

my General Headquarters should assume the general direction of the road transport activities of the United Kingdom Commercial Corporation; and that it should become responsible for maintaining its fleet of vehicles, and should take over and hold the large stocks of motor tyres which had already arrived for the United Kingdom Commercial Corporation or were on the water. I was then able to make available a certain number of experienced transport officers to assist the United Kingdom Commercial Corporation officials, and to organize a system of military check posts along the Persian routes to assist in supervising the working of the service. Later, at the request of the Russian authorities, certain military transport units were allocated to carrying Russian stores, to ensure that ammunition and certain other types of stores remained in military charge throughout. The results of these measures are not yet fully apparent, but a gradual improvement is being made in the working of the road transport service in Persia.

22. In the operation of the transport of stores to Russia a serious hold-up of shipping occurred in the Persian Gulf. This was already the case when I assumed command and has been a cause of anxiety throughout. It has been brought about by various factors. In estimating the capacity of the ports to receive stores, and the rail and road transport to clear them, insufficient allowance was made originally for the various difficulties in operation which I have mentioned; the tonnages despatched to Persian Gulf ports have been in excess of the already optimistic estimates of what could be accepted; and the high proportion of difficult cargoes, combined with the slow development of port construction and the slow arrival of lifting appliances, have accentuated the delays. Another factor, though in other respects a fortunate one, has been that sinkings en route have fallen below what was anticipated and allowed for in loadings. Improved performance in tonnages landed, combined with a temporary scaling down of loadings, are now rapidly reducing the congestion of shipping which should shortly disappear.

23. It was obvious during the summer of 1942 that the British personnel available for transportation duties in Persia were quite inadequate to deal with the scale of development planned and in progress, and that their numbers could not be materially increased. In August, 1942, therefore, information was received from the War Office that the United States Army was to take over the operation of the ports and railway in Persia, and in addition provide a fleet of motor vehicles to supplement the road transport service. Major General Donald H. Connolly was appointed Commanding General, United States Persian Gulf Service Command, and arrived in Persia in October, 1942, with advance elements of his staff. The first United States Army troops landed in December, 1942.

The process of handing over is still going on, and although minor set-backs and difficulties have naturally been encountered, as a result of willing co-operation on both sides the process of changing from British to United States Army administration and control is progressing smoothly. With the much larger resources in personnel and plant which the Commanding General United States Persian Gulf Service Command will have at his disposal, a rapid improvement is to be expected in the output of the transportation services and a corresponding increase in the tonnage which can be delivered to the Russian Army. Although the full resources of the United States Persian Gulf Service Command are not yet deployed, and the transfer of operations is still incomplete, an improvement is already apparent; though in fairness to the personnel of the British Army. I wish to place on record that the arrival of United States Army troops to relieve them has come at a time when much of the heavy work of preparation and development is at an end and about to show results.

24. The following figures show the tonnages which have been landed for Aid to Russia and carried forward by various agencies during the period of my command:—

	1942				1943	
	(Sept.)	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.)	(Jan.)	Feb.)
Tonnage landed	39,000	50,000	35,000	37,000	53,000	83,000
Cased MT landed	5,000	4,000	4,000	8,000	8,000	11,000
Tonnage forwarded by rail	24,000	23,000	20,000	23,000	24,000	33,000
Tonnage forwarded by road	11,000	16,000	16,000	16,000	21,000	18,000
Total tonnage forwarded... ..	35,000	39,000	36,000	39,000	45,000	51,000

25. The fact that deliveries so far have failed to reach expectations does not lessen the value of the work performed by the very inadequate number of British personnel which it has been possible to allot to this duty. Great credit is due to the personnel concerned in this work, who have carried through their task with unflinching energy in spite of many obstacles and disappointments they have encountered.

THE HEALTH AND WELFARE OF TROOPS.

26. During the period under review, the health of the troops in the Command has been satisfactory. During September and October, 1942, the rate of admissions to hospital was comparatively high, mainly owing to the effects

of the hot summer, the prevalence of malaria in certain parts of the country, and in the case of the Polish troops to the after effects of their recent privations. Throughout the winter the troops have been very healthy and their standard of physical fitness for war is high.

Much valuable work has been done by the Medical Services, especially in the prevention of malaria.

A great deal has also been done for the welfare of the troops. The civil communities in Iraq and in Persia, the clergy, the philanthropic bodies and the NAAFI/EFI have all made valuable contributions to this essential work, which is more than ever necessary in a country where so few natural amenities exist.