

INTRODUCTION

(a) RICE AS A WORLD CROP.

Rice is one of the most extensively grown and widely used foodstuffs in the world. While wheat is considered the "staff of life" as far as the inhabitants of the temperate countries are concerned, rice is the chief maintenance of the populations of Eastern and South-Eastern Asia, including the large nearby islands of Japan and Indonesia. Rice accounts for over 70 per cent. of the total calories in their diet.

The principal rice-producing countries are India, Burma, Japan and China. Large quantities are also produced in Indonesia, Indo-China, Siam and Korea. These countries together produce about 94 per cent. of the world's crop.

The chief warm-temperate areas of production are in the United States, Brazil, Spain, Italy and Egypt.

World production of rice⁽⁵⁾ in 1948 was estimated at approximately 145 million metric tons, and this was found to be 2.9 million tons short of the pre-war average. Against this decreased production the population of the rice-eating areas was found to have increased by nearly 100 million⁽⁷⁾ in the past decade. The annual increase in population in these areas has been estimated to be in the region of about 10 million.

Increasing production, to keep pace with the increase in the population, is one of the most insistent problems in rice cultivation.