

INTRODUCTION.

THE WORLD'S RICE CROP.

Rice is one of the most extensively grown crops and is the staple food of a very large proportion of the world's population. In East and South-East Asia, where rice is the major crop, it forms nearly three-quarters of the normal diet. Seven countries, India, Burma, Japan, China, Indo-China, Siam and Korea produce some ninety percent of the world's rice crop, whilst the U.S.A., Spain, Italy and Egypt, among the less important producers, grow significant quantities. The total production of paddy, estimated in 1954, (The Commonwealth Economic Committee 1955) was one hundred and eleven million long tons, which is substantially lower than the pre-1939 figure; this is in the face of a rapidly increasing rice eating population.

Practically the whole of the world's rice crop is grown on holdings of less than five acres, exceptions being where large scale schemes for mechanized production have been set up as in Suriname, British Guiana and the U.S.A. Many problems face the introduction of mechanization into peasant rice farming. The systems of land tenure existing in peasant rice producing areas are invariably extremely complex; fragmentation of holdings, no system of security for the tenant and uneconomic small plots forming the most important disadvantages.

In some areas rice growing is only a part-time occupation, even during the busy time of preparing the paddy land the peasant farmer may have another job during the daytime and cultivate rice in his spare time. This system of cultivation leads to poor crops due to inadequate attention.