



INTRODUCTION.

Readers of this diary are asked to bear in mind that it was written by me primarily as a private letter to my wife and is an account of my own impressions during an interesting time in my life. It also describes certain events as I saw them, or as they were related to me. Many things happened which are not recorded and a fellow internee chancing to glance through what I have written would no doubt find himself asking why I had not included such and such a happening, or, perhaps, criticising some of the views expressed herein. I know, for example, that I sometimes found excuses for the actions of our Japanese custodians which others did not share, so that my impressions must be regarded only as my own personal ones.

Then again, there are intentional omissions.

I have, for example, made no reference to the fact that we were constantly in receipt of outside news in some form or another. Up to the fateful "double tenth" - the 10th October, 1943, when our camp in Changi Prison was raided by the Japanese Military Police - several secret radio receiving sets were in operation, and a sort of grape-vine system for the dissemination of the news they brought was in operation, so that for a long time we had reliable information at regular intervals of all that was going on in the outer world, even down to brief resumé's of Wickham Steed's weekly commentaries.

The unfortunate individuals who operated and serviced those radio sets were all taken by the Japanese Military Police on, or very soon after, the "double tenth", and without exception died as a result of the inhuman treatment they received at the hands of the Japanese. Others who spread the news around surreptitiously by word of mouth were also taken and suffered long terms of imprisonment for their activities. These arrests are merely mentioned in the diary.

For some time after the confiscation of our radio sets we were without news of any description and, as is bound to happen under such circumstances, the camp was rife with wild and irresponsible rumour. Then gradually Japanese sponsored Singapore newspapers in different languages began to find their way into the camp, and from these we would get a pretty fair impression of how the various campaigns were shaping. Place names would be mentioned and we knew from them that the course of the war was running favourably for the Allies.

The Bank Compradore (Head Chinese Clerk) once visited me while I was a patient in Miyako Hospital (outside of the camp) in 1942, and I arranged with him to send in to me by the hands of one of the Chinese nurses \$1,000 as a personal loan. This is not mentioned in the diary. Nor have I described how I was implicated in the borrowing of money from sources outside of the camp, money which was smuggled in with the aid of the Bishop of Singapore (the Rt. Rev. Leonard Wilson), now Bishop of Birmingham, and certain internee lorry drivers. I signed I.O.U's in the name of the Hongkong and Shanghai Bank and this fact was brought to light when the Bishop was later compelled to make a full confession under torture, but, for some reason unknown to me, I was not arrested. The funds brought in in this way ran into some hundreds of thousands of dollars and were used to build up reserve supplies of foodstuffs, medical stores, and other essentials, which stood us in good stead in the hard days which were to come later. The Japanese Camp



Commandant at this time allowed us to buy from local shopkeepers and none of these reserve supplies were taken away from us at any time.

Another omission in the diary is the way in which the news of the Japanese collapse filtered through to us.

One day a working party outside the camp, marching along the road on its way to its task, passed a Eurasian on a bicycle, and as this Eurasian slowly pedalled past he sang a little song to himself without taking his eyes off the road. The words of his song were: "The Japanese have surrendered. The Japanese have surrendered". The cyclist went on but soon returned and overtook the working party, still singing the same song. The Sikh guard escorting the party suspected nothing. This news ran through the camp like wildfire.

About the same time - I cannot now remember dates - a Japanese language newspaper was picked out of the waste paper basket in the camp office, having been discarded by one of the Japanese interpreters, and in it there was news of the dropping of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and also of the campaign against the Russians in Manchuria which we had hitherto known nothing of. It was evident then that the end of the Japanese War was near and it gave support to the story which the working party had brought in. The diary explains how other signs became evident. Our hopes soared sky high.

And there were other matters which it would have been foolhardy of me to mention, but they cannot all be referred to in this introduction which I wish to make brief.

My reason for omitting all these very significant facts is evident. I feared that my diary might one day fall into the hands of the Japanese, however careful I might be, and bring disaster not only on myself but also on others. At all times there was a risk in keeping a diary as, if it were found, the Japanese, with their poisonously suspicious minds, would be sure to read into certain of its contents something more than was intended, and the results to the innocent writer might have been fatal. We all had information of activities which were secret, news for instance, and torture might have brought them to light even if one were being tortured to extract information about something quite different. Intrigues were going on all the time and we got careless, but I always tried to steer a safe course.

There are gaps in the diary which call for an explanation: between the 30th October, 1942, and the 6th December, 1942, and between 4th May, 1943, and the 5th March, 1944. These happened when I lost my nerve to some extent and decided to discontinue my writings. When this occurred I would bury what I had written, but as my nerve recovered and nothing untoward happened I would start up again. I have missed some of the most dramatic moments for this reason, when for example the Gestapo fell upon us on the 10th October, 1943, and made their search, a search which was followed by such tragic results. I have tried to fill the second gap before picking up the threads again on the 5th March, 1944, but the time lag has destroyed to some extent the proper descriptive atmosphere.

So there it is. If the diary interests those who read it the time spent in compiling it will not have been wasted. Anyway, I cannot admit that the time has been wasted whatever the reaction of others, as the writing occupied my mind at a time when it so much needed to be diverted from depressing channels of thought.

And finally, please forgive any sentiment.



PRELUDE.

My wife left me on the last day of 1941, sailing from Singapore in the s. s. "Orion" for Perth, Western Australia.

I had had the greatest of difficulty in persuading her that it was the best thing to do under the circumstances, she being quite determined to remain by my side whatever might befall. It was only when I had convinced her that her presence in Singapore was a constant anxiety to me and that I was quite unable to concentrate on my duties in the bank so long as she was in danger, that I finally got her to agree to leave.

We had argued on this subject so often and each time I was weak enough to give in to her pleadings to be allowed to stay with me, but I was never happy about it and the somewhat threatening situation which developed in North Malaya as the Japanese war progressed definitely decided the matter as far as I was concerned. Things were not going according to plan I was quite convinced, and when the "Prince of Wales" and the "Repulse" were sunk I began to lose confidence in our ability to hold the Japs far enough away from Singapore to make effective aerial bombing difficult. Little did I think then that there was the remotest possibility of Singapore falling. How soon were we all to be disillusioned!

I saw Helen off on the morning of the 31st December. For two or three hours we hung about the docks awaiting the order to embark and exchanging the foolish chatter usual on such occasions until we could stand the strain no longer and decided to cut short the agony and say good-bye. I remember Helen kissing me and my having literally to break away by force as I was afraid of weakening and finding at the last moment that I could not let her go.

