

Industry / Business

A 50% cutback in PVC output at its Niagara Falls, N.Y., plant is being undertaken by Goodyear Tire because bringing a 28-year-old unit into compliance with federal standards for worker exposure to vinyl chloride is "economically unfeasible." The move will eliminate 60 of the plant's 440 jobs and halt annual production of 50 million pounds of general-purpose polyvinyl chloride, although specialty resins will continue to be made in an adjacent unit built in 1957. In a separate move, Olin expects to close its 150 million pound-a-year PVC plant at Assonet, Mass., by year's end. Its contract for monomer with PPG Industries expires Dec. 31, and Olin has been unable to line up new supplies. The plant, which employs 200, has been receiving only enough monomer recently to operate at less than 50% of capacity. In a third development, a strike at Uniroyal's PVC plant at Painesville, Ohio, has ended. The company and United Rubber Workers officials have resumed talks over the issue of "working conditions related to vinyl chloride" (C&EN, Nov. 11, page 5).

Kaiser Industries is dropping out of the glass fiber business because of "continuing operating losses." It will shut down the two plants run by its Kaiser Glass Fiber subsidiary at Irwindale, Calif., and write off a \$5 million loss against 1974 earnings. The subsidiary employs about 250 workers and has been making about 18 million lb of textile glass fiber products a year for reinforcing plastics.

Texaco will become the sole owner of Jefferson Chemical. It has agreed to pay \$80.7 million in cash for the 50% interest American Cyanamid has had in the joint venture since it was formed in 1944. Jefferson, which makes ethylene oxide, propylene oxide, and intermediates in Texas and specialty chemicals in the U.K., had sales of \$154.1 million during 1974's first three quarters.

Government

FDA has been blasted for permitting asbestos in food-grade salt. The Salt Institute and a Ralph Nader group have asked FDA to stop chemical companies from selling the salt left over from chlorine manufacturing processes as food-grade salt. They claim that 10% of the asbestos from the asbestos diaphragm used in the chlorine-making process winds up in the salt. Asbestos in the air has been linked to cancer.

Dr. Phillip Handler's election to a second six-year term as president of the National Academy of Sciences seems virtually assured. The former Duke University biochemist is the sole nominee of NAS's nominating committee. And under NAS by-laws, anybody else seeking to be on the ballot for the post must file a petition signed by 50 academy members by Dec. 1. So far, there seem to be no takers.

There should be flexibility in applying effluent guidelines to the synthetic plastics industry, says the Manufacturing Chemists Association. EPA has proposed single number standards for 11 manufacturing categories, such as epoxy resins, fluorocarbons, and polyamides. MCA has asked that EPA establish appropriate guideline ranges instead, claiming that factors such as age and size of plants, varying raw materials, and product mix prohibit a single number being applied equitably nationwide.

Washington roundup

- EPA has proposed pesticide disposal rules. The regulations would ban such practices as open burning and dumping of pesticides and containers.
- The Occupational Safety & Health Administration hopes to propose health standards for about 15 chemicals—including beryllium, lead, benzene, and chloroform—by the end of the year.

International

Dow Chemical expects an okay for its South Korean expansion plans. The South Korean government has given "approval in principle" to Dow's proposal to put up a wholly owned chlorine-caustic soda unit at Yosu, on the southern coast, as well as that of Korea Pacific Chemical (50% owned by Dow) to build ethylene dichloride, vinyl chloride, and low-density polyethylene plants there (C&EN, Nov. 4, page 9). Meanwhile, Japan's Mitsui group has filed a proposal in Seoul to build high-density polyethylene, polypropylene, butadiene, and ethylene glycol plants at Yosu as a joint venture with the South Korean government.

Foster Grant will own a one-third interest in a Brazilian company, Estireno do Nordeste, that will build a plant in the Camacari area of northeastern Brazil to make 200 million lb of styrene and 90 million lb of polystyrene a year. The unit, part of a major petrochemical complex now under construction there, is expected on stream in 1977. Petrobras Quimica and a group of private Brazilian investors also will each own a third of the new enterprise.

Rhône-Poulenc's man-made fiber plants will shut down from Dec. 1 until mid-January. The move by the company, which accounts for the bulk of France's output of synthetic fibers, stems from a buildup of inventories on the part of fiber users, even though there doesn't appear to be any serious drop in consumer demand yet in France for fiber-containing products.

Contracts for two big overseas ethylene plants have been won by Stone & Webster. The construction firm will build a 500,000 metric-ton-a-year plant for Stenungsunds Kemiska at Stenungsund, Sweden. And it will complete a 400,000 metric-ton-a-year unit by 1977 for Sumitomo at Niihama, Japan.