



AT LEFT: R.A.F. armourers loading 60 lb. rockets into position on a Beaufighter in preparation for an attack on bandits in the jungle

REPORT ON MALAYA

FOR over three years a guerrilla war has been going on in the jungles of Malaya between the Malay authorities (assisted by British regular forces) and Communist rebels, and New Zealand has taken part by sending R.N.Z.A.F. Dakotas to drop supplies to the anti-Communist forces.

This tongue of land at the extremity of Asia is facing up to many problems in its struggle to become a nation, and under the title, *Malaya: A Report to the People*, an examination of the difficulties besetting the Malays today will have its first New Zealand broadcast from 3YC at 8.0 p.m. on Monday, January 7.

The programme was compiled for the BBC by Commander John Proud and Dr. Victor Purcell, both of whom share the narration with Edward Ward. Dr. Purcell, who served in the Malay Ad-

ministration for many years, was appointed University Lecturer in Far Eastern History at Cambridge in 1949. Among those taking part are General Sir Harold Briggs (Director of anti-Terrorist Operations in Malaya), who was reported to have said in a message from Singapore a week or so ago that the Communists were now fully committed to battle, "deploying all their resources in order to exist." Other speakers include Sir John Hay (an authority on rubber), Sir Patrick McKerron (formerly Colonial Secretary in Singapore), and representatives of two racial groups in Malaya.

Four-fifths of Malaya is jungle. Most of the remainder is a highly developed area with rubber plantations, rice fields and tin mines. A century ago the Straits Settlements (Singapore, Penang and Malacca), flourished under Free Trade, but the Malay States of the mainland had reached a condition of political decadence near to anarchy.

State fought against State, and one or two of them were torn apart by civil war. On the mainland the population was fewer than 300,000. Roads, railways, schools, and courts of law were non-existent, and slavery was an accepted feature of local society. Today there is a population of nearly 6,000,000. There are up-to-date roads, railways and air routes; hygiene has improved immensely, irrigation and hydro-electric schemes are operating, and educational and welfare institutions are run on modern lines.

To protect the Malay States against increasing disruption the British intervened in 1874. The Sultans accepted treaties of protection, agreed to rule under British advice, and the country quickly became ready for development. But labour was insufficient to work the

estates and mines, and had to be imported from South India and China. The rubber industry—an entirely British creation, which was to become the principal source of Malaya's prosperity, along with tin—attracted immigrants in large numbers. Malays and Chinese worked and lived together in peace under British rule. But the Japanese occupation (according to Dr. Purcell) brought a change, their object being to set race against race. Communists took to the jungle to escape the invader, and formed guerrilla bands; and after the liberation they tried to subvert British rule. Unsuccessful, they went underground, but in June, 1948, they came out in open rebellion to ambush, kill, and sabotage the country's economic recovery.

Malaya: A Report to the People, was recorded as a transcription from the BBC's General Overseas Service in June last. It concentrates on three main causes of the country's difficulties: its economic importance as a large producer of tin and rubber; the internal racial, religious and temperamental cleavage mainly between the Malays and Chinese, but also affecting the Indian population; and finally the emergence of Communism, with its attendant guerrilla warfare causing a complete disruption in the life of the people. The programme will occupy half an hour.

FOR DONALD PEERS

Success Began at Forty

EVEN with old Man Crosby to remember, a crooner who is forty-three years old and yet a bobbysoxers' idol is something of a phenomenon, particularly—and here we come to Donald Peers—when he is only 5 feet, 7½ inches tall and has, as Peers himself admits, a double chin. However, whether or not his appearance has anything to do with it, there's no doubt that Donald Peers has become a sort of British Sinatra. Reserved Englishwomen become mildly hysterical when he sings his cosy little songs, and although no one has yet done him the honour of swooning, they make up for it by tearing souvenir buttons off his jacket whenever he appears in public.

So far their New Zealand sisters have not had a chance to make such open demonstrations of their enthusiasm, but they should have a better opportunity of becoming acquainted with Mr. Peers through a new recorded series which the four ZB stations and 2ZA are to broadcast on Sunday evenings at 9.0, beginning on January 6. Called simply and adequately *The Donald Peers Show*, the new programme is a Towers of London production.

It's probably Peers's cosiness and familiarity that has got him where he is. He had spent all his singing life—twenty years—in the Music Halls before he began to broadcast, getting himself known and remembered (so he says), as a "nice, bright little fellow." Consequently he had something of a following when he arrived at the BBC. That, and an attractive technique with his Welsh voice, made his name.

But it was a slow business when he started off as an unknown. At one time he was singing thirty songs a night accompanied by a ukulele-banjo, and getting five shillings for it. Later, a Music



BBC photograph
DONALD PEERS

Hall proprietor who promised to pay him what he was worth, gave him half a crown when he was hooted off the stage in Canning Town. In 1926 he made his first broadcast, but in 1928 he refused an offer from the BBC to tour their provincial stations and joined a concert party instead.

He spent five years in the army during the war, and then set to work to rebuild his career. Success came when he was given ten weekly half-hours in the BBC's Light Programme. After his first performance he smiled at the audience and said "Good-night," but before he had a chance to move a girl called, "More, Donald, more!" He sang another song. The following week he was kept singing for half an hour after the broadcast ended. Within four weeks he was singing for two hours, and the only way he could get out was by singing his last song in his overcoat. Then the BBC extended his contract, and he sang in the Albert Hall to a frantic female audience. That night he had to fight his way back to his dressing room, but his reputation was made.



LIFE IN BRITISH EAST AFRICA is to be the subject of a series of six talks by Emily Host, starting from 4YA on Friday, January 11. Mrs. Host, who was formerly Emily Siedeberg, of Dunedin, is married to a planter and copra expert and has lived for some years in Uganda, Tanganyika and Kenya. Special interest will attach to Emily Host's third talk, "A Royal Holiday," since in it she describes the kind of country in which is situated the lodge given by the people of Kenya to Princess Elizabeth and the Duke of Edinburgh for a wedding present. The photograph we print above was taken as Mr. and Mrs. Host got directions from a Masai tribesman during a visit to Kenya's Great Rift Valley

N.Z. LISTENER, JANUARY 4, 1952.