I did not know then that I was doing the right thing. There was considerable danger on the high seas and I was worried that something might happen to her ship, while at the same time things might have turned out all right in Malaya with a change of fortune up North. Little did I think then that I should later be thanking God for the action taken. During my internment in Changi Prison I used to see poor unhappy men peering through bars in the hope of catching a fleeting glimpse of their wives, day in, day out, and I knew then how right I was to send Helen away, however much we both felt the parting at the time.

The rest of that day I could think of nothing but my wife and her ship and wonder if they had left or if they were still delayed at the docks. My imagination was running riot and I was tortured with thoughts of air raids on the docks before their departure. I foresaw the worst under all circumstances; there was no way of finding out whether the ship had actually gone or not, as the strictest censorship over shipping movements was in force. Later in the day I drove home via the docks and was relieved to see that the ship had left her berth, and that same evening one of the refugee men living with me (of whom more anon) told me that he had seen the "Orion" sail out to sea just before noon.

In due course I heard that all was well and that the ship had reached its destination safely, in fact she had done the trip in four and a half days - a record - and my relief was very great.

Penang fell early in December and our office there was evacuated to Singapore. The foreign staff brought down with them very incomplete records but managed to salvage all securities and the bulk of their cash. Fuzzey, who accompanied the latter by road, had an adventuresome trip by



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private car the whole way South, running into several air raids and machine gun fire from planes, as the heavy traffic on the road was too tempting a target to be overlooked by the Jap pilots.

As a result of the Penang evacuation I had one bank refugee parked on me, W.J. Sutherland.

Soon after this an old friend from Ipoh, J.S. Ferguson, a rubber planter, turned up and we took him in too. Then towards the end of December Mrs. Pat Devonport and daughter, Mrs. Stella Chappell and her two young children, and another woman and her child whose names I have forgotten, all landed on us and we were a very full house for a few days. All these women and children were waiting to get away by boat and actually left with Helen in the "Orion".

While we had this full house the Japs staged an air raid on Singapore about 10.30 one night. At the start of the raid we three men and Helen were visiting some friends but hastily returned to our own house when we heard the bombs exploding and saw that they had started up a good sized blaze in the region of my house. On reaching home we found the women and children assembled in the concrete air-raid shelter which I had had built in my garden early in the year to meet just such a contingency; they were all very scared, and the mothers were clutching their children to them, the better to protect them from harm. I was not surprised to find them in this state, as the blaze, which by this time had intensified, now lighted up the whole sky and came from a large military petrol dump about a quarter of a mile distant from our house. It was all very terrifying.

We returned to the house when the "All Clear" sounded but it was not long before the alarm went again and down we all scrambled to the shelter once more. This time I watched the planes - about twenty of them - sail right over our heads caught in the searchlights, and I knew that the burning dump so near would tempt them to have another go at the same spot as it would surely indicate that supplies of some sort had gone up in flames and where there was one dump there would probably be another. My conjecture was correct. Bombs began to rain down, and from the noise they made on their course through the air I gathered that they might drop too close for comfort. The next morning revealed that several had landed in fields within a quarter of a mile of us, and two houses within half a mile had been hit.

When I saw the planes directly overhead, probably flying at about 20,000 feet, I did not tarry long outside the dug-out but dived in hurriedly as I heard the swish of the falling bombs, and it seemed then that they must drop on top of us. Then came a succession of nerve shattering explosions, which extinguished the small lamp in the shelter, and each sounded just a few feet away. The poor women were terrified and, to be quite honest, so was I! They (the women with children) were lying on top of their half-asleep infants, intent on protecting them from whatever might befall.

This time when the "All Clear" went we decided that the women with children should spend the rest of the night in the shelter, so we brought down rugs and rubber mattresses and left them all there until the morning.

The blast from the bombs which had fallen that night loosened pieces of plaster from our roof and broke several of our windows. It also burst open the locked door of Helen's private store cupboard in the pantry. On every occasion subsequently when we were subjected to close bombing the same thing happened, plaster was shattered from the roof and walls



and windows were broken, and on one or two occasions we were hit by flying splinters which crashed through wooden shutters and buried themselves in the walls.

What I have described above happened a few nights before the end of the year so the women with children slept every night afterwards in the dug-out until their departure on New Year's Eve. I was relieved to get them all safely away.

Stringfellow was the next man I took in to live with me. He came early in January when Malacca Office closed down before the Jap advance. Then later that month an old friend, Colonel Wolfe-Murray of the Seaforth Highlanders, returned from leave in Australia and he too joined the "Matheran Mess". We were five, Ferguson, Sutherland, Stringfellow, Wolfe-Murray and myself, and we got along very harmoniously right up to the end. Ferguson was particularly useful to us as he could speak Malay and Tamil fluently and could so deal with the servants, one or two of whom were beginning to show signs of nervousness.

January was an uncomfortable month as we were being subjected to almost nightly and frequent daily air raids. At the beginning we went to the concrete dug-out when night raids were on, but not always as we began to get somewhat casual about it all, and latterly would move downstairs and lie there on divans. Ferguson and Sutherland, however, were faithful to the dug-out to the end. We other three would stop indoors until the buzz of the planes overhead sounded menacing, when we too would rapidly move to the better protection of the dug-out.

The Chinese amah, her husband (who by this time had parked himself on us), and their young daughter practically lived in the shelter; the amah, poor little devil, was terrified, having experienced this sort of thing before in Canton, and at the first note of the alarm, day or night, would run to the dug-out dragging her daughter after her. She made several efforts to leave my service about this time, but Ferguson and I between us would talk her into staying. I knew, however, that she would not stand the strain of the bombing much longer and was not surprised when she left us at the end of January.

One night I remember: I was lying in my bed upstairs listening to the drone of a solitary plane overhead and as no alarm had sounded I argued that it must be one of our own. It seemed incredible that an enemy plane should be allowed such freedom. Suddenly to my ears came the unmistakable sound of falling bombs, as I thought, right on top of the house, and out of bed I jumped and down helter-skelter, to the dug-out. Only then did the sirens begin to sound the alarm, indicating that I was not alone in assuming that the plane had been one of our own. The bombs dropped within half a mile of us and started up a tidy blaze among some Chinese houses.

It was all very eerie and nerve wracking, the regular bombing by night and the frequent raids by day which were becoming more frequent as the Japs fought their way further South.

