

Industry / Business

Dow Chemical is restructuring its Life Sciences organization, which has handled its drug and diagnostic products in the U.S. and abroad. The operation now will become Dow Lepetit, with headquarters transferred from Midland, Mich., to Milan, Italy, where Dow's Italian drug affiliate, Gruppo Lepetit, is located. And the new organization's U.S. arm, with headquarters in Indianapolis, Ind., will take over responsibility for Dow's U.S. consumer products. Dr. Julius E. Johnson, general manager of Life Sciences, will be president of Dow Lepetit.

PEG urges an end to FPC control of wellhead prices for interstate natural gas from new wells drilled, Monsanto vice president E. S. Robson, Jr., told the Senate Commerce Committee. But the Petrochemical Energy Group stops short of advocating total deregulation of natural gas prices by the Federal Power Commission. PEG also opposes extending FPC authority to crude oil, petroleum products, and intrastate natural gas.

Chlorine and caustic soda prices have been hiked about 20% by Dow Chemical, the leading U.S. producer. In a move to keep up with energy costs, Dow is now quoting both products at 5 cents a pound, up from 3.95 cents for liquid chlorine and 4.3 cents for regular liquid caustic, the level to which they had been raised last January.

Government

Textile and steel import restraints are scored by GAO as costly to the U.S. and foreign governments as well as to U.S. consumers. For example, the textile quotas, which slowed man-made fiber imports into the U.S. in the 1970's, resulted in a \$58.8 million loss to the U.S. Treasury in 1971 and higher consumer prices ranging up to an additional \$632 million for products from Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan, and Korea. The General Accounting Office urges a new look at the quotas and a determination of whether imports threaten all domestic textiles or only a few product lines.

Will the vinyl chloride health scare trigger new legislation? Taking the rare step of suspending sales of 28 pesticide aerosols containing the chemical, EPA chief Russell E. Train urged "early Congressional action" on the Toxic Substances Control Act. The act would give EPA power to identify hazardous chemicals prior to marketing and more effectively ban or limit their sales. Supported by the American Chemical Society, the act has been stalled in a Senate-House conference since last fall.

Washington roundup

- The National Academy of Sciences has elected Dr. George S. Hammond, vice chancellor of natural sciences at the University of California, Santa

Cruz, and chemistry professor, to a four-year term as NAS foreign secretary.

- The General Accounting Office has criticized AEC for poor safeguards against possible diversion of fissionable plutonium and enriched uranium to weapons.

International

A big round of petrochemical building is slated for Sarnia, Ont., Canada. Sun Oil plans a \$15 million aromatics unit with startup in early 1977. Capacity will be 10 million gallons a year of benzene, and 30 million gallons a year of xylene. Polysar, Ltd., plans a 600 million pound-a-year ethylbenzene-styrene plant due on stream in 1976, and an expansion of its styrene plant to 250 million pounds a year. The Sarnia Olefins Aromatics Project will build a \$250 million, 1 billion pound-a-year ethylene plant scheduled for completion in early 1977, and Dow Chemical plans a polypropylene glycol plant with startup in early 1975.

Borg-Warner's first MBS plant will be built at Grangemouth, Scotland. The unit will be able to make 20,000 metric tons a year of polymethyl methacrylate-butadiene-styrene, a plastics modifier, under license from Japan's Kureha Chemical Industry, with completion slated for 1976. Borg-Warner also is increasing acrylonitrile-butadiene-styrene resin capacity at Grangemouth to 70,000 metric tons annually, to bring its total ABS capacity there and at Amsterdam, the Netherlands, to 140,000 metric tons. And it is evaluating several sites in western Europe for a third major chemical complex.

Akzo is expanding its international operations. The big Dutch chemicals and fibers producer will build a plant to make chemicals and polyester yarn and fiber in Indonesia, as well as polyester units in Quito, Ecuador, and Camacari, Brazil (in partnership with local companies). And it is making a feasibility study with Iran's national oil company that may lead to a chemical complex in Iran.

A 50-50 joint dye venture in Japan is planned by West Germany's BASF and Japan's Mitsui Toatsu Chemicals. If the two firms are granted permission to form their proposed company, Mitsui Badische Dyes, they will build a plant, scheduled to be on stream in 1976, at Omuta, on Kyushu.

International notes

- Butachimie, a joint venture of Du Pont and France's Rhône-Poulenc, plans to build an \$80 million adiponitrile plant on the Rhine River near Mulhouse, France. Capacity will be 225 million pounds a year when the plant starts up in early 1977.
- Baxter Laboratories has contracted with the Soviet Union to design a \$20 million enzyme plant at Vinnitsa, in the Ukraine. France's Nordon et Cie. will handle construction, to be completed by 1978.

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