

STORAGE BATTERIES

The predominance of American automobiles in the Netherland East Indies has resulted in a fairly good demand for American storage batteries. In 1928 this territory ranked as the sixteenth most important consuming country for storage batteries exported from the United States.

The majority of storage batteries are sold through manufacturers' agents specializing in the marketing of automobile accessories, although several well-known American makes are distributed through import houses. During the last few years, however, there has been a tendency on the part of the Chinese motor-car-accessory dealers, who practically control the retailing of automobile accessories, to secure direct connections with American storage-battery manufacturers, which has led to considerable competition in this line. American firms interested in exporting storage batteries to the Netherland East Indies have little chance of doing so unless their prices are competitive or below those of the manufacturers who are now selling in this market.

European firms also obtain a share of the storage-battery trade. One of them, the manufacturer of the Varta battery, finds it profitable enough to maintain branch houses in the most important cities.

The principal demand is for 6-volt, 11-plate batteries for use in light, low-priced American cars.

DOMESTIC APPLIANCES

Numerous American manufacturers have made vain efforts to export household electric appliances, such as vacuum cleaners, electric grills and toasters, electric washing machines, and electric refrigerators to the Netherland East Indies. In 1928 the total exports of domestic electric appliances from the United States amounted to approximately \$25,000. Continental and English manufacturers are obtaining less business in these lines than American manufacturers, which indicates the limited demand for them in the Netherland East Indies.

There are several reasons why the sales of domestic household appliances have been small, the principal one being the abundant supply of cheap and fairly efficient household labor. In addition to this, the electric household appliance, no matter how simple, requires some one to operate it; and there are few European women in the Netherland East Indies who would consider cleaning their homes with a vacuum cleaner or ironing the family wash. They are not solicitous over the amount of labor required of their servants and are not inclined to spend money to make their work easier.

Until recently, the rates charged by the public-utility companies did not favor the use of household appliances, but during the last year the power companies, realizing the possibilities of an increase in business, have been offering more favorable monthly rates to the owners of electric household appliances. It is believed that the sales of household appliances in the Netherland East Indies could be increased by sales and educational campaigns on the part of the local agents or distributors.

Fans.—Despite the fact that the climate of the Netherland East Indies is tropical throughout the year, few electric fans are used,