By day I never used to go down to the office basement but would take cover behind the window of my room when there might appear to be danger of bombs dropping in our particular district. There was an anti-aircraft battery stationed at Tanjong Rhu, just across the bay, and I would watch this



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point. When the battery opened up I would know that it was time to kneel down behind my window, and when the guns were firing directly overhead, as I could tell from the flashes, I would know that the time had come to lie down flat behind the balustrade of the window as bombs might be expected to drop pretty close at any moment. Then the swish of the falling bombs could be heard and I would be all tense until the explosions, when I would know that immediate danger had passed and the tension could be relaxed. The Jap bombers had a way of letting everything go at once so when the explosions started and provided they were not too close - I would feel safe in bobbing up to see their effect. In this way I was able to watch Arab Street go up in smoke and dust in the distance, several bombs straddle two British destroyers anchored about a quarter of a mile out, see a large junk take a direct hit, watch Kallang Aerodrome get several bad pastings, and view a lot of incidents of a similar nature. It was all extremely thrilling. On one occasion, just after the Cricket Club a few hundred yards away had been hit and the smell of the explosive charge was particularly strong, a terrified Eurasian came running past my window in a panic yelling "Gas! Gas!" and I shouted back at him "Shut up, you bloody fool! There's no gas!".

All this time we were terribly busy in the office. There was quite a run on the bank, the aim of everyone being to get their funds away to London for safety. We were unable to keep pace with the demand, and outward remittances were being subjected to a certain delay in despatch, this delay varying from one to two days, while at the end there were several which we were unable to get away at all as the cable office closed down on Friday, 13th February.

There was a fair amount of confusion in the office at all times then, as most of the Chinese and Eurasian staff would disappear below as soon as a raid started, leaving everything behind them on their desks. On these occasions slips and cheques would get lost and there would be the resultant difficulty in balancing our books in the evening. No-one was liking it and we were working much too hard in an endeavour to accommodate our clients, who in their turn were all clamouring for immediate attention. The confusion was worst during the last week or two as every day was bringing news of further reverses which depressed everyone.

As far as our menage was concerned, Stringfellow, Sutherland and I worked in the bank; Ferguson drove a military lorry, and Wolfe-Murray commanded a military reserve depot. We would meet for meals and exchange what news we had picked up on our various jobs. Ferguson was always pessimistic and would relate the gloomiest tales of aerodromes being evacuated up-country and planes being flown over to Sumatra. He would frequently tell us that he himself had that very day driven a lorry-load of bombs from some aerodrome to the docks, evidently intended for shipment away from Singapore, and he had the most alarming tales of native labour having absolutely disappeared. All of this we would accept as the distorted view of one who was depressed at having lost and suffered so much. Little did we think then that his tales revealed the true situation and that we were, by the end of January, as good as beaten. I am glad that we did not know this until the very end. Up to the last the Governor had been stating publicly in the newspapers that "Singapore shall not fall! Singapore must not fall!" Had we had enough sense we should probably have been able to distinguish the note of despair in this cry.



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As we got into February the war became hotter, and around the 12/15th of that month the Japs were having things all their own way. At the end their planes were flying quite low but I never throughout the whole campaign saw one brought down.

I went on to our roof - the roof of the bank building - on the afternoon of the 15th February and saw many fires burning at various points ranging from half a mile to two or three miles away. Oil tanks on the nearby islands were also ablaze, possibly having been set on fire by our own troops. The sky was veiled with heavy black smoke, and all the time heavy shelling and rifle and machine gun fire was audible. Not so far off I could see three Jap dive bombers drop to a few hundred feet and presumably release their bombs on our infantry. It was a very impressive panorama and one which will stay with me for many a day. Poor Singapore! Would I ever again see it as it was in the piping days of peace and plenty?

The Japanese had got as far as Johore Bahru in early February and we then thought that we were in for a long and very uncomfortable siege. Our surprise can well be imagined when the rumour spread on Sunday the 8th that the Japs had effected a landing on the "impregnable" fortress of Singapore. We said to ourselves "Well, of course, if they want to commit suicide let them go to it!" but no, they kept coming on and our troops couldn't seem to stem the tide.

Things were getting serious and when I woke in my bed at "Matheran" one night and heard machine gun fire within what seemed to me only a few hundred yards, I decided that a strategic retreat to the better protection of the reinforced concrete bank building was indicated. Next morning, that is the morning of Wednesday the 11th, I put forward a suggestion to Stringfellow and Sutherland that we should take with us to the office a packed suitcase each in case at any time we should decide to spend the night there, and they, who had also heard the machine gun fire overnight, were fully in agreement.

That was our last day at "Matheran". I told our servants, who saw us leave with our bags, that we should be back to sleep that night and that I should bring their wages with me, and that was our intention. However, as things turned out we decided to stay in the bank overnight and see what the next morning would bring forth. I went back to the house at 1 o'clock midday to pay the servants so that they should be free to make a getaway if the worst came to the worst, and also to collect a mattress or two to sleep on and some extra clothing, but when I got there I found that the boy, cook, two house coolies, one Malay and one Tamil gardener had all departed, leaving only one terrified Malay gardener. That day there had been a raid over the bank residential compound (there are eleven large houses spread over 45 acres) and five bombs had dropped in it, all in the grounds and none on the houses. A house in Jervoise road less than a hundred yards from mine had received a direct hit and half of it was completely demolished.

As shells were singing overhead I wasted no time in packing three mattresses into the car, a few odds and ends of wearing apparel and a large cabin trunk containing all my winter clothes, and, after paying the Malay gardener, returned to the bank.

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For about a week or so before the end we were terribly busy in the bank trying to keep pace with the panic



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remittances the public wanted to send away to London and elsewhere in case the worst should befall. We were being bombed regularly by day and by night by this time and it was all extremely disconcerting to say the least.

Under these difficult conditions tempers were lost, both amongst the staff themselves and with the public, who were five and six deep at the various counters, all wishing to be attended to at once. How we managed during these difficult days I do not know, but manage we did, and most of the remittances got away all right although it was inevitable that some did not as the cable office closed down suddenly on Friday the 13th. We were all working the best part of twenty-four hours a day and the strain was telling on the nerves.

On Friday the 13th Stuart^{*} came back from lunching at the Singapore Club, called me into his room, and informed me that he had received orders from Government to leave the Colony as one of a group of prominent business men who might be of use to the enemy in the event of a surrender.

The thought of surrender was one which I had not allowed to develop in my mind, but Stuart's statement undermined my resistance to such fears. It really seemed that the end must be near if the Government were taking such steps.

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Friday, 13th February, 1942.

Giles, Thomas, Cruickshank and another man, all of the Imperial Chemical Industries, joined us in the bank for residence late in the afternoon as their own premises had become untenable on account of shell fire.

