

Asia Needs Cropland Areas Immediately

► AN AREA of cultivated land greater than Connecticut, Delaware, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey and Rhode Island combined must "immediately" be added to that now available in Southeast Asia if the region is again to become self-sufficient in vital cereal grains, a United Nations official said in Canberra, Australia.

The problem is water, sometimes too much and sometimes too little, warned U Nyun, secretary of the U.N. Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East (ECAFE).

Water will soon be a limiting factor to the economic development of Asia, he said, unless the governments of the region give more serious attention to proper planning of water resources. He told the seventh ECAFE regional conference on water resources development that since the start of the U.N.'s Development Decade in 1960, the irrigated area in the nine developing countries of the ECAFE region has increased by an average of only 2.28 percent. Before the war in Southeast Asia, he pointed out, the region had been a cereals exporter, but since the war there has been a constant shortage and in 1965 net imports of cereals reached 8.8 million tons.

The present cereal yield in the region is only about 800 pounds per acre. Unless this amount can be "significantly" increased, Secretary Nyun said, about 34 million square miles must immediately be added to the present cultivated area to make the region self-sufficient.

A major problem is flood damage. The affected ECAFE countries spend about \$250 million a year to combat floods, but though the amount is a heavy burden on their economies, it is hardly a drop in the bucket.

The water requirements for irrigation and other uses will soon equal and exceed the available supplies, U Nyun said, making water a limiting factor in the economic growth of the region.

Floyd Dominy, commissioner of the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, of the Department of the Interior, later supported U Nyun. He said irrigation is the answer to the food problem in Asia—and for further development of Australia, the driest continent.



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TECHNOLOGY

Transport Crisis: Fact Or Fancy?

► THERE IS no "major crisis" in automobile transportation, either between cities or inside cities, Deputy Under Secretary of Commerce A. Sheffer Lang, said in Gatlinburg, Tenn.

However, if the public believes there is a problem, then that very fact makes it a problem, Mr. Lang told a seminar of science writers meeting at the Mountain View Hotel. He said professionals are not as "clear as the public" that there is an actual crisis and even some difficulties finding "major problems" in their statistics.

He said it was up to the professional either to show the problem is non-existent or to solve it. Mr. Lang, who supervises the Federal Government's transportation research program, noted that the time it takes to drive long distances has steadily decreased in recent years. Although the time necessary to drive short distance has also decreased, it has not been to the same extent.

The public is growing "more and more conscious" of the need to make urban freeways aesthetically pleasing in appearance, not just vast wastelands of ugly concrete. The public is also becoming "more and more conscious" of noise around airports, and "less and less tolerant of it," Mr. Lang said.

He predicted that within five years there would be both local and Federal restrictions on the amount of noise generated by aircraft.

Another problem over which the public is becoming increasingly concerned, Mr. Lang said, is auto fumes. He noted that even with the present regulations governing exhausts, which go into effect on 1968 model cars, there will be too many automobiles on the road by 1980 for clean air.

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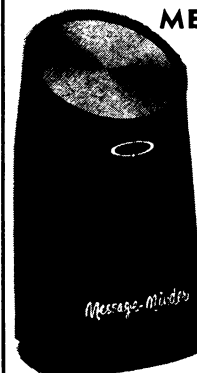
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