

INTRODUCTION.

World Production and Waste.

The importance of rice as the largest crop produced to feed a rapidly increasing world population is well known. In recent years a concerted effort has been made by world organisations and by individual governments to increase production of this commodity still further ; as a result, estimates of world production since the war show that both the rice acreage and yield are rising, especially in the main consuming areas of Asia where the need is greatest. Increases however are also reported from European and African countries and from the New World ; many countries which previously imported rice are now striving towards self sufficiency at a time when the indications are that world demands for this staple food will grow, and prices rise. In 1953 it is estimated that the record crop of 357,000 million lbs of paddy was harvested:(U.S.D.A.1953).

When such efforts are being made to increase world food production, it is important that steps are also taken to ensure that losses to the commodities concerned after harvest should be reduced to a minimum. The Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations has done much to draw attention to the importance of avoiding waste, especially in the case of rice. According to one estimate made in 1948 (F.A.O. 1948), more than 22,000 million lbs. of paddy are lost annually, due to insect and rodent infestation during storage, faulty storage methods, wasteful milling and wasteful methods of household preparation. If this enormous figure could be reduced by only 10 per cent., 2,200 million lbs more rice would be available for human consumption, a figure approximately equal to one third of the average annual amount handled in international trade.