This same evening Weisberg (Financial Secretary of the S.S.), Joynt (Financial Secretary F.M.S.), Arthur Sleep (Assistant Financial Secretary S.S.) and one Bridge also took up residence with us in the bank as their temporary habitation in the Union Building next door had been commandeered by the military as a hospital.

Many of us have been running out to our houses these last few days to collect kit, but this will have to be abandoned soon as the shelling is closing in on us. George Travers and I made a quick trip to "Matheran" this evening when I collected a few odds and ends, but as shells were whining over towards River Valley Road we wasted no time about it as we feared we might be picked out as a target at any moment. I really went up to get my movie camera and projector as I thought an opportunity might present itself for the taking of some interesting pictures, but I found on arrival at my house that this, as well as a good many other things, had been looted by the Australian troops who were parked in our garden. I also discovered that our store cupboard had been visited by the same fraternity and very little remained. The troops themselves were at the time of my visit seated around my veranda eating out of tins - my wife's reserve store!

About 5 p.m. the Cable and Wireless Office informed us that they were accepting no more cables as all their main machines had been destroyed. We therefore burned all our private check cyphers.

Quite heavy bombing of Raffles Square and Collyer Quay today, with considerable damage to parked cars.

* Manager of the Bank in Singapore Office. I was Sub-Manager.



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Saturday, 14th February, 1942.

There was a lot of intermittent shelling during the night and few of us got any sleep to speak of as many of the shells were dropping too close for comfort.

I decided not to open to the public today as all my cash, with the exception of about \$10,000 (mostly silver coin) was with the Treasury. An arrangement had been come to with Government some week or two previously whereby banks would deposit the bulk of their cash with the Treasury at the close of business each evening, so that the Treasury would be in a position to destroy as much as possible in the event of disaster. The cash would be redrawn next morning to enable the banks to carry on for the day.

Weisberg, later in the morning, supported my decision not to open. The shelling and bombing was increasing and I should not have cared to open.

McI. Brown put all hands on to balancing our ledgers but as few of the local staff by this time remained in the office, this work fell principally to the foreign staff. I myself took out four ledgers. Something to occupy the mind was essential at this time of stress and strain.

We were getting little authentic news but plenty of rumours. My own impression was that the situation was pretty hopeless and that the end was very near. We heard that the Japs were at McRitchie Reservoir, which was very ominous.

A small calibre shell hit the bank building today, passing through the window of Goodrich's office on the top floor and bursting inside the room but doing remarkably little damage. I went up to have a look and found the shell casing which had broken into three pieces only. It blew a hole about 8" diameter in a floor of about 4" reinforced concrete.

Late in the day Weisberg informed me that all the cash in the Government Treasury had been destroyed. He also informed me that we were going to surrender either tonight or tomorrow morning. This came as a shock to me in spite of the fact that I had been expecting something of the kind, having seen the end coming nearer and nearer.

Sunday, 15th February, 1942.

We got on with the balancing of the Current Account ledgers today. I had hoped to complete this work before we either reopened to the public or surrendered to the Japanese, but my hopes were not altogether fulfilled. Although we succeeded in balancing the ledgers against the journals, the transfer books were not all balanced with the journals so that the current accounts were not balanced with the general ledger. Five days were still out when we finally abandoned the office to the Japanese, the 5th, 6th, 7th, 9th and 10th of February.

At this time I had a feeling that if the Japanese did succeed in capturing Singapore there was quite a reasonable chance that they would preserve our records after taking over. I could see no reason why they should destroy them unless the troops ran amok and I considered therefore that it would be an excellent thing to have them balanced if possible before we finally shut up shop. The rush of business at the end had been so great that we had been quite unable to keep pace with it, so I think we can reasonably



congratulate ourselves on leaving only five days of the journals/transfers unbalanced.

The Municipal garbage coolies had ceased to carry out their duties for some days, and baskets and piles of rubbish had by now collected in the bank alleyways. As it was important that some sort of law and order should be maintained in and around the building, I formed several sub-committees among the foreign staff to deal with various matters. For example, I formed a group under Raikes to attend to the catering, another under Ormston to tackle the question of sanitation, one under G.G. Thomson to care for and control our water supply (there was a large reserve tank on the roof of the building and the conservation of its contents might have been a vital matter to us), McI. Brown supervised the work being done in the office, and Ralston and Travers were detailed to guard the doors of the bank.

The streets were chock full of soldiers who had apparently come down from the front line to rest, and our doors had to be kept closed and guarded to protect us from this rabble, because rabble it certainly was. If the troops had once penetrated inside the bank then we should most probably have had to clear out. We should certainly have been unable to do any work. I suppose with the small perimeter then held there wasn't enough accommodation available in that part of the city remaining in comparative safety to provide proper shelter for the resting troops, so the streets and verandahs had to be made use of. There appeared to be a sad lack of discipline and supervision which indicated a loss of morale. I actually saw some Australians throw their rifles into the sea earlier in the day, and several of the white troops were very very drunk.

The outlying parts of the town were being subjected to some quite heavy shelling and as the day progressed the shelling came closer, until the business district was getting a fair amount of attention.

At about 1.15 p.m. several bombs straddled the bank and Raffles Square, one scoring a direct hit on Robinson & Co's old premises where a large number of Indian soldiers were billeted, and another landing amidst several cars parked on Collyer Quay, just outside the sub-manager's room, causing extensive damage to the cars. I happened to be at the far end of the office at the time and from there saw the front part of it shrouded in dust and smoke to such an extent that I feared we had taken a direct hit through one of the windows. I was considerably relieved when I went along and discovered that we had suffered no casualties and remarkably little damage. One or two windows were scarred and splintered, and that was all.

The bomb or bombs on Robinson's old building had inflicted a very large number of casualties among the Indian troops billeted there and the remainder had to clear out and find accommodation elsewhere. Their choice fell on the bank - which was just what I feared - and I had to take them in. However, I persuaded their officer to make use of the corridors upstairs, which was a great relief to me as they were an untidy looking mob. All the private offices upstairs were either occupied by their tenants or locked up so none of them were disturbed.

This same afternoon I went on to the roof of the building where I got an excellent panoramic view of the town and the surrounding islands and waters, and what met my eye grieved me more than I can describe. The lovely town which I had once known was quite extensively ablaze, particularly in the outlying parts, as also were the oil tanks on the



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nearby small islands which had no doubt been sabotaged by our own troops. The sky was veiled in heavy black smoke which turned the day into night.

