

of war. It is difficult to say whether the Thai officers who came on official visits to Malaya were sent with the intention of misleading us or not, but there can be no doubt that there was at least an advanced degree of co-operation between some of the most responsible authorities in Thailand and the Japanese, and that the preparations made in South Thailand by the Japanese for their landing there and for their attack on Malaya were made with the connivance, if not with the actual assistance, of those Thai authorities.

SECTION IX.—ADMINISTRATION.

66. The scale of reserve stocks to be held in Malaya was based on the "Period before Relief" which, as has been stated, stood in 1941 at 180 days. Initially these reserve stocks had been held entirely on Singapore Island, where special bomb-proof magazines had been constructed for the ammunition. With the increase in the garrison, however, and the extension of the defence to cover the whole of Malaya new problems were presented. These problems were akin to those connected with the defence of the United Kingdom in 1940 i.e. the base at Singapore, except that it was more heavily defended, was equally as exposed to attack as were the more forward areas elsewhere in Malaya. It was therefore necessary to distribute some of the reserve stocks throughout the country instead of holding them all in one area. In this way transportation problems would during active operations be reduced and all areas would be to some extent self-contained. Operation MATADOR was another factor in the problem. To meet the requirements of this, should it be put into effect, it was necessary to hold certain reserves well forward. I therefore decided that the main reserve stocks should be held on Singapore Island, that reserves on a scale to be fixed in each case should be held in the forward areas and that the balance should be held in advanced depots in Central Malaya. In accordance with this policy it was decided:—

(a) That the full 180 days for the garrisons of Singapore and Penang should be kept in those islands.

(b) That 60 days for all the troops, except the Penang garrison, north of Singapore should be kept in Singapore.

(c) That on the west coast 60 days should be kept north of the Perak River, and on the east coast 90 days in Kelantan and 60 days in Kuantan.

(d) That the balance of the 180 days for the troops in 3 Indian Corps area should be kept in the Kuala Lumpur, Ipoh and Jerantut areas.

In the Singapore Island area a policy of dispersal was adopted. This was due partly to the congestion in the Town area where depot space was difficult to obtain and partly to the desire to avoid heavy loss from air attack.

The administrative situation at the outset of hostilities was approximately as under:—

67. *Weapons*.—Early in 1941 the scale of armament had been dangerously low. In particular all Indian formations and units arrived in Malaya with a very low scale of weapons. After March, however, a steady and increasing flow came in Malaya, but it was not until November that formations received the higher scale of weapons and were issued with

25-pounder guns for the artillery. Even then many units, i.e. Artillery, Signals, R.A.S.C., were below establishment in light automatics and rifles and there were never more than a few of these weapons in reserve. Requests for weapons from the Sarawak Rangers, the British North Borneo Volunteers and other units had to be refused either in whole or in part, while the lack of weapons also rendered the further expansion of local forces impossible.

68. *Ammunition*.—It had been difficult to keep pace with the increase in the "Period before Relief" and the great increase in the garrison. Nevertheless, when hostilities started, the situation in most categories was satisfactory though in some, such as those for Light Anti-Aircraft and 25-pounders, there were shortages.

69. *Petrol*.—With an almost unlimited supply in the Netherlands East Indies it had been possible to build up large reserve stocks. The Army stocks were held chiefly in large 60-gallon drums. The Air Force stocks were held dispersed as in the case of the Army, but the main Air Force petrol reserve was held in specially constructed underground tanks at Woodlands on Singapore Island a little south of the Causeway.

The Asiatic Petroleum Company held large reserve stocks for civil use both on Singapore Island and at certain places on the west coast.

70. *Food*.—The food problem was complicated with the Australian ration differing from the British ration and with the Indian and other Asiatic troops having their own specialized rations. Nevertheless, approximately 180 days reserve stocks of all types had been accumulated before hostilities broke out. Cold storage accommodation for frozen meat existed at Singapore and Penang and a few vans were available for distribution to troops on the mainland.

In order to build up reserves the meat ration of British troops (though not of the Australian troops) was reduced in the autumn of 1941 and replaced by other commodities, the full meat ration not being so necessary in the climate of Malaya as it is elsewhere.

The food supply for the civil population of Malaya was a complicated problem. It had been studied for some years by a sub-committee of the Defence Committee, Malaya, and, on the outbreak of World War II, a Food Controller was appointed. In peace-time only the rice-growing areas of Malaya are self-supporting. To all other areas, and especially to Singapore Island, rice has to be imported. Malaya had to import annually from Thailand and Burma two tons of rice for every ton grown. The annual consumption was about 900,000 tons. In Singapore and other large cities stocks for both European and Asiatics were held, while in each State rice stocks were accumulated under State arrangements. In addition, a number of cattle on the hoof were brought from Bali in the Netherlands East Indies. It is probable that, when hostilities broke out, a minimum of 180 days reserves were held in the more important commodities, though in some of the others the reserves were on a smaller scale.

The question of a rationing scheme had been under consideration by the Civil Government for some years but by the summer of 1941 no result had been achieved. Committees appointed to examine the problem reported that the difficulties in producing a rationing scheme