

SICKNESS AT SINGAPORE

A 600-bed Australian hospital is being set up at Singapore to handle urgent medical cases. Other cases will be taken by hospital ship to Labuan Island, Borneo, where two big hospitals are ready and waiting.

The hospital ship *Oranje* will pick up 100 men from Singapore about mid-October and take them direct to Sydney, Brisbane, and Melbourne.

Those in the Labuan hospitals will be taken to Australia by ship as soon as they are fit.

Twelve hundred of the 8,500 Australian prisoners in the Singapore camps are known to be hospital cases. Many of them are suffering from malnutrition. Eight per cent. of the remainder have chronic malaria.

A huge air evacuation scheme, in which the R.A.A.F. is taking part, has been arranged for picking up prisoners in camps in Siam and Indo-China and flying them to hospital.

Wireless sets, urgent relief stores, and leaflets with instructions have been already dropped from the air on 155 prisoner-of-war camps.

In addition, small teams, including Australian officers, have been parachuted into many camps, and are already broadcasting information about the prisoners.

FLYING HOSPITALS

One hundred and fifty planes are standing by to fly three British hospitals into Bangkok. These planes will bring out 2,000 to 3,000 prisoners, including Australians.

The building of the infamous "death" railway from Siam to Burma, which cost many Australian lives, was seen by Lieutenant-Colonel J. M. Williams, Sefton, N.S.W., of the Australia Pioneer Corps.

Speaking to an Army observer, Lieut.-Colonel Williams said 884 Diggers began work on the "death" railway. After 130 kilns had been laid, only 34 of his men remained. The rest had died or were in hospital.

Besides the lives of Allied prisoners, this railway through the jungle is also reported to have cost the lives of 20,000 Tamil slave workers taken from Malayan rubber plantations.

JAP. "PERSUASION"

Lieut.-Colonel Williams told how after his capture in Java with seven other officers the Japanese tried to break down their resistance and make them disclose their knowledge of the defences of Australia.

The enemy failed to quell the magnificent spirit of these Australians, and learnt nothing from them.

Other prisoners told how, as the railway progressed from the Bangkok plains into the jungle, the life of the prisoners rapidly became worse until men were dying almost daily from

prisoners rapidly became worse until men were dying almost daily from lack of food and drugs necessary to combat jungle diseases such as malaria, dysentery, blackwater fever, typhus, and starvation.

In spite of disease and sickness, the men were driven out to a by brutal Korean guards.

They worked on an average 18 hours a day, dressed only in loincloths.

A British officer, one of many rescued recently by the R.A.F. from Bangkok, told how ingenious Signal Corps officers had constructed small wireless sets capable of receiving news from India. These sets, in many cases, kept the men sane.

News of Allied victories as the weary months of slavery passed kept their spirits above the point where men become insane.