And so for the time being it was all to come to an end. God alone knew what the future held in store for us all. My spirits were at a very low ebb that evening.

I told Raikes I thought he might let himself go a bit on the evening meal and give us a good spread as it might be our last decent meal for a long time to come.

Monday, 16th February, 1942.

I think it was about 7 or 8 o'clock last night that the armistice took effect. The sudden cease fire was a great relief to the nerves. Now we had to wait and see what was to happen next.

About midnight we all had to turn out and do a bit of fire fighting. Two cars caught fire in Battery Road car park, one of which incidentally was my own, and there was considerable danger as the square was absolutely crammed with cars and military lorries. Some of the latter were ammunition lorries full of small arms ammunition. After an hour or two we got the flames under control, but not before the two cars were a total loss.

Colonel Wolfe-Murray, accompanied by one of his British sergeants, turned up in the night intent on escape; they had left the front line after the armistice. We held a conspiratorial meeting in my room and the result of this was that G.W. Stabb, N.E. Clark and D.N.H. Self of the bank and Thomas and Cruickshanks of the I.C.I. decided to join in the attempted escape. After fitting them all out with provisions and water and giving them some money we sent them off with our best wishes for success. They went down to the Singapore River and seized a sampan at the jetty at the end of Fullerton Building, and their idea was to make for the open sea in the hope of being picked up by some larger craft. By 10 a.m. this morning they hadn't returned, so perhaps they have been successful. I sincerely hope so.

The passages upstairs are a mess after the nocturnal visit of the Indian troops. The streets around are a shambles, with dozens of burnt out cars lying about everywhere. I took a stroll along Collyer Quay this morning and found nothing but a mass of destruction; blasted and burnt out cars everywhere and some had even been blown into the sea by the force of explosions, so I suppose the bombing of this area yesterday must have been much heavier than I imagined at the time.

Our sanitary men have done good work by cleaning up the streets and alleyways around the building. They have carried basket after basket of rubbish from the vicinity of the building to the sea wall, where it has been dumped overboard, and they have used the fire hose on the passages around the bank to good effect.

About mid-morning Japanese troops began to move into the business district of the town, and sentries with fixed bayonets would appear out of the blue and take up positions at street corners and at the entrances of the larger and more important buildings. We were picketed in this way about midday.

Soon after noon one or two cars rolled up to our front entrance and unloaded Mr. Mutoh (Singapore manager of



the Yokohama Specie Bank prior to the outbreak of the Japanese war) and several Army officers. I met them on the stairs at the door and escorted them into my room where Mutoh (whom I already knew) introduced me to the officers.

This meeting was very cordial. There was much hand-shaking and bowing. Mutoh told me that he had not got further than Saigon after his departure from Singapore just prior to the outbreak of this particular war, and that he had since accompanied the Army on its advance South. His presence with the advance troops was apparently necessary to expedite the reconstruction of Malaya after its occupation.

One of the first questions of a banking nature which Mutoh put to me was: "How much cash have you in your treasury?", and my satisfaction was as great as his surprise when I told him that it was in the region of two or three thousand dollars only. He said: "What! So little! How is that?" and I then explained how we had deposited our cash each evening in the Government Treasury.

Some twenty or thirty Japanese soldiers then moved into the bank office, bag and baggage, and it did not take them long to settle down amongst the desks. Mutoh and the officers took over the Manager's and Sub-Manager's rooms as their living quarters.

Later in the same day Mutoh furnished all the members of my foreign staff with passes to enable them to move about without let or hindrance and he gave the three British banks (the Chartered, Mercantile and ourselves) instructions as to his requirements.

On this same morning, soon after the arrival of Mutoh and his party, Clive Charlwood turned up at the office and told me that the Governor had appointed me to a Committee with F.M. Edmonds of Sims Darby's and R. Williamson, the Singapore lawyer, to act as Liaison between the Japanese and the British in the matter of civilian prisoners, and that my presence was required at the Municipal Building at 2 p.m. that same day to receive instructions concerning my duties. As this was more or less a "royal" command, I had no option but to obey.

I duly presented myself at the rendezvous at the appointed time and found my fellow committeemen already there. We hung around for a long time with no sign of our Japanese opposites, so after more than an hour of this waiting we decided to go up to Fort Canning and make enquiries. There, after much wandering up and down the corridors and asking endless questions, we at last came upon someone who was able to give us information about what was required of us, one Brigadier Newbigging.

From Newbigging we heard what was expected of us and it gave us a very considerable shock. We were to ensure that all citizens of countries at war with Japan paraded on the Padang at 10 a.m. next morning to march to a concentration camp near the Roxy Theatre, about 8 or 9 miles distant!

As it was quite impossible under reigning conditions to spread the news of this parade either by pamphlet, telephone or radio, we protested that it could not be done. We estimated that there were probably 1,500 to 2,000 people to whom this order applied (Eurasians, Indians and Chinese were exempted) and we had no idea how we could get in touch with them. Our protests were unavailing.

So we left Fort Canning about 5 p.m. to commence our duties, having been told that the penalties for failing to carry out the order would be very severe. The punishment



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would be inflicted on the three of us and would come from the Japanese!

I went back to the bank and informed Mitch of what had transpired and that I should in consequence be unable to work with my colleagues in the office. He said he was sorry as he was arranging for all the foreign staff to live at Mount Echo during the few days they would be required to work in the office, and that conditions would be better for them than for me. He seemed to know something!

As it would not have suited me to stay at Mount Echo while carrying out my duties, I arranged to go to Sime Darby's office to feed and sleep so that our Internees Committee might be together. Williamson joined Edmonds and myself there.

We three then got down to it. As I had the bank pass and with it was unlikely to be held up by Japanese sentries in the streets, I said that I would wander around the town on foot and spread the news of the parade on the following morning as best I could by word of mouth. Edmonds decided that he would make use of the telephone, although the use of the telephone was very much restricted as the lines had suffered considerable damage in the recent shelling. Anyway, we did our best that evening and after a scratch meal and some beer (of which there was plenty in the office) we settled down as best we could to snatch a little sleep before the troubles of the next day. I lay me down on a mattress on the office floor and in spite of the mosquitoes, of which there were plenty, was soon sound asleep. I was exhausted after a tiring and eventful day.

That evening I had walked the streets for about two hours warning every European I saw of the parade on the Padang on the following morning, and asking them to pass the news around.

Tuesday, 17th February, 1942.

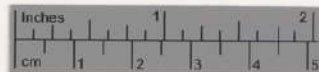
We continued our work of trying to spread the news of the parade all through the morning.

