

JAP MAJOR ADMITS CHARGES OF CRUELTY

Blames Monsoons For Lack Of Supplies On Burma Rail Work

SINGAPORE, Wednesday.

An admission that Allied prisoners of war were over worked and that the sick were forced to march was made by Major Totaro Mizutani, commander of camps on a section of the Siam-Burma railway, who is being tried before a war crimes tribunal.

However, he ascribed all the blame, including lack of medical supplies, food and bad conditions to monsoons which made transportation difficult.

He denied beating prisoners and regarding forced marches he said he did everything he could to help them.

An affidavit by Major Edward Raymond Meagher, of 2/2nd. Australian pioneer battalion, described the appalling conditions at the 80 kilo camp. He dealt particularly with the amputation of a leg performed on an Australian private, named Broadribb, by a Dutch surgeon who borrowed a hacksaw blade and other small articles from prisoners of war in order to carry out the operation.

Broadribb died seven days after the operation. Meagher said that Broadribb was probably the worst case in the hospital. He had no flesh on the leg from knee to ankle.

Evidence was also given on the second charge of ill-treatment of Burmese whom the accused caught giving scraps of food from a kitchen at one camp. An eye-witness said that Mizutani pulled a piece of burning wood from the kitchen fire and proceeded to burn the man all over the body and head, all the time laughing. The man dropped unconscious and was carried away moaning.