla for air supply

Ammunition laboratories and mobile ammunition inspection units were provided for both the Fourteenth Army and the Eastern Command.

Manpower in the ordnance services still remained a difficulty, and recruitment of educated types as N.C.O. clerks for office and store duties continued to be unsatisfactory.* Reinforcements, however, were steadily despatched to the Fourteenth Army for ordnance field units, and the strain was then eased.

33. *The Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (E. & M.E.).*

Generally speaking, the 1st and 2nd Echelon units of the service proved satisfactory, except the recovery company in the Light Division. For this a heavier vehicle for jeep recovery was found necessary and was provided. As regards actual 1st and 2nd Echelon repair of vehicles, this was satisfactory in so far as the supply of spare parts allowed.

A lack of 2nd Echelon wireless repair facilities was felt This was remedied by the addition of wireless sections to each mobile workshop company in an operational formation, but in the meantime wireless repair suffered. There were no 2nd Echelon wireless repair facilities available at all; and wireless sets which could have been repaired in the field, had to be evacuated to base or command workshops for the purpose. This resulted in overloading these shops, and heavy delays in repairs. The lack of up-to-date wireless workshop sections has been due to a continued shortage of special test equipment and artificers from England.

With a view to providing some of these units from India, wireless mechanics were under training in this country and the raising of nine workshop sections was commenced.

The great expansion of lines of communication continued to make heavy demands on E. & M.E. resources, principally in lines of communication recovery companies. In order to economise in mobile workshops on the lines of communication, sixteen station workshops were installed, thus releasing mobile units for the forward areas.

Road transport on the lines of communication, and in particular between Manipur Road and Imphal, continued to absorb a large amount of E & M.E. maintenance. The thousand vehicles employed there were plying on a terrain in exacting conditions, and to a continuous " round the clock " running routine. The water-proofing of vehicles and equipment also required constant attention.

* *See* also paragraph 25 above under 'Manpower'