I, personally, did not present myself at the Padang at 10 a.m. but heard later in the day that some 1,200 people assembled there and that some transport had been provided which took the women, of which there were about 150, and a certain amount of baggage.

In the afternoon we were informed that three separate camps had been established, one in Joo Chiat Police Station, one in a compound group of five large houses in Karikal Lane, half a mile beyond, both of these for men, and the third for women in a Chinese mansion next to the Roxy Cinema and quite close to the first mentioned camp.

We three committeemen hung around all that day waiting for news or instructions, in the hope that we should be called upon to meet our Japanese opposite numbers and discuss with them camp problems etc., of which we knew there were going to be many, but without result.

By this time our temporary habitation in Sime Darby's office was fast becoming a shambles and living there was extremely depressing to me. The whole office staff, probably about thirty of them, had moved out to the concentration camps in the morning and had left behind them dirty pots, plates, wash cloths, towels and personal clothing (they, too, had been living in their office for some days before the end) which they could not carry with them. There were mattresses all over the



place, and plenty of empty bottles and tins.

Over and above this the whole city was beginning literally to stink. The British troops who had crowded the buildings, verandahs and streets during the last few days had used any convenient spot as a latrine, and they hadn't been very fastidious about their choice, so the filth lying around, particularly in the narrow lanes (of which there are plenty in the business district) beggars description. It was a shock to me to see such lack of discipline. The morale of the troops who occupied the areas, the majority of whom were Indian, must have been very low.

I looked into the bank to find out what was happening there and discovered them all hard at work writing the returns which the Japs had called for.

Wednesday, 18th February, 1942.

Early this morning we were informed that the people who had moved into the internment camp had had no food since they left, so we three set out to see what we could do about it.

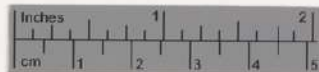
Edmonds managed to find a British military ambulance, the driver of which was willing to assist us, so we proceeded to load it up with boxes of stores which were then stacked in Sime Darby's office - part of their stock in trade. It was extremely hard manual labour and left us all at the end of the time very tired and sweaty. The ambulance made several trips to the different camps, which was a start in the right direction, and then we found on one of our trips that the Japs had allotted one lorry to each of the three camps and each one carried a permit allowing it to pass into town to scrounge for food, the idea being that private supplies of food and effects might be removed from offices and residences but not from godowns.

As there now appeared to be no pressing need for our committee to concern itself with rations for internees, we three went along to the Municipal Building to find out what was going on. The Japanese Army had established some sort of headquarters there and were in touch with the British Municipal authorities in an effort to re-establish some sort of law and order out of the existing chaos, and keep the essential services functioning.

There we found the Governor, Raymon (President of the Municipality), Jarrett (Food Controller, Malaya), my friend Clive Charlwood (one time Legislative Counsellor, Straits Settlements), and also our Japanese opposite numbers on the Civilian Internees Committee, so we all, under the chairmanship of the Japanese General commanding the Singapore District, Major-General Manaki, sat down round a table to discuss matters relating to internees.

At this time I estimate there were approximately 600 men in Joo Chiat, something just over this number in Karikal, and about 150 women in the Chinese house; and we considered that the camps were hopelessly overcrowded. How soon we were to be disillusioned!

At this meeting with the Japanese were present General Manaki, Colonel Yamazo, Major Kato, The Governor, Raymon, Jarrett, Charlwood, Edmonds, Williamson, myself, and one or two minor Malayan Government officials whose names I have forgotten. We got down to business, conducting the exchanges through an interpreter provided by the Japanese.



If we had hoped to achieve anything at this meeting we were sadly disappointed. In the course of the conversation, which was pretty general, I ventured a few questions, I asked how the Japanese proposed to feed internees and was told that internees would have to find their own food, the Japanese pointing out that lorries had been detailed to the different camps for this very purpose. I pointed out that private supplies of food were bound to be very limited and that this source would dry up in a very short time. The Japanese come-back to this was that by then we could buy food as the shops would be open, and when I asked them what we should use for money they wanted to know what we generally used for money! I explained that the credit system had been general in Singapore before this particular war had started and that the average citizen was not in the habit of carrying large sums on his person, that monthly bills were paid by cheque. This seemed to bother them for a moment, but not for long - I was informed that we should be given work to do for which we should be paid. I then asked them what sort of work we should have to do and was informed that we should be given the sort of work to which we had been accustomed. They finalised this line of conversation by stating that "the Nipponese Army would guarantee our lives".

The Japanese kept harping on the fact (according to them) that their internees had been very badly treated by the Malayan Government, but this assertion was strongly repudiated both by the Governor and by Jarrett. The former said that he had actually received a letter from some of the Japanese internees thanking him for the fair treatment they had received at our hands. I think the real trouble was that the Japanese were upset to find none of their civilian nationals still in Malaya on their arrival (they had all been sent to India shortly before the fall of Singapore) as they had no doubt counted on them to assist in the reconstruction of the occupied territories.

Another idea which was strong in their minds was that we had regarded Japanese prisoners as "members of a number three country and not as members of a number one country", to use their own phraseology, and this seemed to me to explain a lot. Their national pride had been hurt.

The meeting ended with nothing accomplished. We had raised the question of overcrowding but the Japanese attitude was absolutely negative.

Edmonds, Williamson and I then decided that we should move from Sime Darby's offices to the Municipal Building to live until our committee duties should finish, so as to be in closer touch with our own Government people who were living there, and also with the Japanese who had established their administration offices there. This was a great relief to me as the Sime Darby offices in Malacca Street were rapidly becoming insanitary with the steady accumulation of swill in buckets, of empty bottles and tins, of dirty dishes and ash trays etc. At the beginning of our residence there I did my little best to maintain some sort of standard of cleanliness, but I soon found that so long as I was prepared to do the dirty work the others remained disinterested, so I abandoned the washing up and so on and just concentrated on the care of myself and my own immediate surroundings. And for some days by this time the water pressure had been poor so that no water had been carried to any of the lavatories above the ground floor - we were living on the first floor - and as all of these, and there were several, had been very extensively used by the Sime Darby departing staff for the purpose intended, and never flushed, their condition can well be imagined.



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Next door to the Sime Darby offices had been established an auxiliary hospital under the charge of an old friend and constituent of my Ipoh days, Dr. Reid Tweedie. He and I had also attended the same school in Edinburgh (Watsons) but at different times. I happened to mention to Tweedie one day that a car would be of the greatest assistance to us in the conduct of our committee duties, and straight away he volunteered to hand over his own, a Mercury touring car. As it was probable that this car would be commandeered by the Japanese at any moment, and as I felt sure that I would be able to obtain a permit to use it from the Japanese in the Municipal Building, I did not hesitate to accept his offer. This car was of the greatest service to us during the following two or three days.

