



P E S T I C I D E S

The growing world demand on food supplies has led to an increasing dependence of agriculture on greater mechanisation, on new high yielding seed varieties and on agro-chemicals in order to step up production. The advantages and disadvantages of these facets of modern agriculture have been the subject of much debate in recent years. In an earlier issue of the Economic Review we discussed fertilizers, which is one aspect of today's extensive agro-chemical industry. In this issue a range of specialists on the subject discuss the other aspect of agro-chemicals, namely, pesticides (which also includes other killers such as insecticides, fungicides, rodenticides, nematocides and acaricides).

Because of its complicated character and growing significance the trade in toxic substances the world over is bound to be a major source of conflict in the years ahead. In a broad overview of the pesticide industry Prof. C. S. Weeraratne, of the Faculty of Agriculture, Ruhuna University examines the major issues on pages

4-15. Prof. Nandasa Kodagoda of the Faculty of Medicine, Colombo discusses some aspects of health hazards in pesticides in Sri Lanka; while the extracts from a WHO report, prepared with the assistance of two members of the Colombo Medical Faculty, deals with the specific issue of pesticide poisoning. Occupational hazards from pesticides are discussed by M. Ponnambalam of the Labour Departments Occupational Hygiene Division. The application of pesticides in agriculture is dealt with by Nallini de Alwis of the CARI Gannoruwa, while mechanical and cultural methods are dealt with by A.S. Widanapathirana of the ARTI Colombo, and biological control of plant pests are discussed by Ranjith Mahindapala of the Coconut Research Institute. Certain aspects of Sri Lanka's market for pesticides are finally analysed by researcher Renton de Alwis.