

Attempts to calculate food deficits or shortages for this broad area, which accounts for over 50 per cent. of the world's population, or some 1,150,000,000 people, are hazardous indeed. But the additional bread grain which will be needed during the twelve months commencing 1 July, after allowing for the use of accumulated stocks and imports of rice from the Americas and Egypt, is estimated at about 10,000,000 metric tons, or 375,000,000 million bushels, wheat equivalent (assuming 90 per cent. extraction).

These estimates are not statements of "requirements" or forecasts of effective demand, but rather are indications of the imports which would be needed to offset about one-half of the difference between indigenous grain supplies and the amounts required to bring per caput grain consumption back to the pre-war level. However, even the pre-war diet over most of the Far East was too low for promoting health and working efficiency. So far as can be estimated, some 25,000,000 tons (wheat equivalent) of cereals or other staple foods would be needed to raise diets to their full pre-war level in 1947, after allowing for the estimated increases in the rice crop which will be harvested late in 1946.

(c) Supplies for Export

Supplies of the several foodstuffs available from the exporting countries as a whole are not likely to be any greater in 1946-47 than the amounts actually moved in 1945-46 unless effective measures are taken to reduce amounts used in these countries, either for feed or human consumption, or for both. Supplies of wheat available for export shipment from the four chief exporters are likely to be smaller, while supplies of other foodstuffs available for shipment to continental Europe or the Far East are likely to be not much different from amounts available in 1945-46.

Assuming average weather, something over 18,000,000 metric tons, or about 675,000,000 bushels, of wheat should be available for shipment from the four chief exporting countries in 1946-47, although the actual amount might easily range from as little as 550,000,000 bushels (15,000,000 metric tons) to as much as 800,000,000 bushels (22,000,000 metric tons), depending upon yields, differences in domestic utilization, and the extent to which stocks are rebuilt. Some wheat may be available for export from other sources—chiefly the Danube Basin and the U.S.S.R.—but such exports are uncertain and are unlikely to exceed about 2,000,000 metric tons, or 75,000,000 bushels at best.

Substantial increases in European production are in prospect, but over against this there is the question whether existing grain economies can be maintained, the increased need for supplementary grain in the Far East, and the fact that world wheat stocks are now low, stocks in the four chief exporting countries having been reduced by about one-half, or around 11,000,000 metric tons, during 1945-46.

While other commodities must also be considered, especially for certain areas or consumer groups, wheat is obviously the key commodity in the international distribution of food. Altogether, some 18,000,000 to 20,000,000 metric tons of wheat may be available for shipment from the four chief exporting countries and other sources in 1946-47, whereas actual needs for imports of bread grains are conservatively estimated at about 30,000,000 metric tons (wheat equivalent).*

* The 30,000,000 metric tons is arrived at by allowing about 12,500,000 tons for continental Europe, about 1,000,000 tons for the Far East, and not less than 8,000,000 tons for the other countries or areas—the United Kingdom and Eire, Brazil and other Latin-American countries, Africa, and the Near East.