In Tweedie's car we moved with all the bag and baggage we thought we might be allowed to keep to the Municipal Building, which we found rapidly filling with Japanese. It looked as if our stay there would be of short duration as we heard that the Japanese were anxious to get all Europeans out of the building as soon as possible.

We ran out to the internment camps in the course of the afternoon and found that their numbers had increased considerably, and were continuing to do so, by the influx of those who had just heard of them and had made their own way out. The congestion was increasing and we knew that there were many more people to come.

At this stage I personally was in possession of two official Japanese badges (or passes), one as a member of the so-called Prisoners of War Committee and the other as senior member of the staff of the Hongkong & Shanghai Bank in Singapore, and I should say that the latter carried more weight than the former judging by the ease with which I had access to the bank and to any of the staff's personal belongings and supplies, and the interest shown by sentries who could read. We had in the bank at this time large reserve stores of foodstuffs intended to see us through the anticipated long siege of Singapore! I arranged for one of the camp lorries to call at the bank and Mutoh very kindly gave permission for it to be removed to the camps.

While we were occupied in carrying this stuff out the side lane and along the alleyway to the bund where the lorry was waiting, one of the Japanese sentries came over and removed some barbed wire which obstructed our efforts, which I thought very considerate of him. On another occasion a soldier inside the bank, seeing Ralston, one of the bank staff, lying on the floor with fever, went off and got him his overcoat to put under his shoulders. Some of the troops were very unpleasant, while others were extremely courteous.

Thursday, 19th February, 1942.

This morning we had a conference with the Governor, Jarrett, Charlwood, Raymon, and one or two others. We decided to draw up a memorandum on the state of the internment camps, stressing particularly the overcrowding. It was quite impossible to get any contact with our opposite numbers on the committee in spite of persistent requests, so we decided on a memorandum. We thought this would perhaps reach them when we could not.

We pointed out in this memorandum that Joo Chiat Police Station had been built to accommodate, under normal conditions, approximately 300, and that the five houses at Karikal might reasonably be expected to house about the same number. I give these figures from memory as I have no copy



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of the memorandum in my possession. We stated that these buildings were now housing over 600 and 620 respectively. We then stressed the danger to health on account of the inadequate space available for ablution purposes and for the digging of latrines. The water supply could not meet the demands of such large numbers. And finally we mentioned that the Japanese Authorities had made no arrangements for the supply of food but had left internees to fend for themselves in this respect, which was a most unsatisfactory state of affairs from our point of view. This memorandum was then sent forward to the Japanese Command and presumably reached them in due course.

After this memorandum had left our hands, Edmonds and I decided that we would make profitable use of our car and the time at our disposal to transport one or two of the older men from the town to the camp. We went round to the Singapore Club where we knew we should find some, and in due course loaded up with three of the oldest inhabitants (average age about 70) and one with a wooden leg from the hip down, so with their bags and baggage we started off.

On this trip we encountered considerable trouble with the sentries near Kallang Bridge. At the first barrier we were stopped and it was evident that the regulations had been tightened up a bit as the guard there was very reluctant to let us proceed. At the next barrier we came to, the sentry on duty made us go back to the guard house, a Chinese dwelling about 50 yards behind, where a non-commissioned officer came out to inspect us. He was an extremely unpleasant gentleman and spat out some order to us in Japanese, and although we could not understand what he was saying, we understood from his attitude what his intentions were: to get out of the car and get out pretty damned quick!

We all got out immediately, and from the N.C.O's further gestures it was clear that our passengers were meant to walk the remaining 4 or 5 miles, which Edmonds and I knew they were quite incapable of doing. We two then proceeded to show all our various passes, our Prisoners of War pass, my banker's pass, and the pass on our car, but to no avail. The three old men began to dither and panic, pulling British Passports, Singapore identification cards, letters and what-not out of their pockets, to show the N.C.O., but all this merely infuriated him the more until I thought he would hit them at any moment. All the time I was saying to the old men "Pipe down for God's sake. Put those papers back in your pockets and leave this to us".

Things weren't looking too good when I suddenly had a brain wave. I said to Baillie, the lame man: "Show them your wooden leg", which he did. The result was instantaneous; pandemonium died down while the N.C.O., who had been joined by the remaining 5 or 6 men of his post, examined the leg. There was a lot of sucking through teeth and exclamations of astonishment and the outcome of it all was that we were beckoned back into the car and allowed to proceed. The wooden leg had done what no pass from the high authorities in the Municipal Building could do!

Williamson, the third member of our committee, had not been too well and proved of little use throughout the whole of our efforts. We decided that we'd drop him at the internment camp at the first opportunity on the excuse that it was desirable to have at least one member of our committee resident there to report from first hand. In the course of the morning this was effected.

I have something to say about Bobbie Burns of Evatt & Co., the Singapore firm of Chartered Accountants. Burns



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had been appointed to a committee to discuss finance with the Japanese and had a special badge in this capacity. His duties with the finance committee did not last long, why I do not know, but no doubt as a result to some extent of our scorched earth policy of destroying all Malayan currency notes in the Treasury before the surrender. So Burns joined Edmonds and myself early on in these proceedings of the last few days and was at all times a most valuable companion. He worked most of the time with our ambulance, scrounging food throughout the town for transport to the internment camps, and he was never downhearted. He did a lot of physical work in loading heavy packing cases into the lorry, work which I myself had to abandon as it was too strenuous, and his advice was always sound. When we foregathered in the evenings at the Municipal Buildings after a long day of anxiety and strain Burns' company would be an antidote to gloom, and with his brighter outlook and perhaps a couple of whiskies and waters under our belts things wouldn't look so bad!

Edmonds and I decided, after this last encounter with the Japanese N.C.O., that the time had come when we should have some Japanese document in our possession which would assure our safe conduct if we were to continue the good work of carrying women and old men to the camps. I therefore angled my way into a room in the Municipal Building where one Toyoda held session, with the object of airing our grievances.

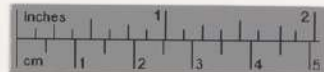
Toyoda, who was in officer's uniform, was a high ranking official in this particular administration, and had the ear of the General. He had been Japanese Consul-General in Singapore some year or two previously, spoke English perfectly and had influence and standing, so I decided that he was the man to see.

