

whole, however, it had been possible by careful organization to evacuate a good proportion of our reserves. The general policy which I had approved was to create new dumps in South Johore for issue to troops in the Johore area. A large dump a few miles south of Segamat, which had been established in the pre-war period to serve both the East and the West Coast areas, was built up. There was also a dump of Royal Engineer material, established for the same purpose, at Batu Anam. The advantages of this policy were threefold (i) It avoided further congestion on Singapore Island; (ii) it avoided traffic congestion on the Causeway between Singapore Island and the mainland; (iii) it would reduce the length of the forward carry. Accordingly dumps were formed at Johore Bahru and near the waterways in South-West Johore.

317. *Food*.—The general food situation remained on the whole satisfactory in spite of the large increase in the population of Singapore caused by the influx of refugees from the mainland, and in spite of the decrease of military reserves occasioned by the arrival of reinforcing units which usually only brought a limited quantity of foodstuffs with them.

318. *Water*.—The water situation also up to this time had given no serious cause for anxiety in spite of a most unusually dry season. After the start of hostilities new wells had been dug round Singapore Town but about the middle of January the digging of them had been stopped at the instigation of the Civil Health Authorities. Measures for strict water economy had also been introduced. The necessity for such economy was constantly kept before the public by publicity in the Press, by posters and by police action.

319. *Ammunition*.—There had been heavy expenditure of field and light anti-aircraft ammunition in the series of battles on the mainland. Our stocks in these categories had never been very satisfactory and now began to give rise to some anxiety. Apart from this the situation was satisfactory.

320. *Petrol and Oil*.—As regards petrol and lubricating oils we still had the large dumps on Singapore Island and some smaller ones in Johore. The civil supplies, however, were getting low owing to the loss of their large depots on the mainland.

321. *Transport*.—A considerable amount of civil transport had been requisitioned, especially in the Northern area, to supplement military resources. Vehicles now also became available owing to the enforced closing of business enterprises. In consequence the transport problem at this stage presented no great difficulty.

322. *Medical*.—The need for increased hospital accommodation in the Johore and Singapore areas now began to make itself felt. All the hospitals in North and Central Malaya and the large Australian Base Hospital at Malacca had had to be cleared. The Alexandra Military Hospital was full and some overflow branch hospitals for the less serious cases had been established in private houses under the pre-war scheme. New buildings had to be taken over. Included among these was a wing of the large new civil hospital at Johore Bahru.

323. Sick and wounded, not likely to be fit for duty within two months, were earmarked for evacuation. These, except acute cases, and those requiring special or constant nursing, were evacuated to the United Kingdom and India by ordinary passenger ship. Both the War Office and Australia had been approached with a view to provision of hospital ship accommodation, but owing to the needs of other theatres of war, no final arrangements could be made and no ship could be promised. With the help of the Naval authorities, however, the "Wu Sueh," a Yangtze river boat of 3,400 tons and 5 feet draught, had some time previously been bought and re-designed as a hospital ship. She was not considered capable of making an ocean voyage (though later she did so) but it was the best that could be done and it would at any rate provide transport to the Dutch East Indies.

324. *Accommodation*.—Accommodation on Singapore Island was becoming very congested. It was clearly impracticable to prohibit the entry of European civilians from the mainland. It was equally impossible to prohibit the entry of influential Asiatics whose lives would be at stake if they fell into Japanese hands. In consequence, though measures were taken to prevent the mass influx of refugees from Johore, the population of Singapore Island increased very greatly during January.

325. *Railway*.—As a result of the rapid withdrawal, great congestion had occurred on the railway. In particular there were insufficient sidings in the southern section of the railway to accommodate the rolling stock. An effort was made to solve this difficulty by building new sidings in South Johore and on Singapore Island where rolling stock not actually in use could be parked. Unfortunately they were not ready for use in time. Consequently, when the withdrawal through Central Johore took place, thirteen fully laden trains had to be abandoned on the Malacca branch. Efforts to destroy them by air attack were only partially successful. Included in the loads of these trains was a large consignment of maps of Singapore Island which had been printed to a special order by the Malayan Survey at Kuala Lumpur. The lack of these maps was to prove a great handicap at a later date. It is not known what, if any, use the Japanese made of them.

326. *Docks*.—The Japanese Air Force had not yet started bombing the Docks at Singapore and work there was proceeding normally up to the middle of January.

327. *Labour*.—(See Section XXX).—There had been little improvement in the situation as regards civil labour. The workers still disappeared as soon as any bombs fell near them and usually remained absent for some days. This applied particularly to the aerodromes upon which the Japanese Air Force was now making daily attacks.

328. *Man-Power*.—A number of European civilians, both official and unofficial, had now become available for duty. Their names were registered with the Controller of Man-Power to whom applications were made both by the Services and by the Civil Departments. Those who had technical knowledge, of whom there were many, were employed as far as possible where their knowledge could be utilized. Some