I was in the process of explaining to him what had transpired that morning and had just reached the part where Baillie had pulled up his trousers to show his wooden leg, when General Manaki walked into the room. When I had finished my tale of woe Toyoda went over to General Manaki and they joined in conversation in Japanese. Suddenly they both burst into fits of laughter and I am pretty certain that it was brought about by the story of Baillie and his wooden leg. However, I achieved my end and left the room with a document in Japanese signed by General Manaki himself which I presume was a safe conduct pass.

When I rejoined Edmonds I told him that I intended to move into the camp and sleep there as I feared that any minute our car would be confiscated in spite of having a pass pasted on the windscreen. Jap soldiers were all over the place opening up bonnets of cars which had been abandoned and put out of running order by owners near the end of the struggle for Singapore, and would start them up and drive them off. They were not particular what cars they took and I feared that if we left ours unattended for five minutes we should never see it again, pass or no pass. The Japanese were no respectors of persons and the fact that we were on a special committee would convey nothing to them, many of whom could not even read their own language.

Edmonds decided likewise so we both moved into camp that evening and joined the Sime Darby crowd in one of the Karikal houses.

Our duties had by no means ended so we should have to move in and out of town, but we now had our bags and mattresses in camp which was all that mattered, as the prospect of having to foot it out to camp from town unencumbered by baggage did not frighten us. Any baggage carried



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under such circumstances would have been restricted to the very minimum and this would have meant the jettisoning of our mattresses, etc.

The house we moved into at Karikal was very full so we had to park ourselves on the open verandah which wasn't so bad provided it didn't rain.

Friday 20th February, 1942.

Last night after dark 60 members of the European police force arrived in lorries under a Japanese guard. There was no accommodation available inside the houses so they had to park themselves in an open band-stand fountain arrangement in the centre of the quadrangle. All sorts of people drift in, and the congestion is becoming acute.

Edmonds and I drove into town today to find out what was going on. We found the Governor, Jarrett, Raymon and Charlwood together and told them how impossible the men's camps were becoming.

I then snoopied around the Municipal Building to see if I could contact Toyoda or someone else in authority who might be interested in our plight, but without success, so we decided on another memorandum. In this we again stressed the bad state of overcrowding and asked to be allowed to meet our opposite numbers on the spot so that we could show them exactly what we meant. I set off with this second memorandum to see if I could deliver it personally to Toyoda, and this time I was fortunate - I found him in his room. I left the memorandum and told him also of the plight we were in at the camps. He seemed surprised at what I had to relate, particularly when I mentioned that 60 police had moved in the night before and slept in the open. He told me that we should go out and choose more accommodation ourselves! This seemed almost too good to be true, and, as it subsequently turned out, was too good to be true. Anyway I took him up on this and asked for his written authority which I could carry to the commander of the guard at the internment camp. He then drew up some document in Japanese which contained the names of Charlwood, Edmonds and myself in English and, I presume, in Japanese, and with this I returned in high spirits to my companions.

Off we went to the camp and after some difficulty got in touch with a Captain Chinan, who we assumed was O/C camp guard and would have some authority. We set off together accompanied by an interpreter, and looked at several houses which appeared to us to be well suited for our purpose. We actually got down to arguing as to the number each house would accommodate and we did a lot of pacing out of rooms, so that it really looked at long last as if we were about to achieve something, but it was all wasted labour. When we had spent an hour or two at this the Japanese left us saying that they would give the matter their attention, but nothing resulted that day.

We came to the conclusion that the Japanese High Command were having their own particular troubles and really did not have time to spare for our grievances. We were very discouraged. However true this might be, it was poor comfort to us who were so badly housed and so badly fed.

The meals I had so far partaken of in camp were perfectly appalling. The cooks were amateur and chosen at random, and our kitchens had not become properly organised. The threat that the Japanese did not intend to issue us with rations led to the extreme conservation of supplies, so that



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we were half starved most of the time. My thoughts turned to the delicious meals I had accepted more or less as a matter of course in the good old days at "Matheran".

The problem of caring for both the military and the civil prisoners will present plenty of difficulties to the Japanese so I'm afraid the future will not be too rosy for any of us.

Wednesday, 25th February, 1942.

Edmonds and I went into town again on Saturday, the 21st, for the last time but we did no useful work whatsoever.

We called on Dr. Tweedie in his auxiliary hospital and were given a square meal which was most welcome. We also hung around the Municipal Building hoping for news of better conditions for internees, but nothing was forthcoming. We therefore decided to return to camp and I told Edmonds I was through with visiting town as I was convinced that we were getting nowhere. We had been told by the Japanese that another batch of internees was to leave for the camp that same day so we thought we'd better stand by our respective patches on the verandah in case some newcomer should try to jump our claim. Late yesterday out came about another 200, which number included most of my colleagues in the bank.

By this time the Japanese had become alive to the fact that space was too cramped and had thrown open a Convent School next door to Karikal into which 600 internees transferred. I and my fellow bankers moved over to these new quarters and established ourselves in the loft of a barn-like building which apparently had been a large class room. This wasn't too bad except that there were 56 of us in all, Hong Kong Bank, Chartered Bank and Mercantile Bank. For our first meal in these new quarters we had to queue up in a single line of over 600 to draw a most unappetising meal of unsweetened rice, dry biscuits and unsweetened tea. It actually took me over an hour and a half to reach the serving table!

When I got back to my loft I decided that this would never do, so I got in touch with Mark Limbury, who commanded and had come into camp with the Local Defence Corps - about 90 strong - all of whom were billeted around and underneath our loft, and suggested to him that his crowd and my bankers should join forces and form a separate mess, to which suggestion he was in full agreement, so we went off to interview a self-appointed committee, on which were serving my old Ipoh friends Aston and Middlebrook, who were supposed to be running things. Aston and Middlebrook tried hard to push others on to us but we weren't having any, and as we had the whip hand, being in the position of refusing to do anything at all unless we had our way, they ultimately agreed. It meant some reduction in the 600 queue and that was all to the general good. Having won our point we immediately went off and got a few men together and from the kitchen drew our rations. We then set about erecting a cookhouse with a couple of old fashioned kitchen ranges, some wood and a large tarpaulin. The L.D.C. had some very handy men in their ranks, engineers and carpenters and the like, and our kitchen was quite a tidy little affair in no time.

That evening we formed up in our own queue of just under 150 and, considering the difficulties our new cooks had to contend with, we had quite a fair meal.

The mosquitoes in camp are bad and I am one of the many who have no net, but I manage to get some sleep with the aid of a little citronella oil which some kind fellow has given me.