

INDUSTRY

The strike of chemical workers is settled at Lederle Laboratories, Pearl River, N.Y., after almost five months. The two-year contract with the International Chemical Workers Union calls for hefty wage increases of 24 cents an hour the first year, 23 cents an hour the second year, plus improved pension and sick pay programs. Lederle, a division of American Cyanamid, and ICWU locked horns for 103 days in 1967.

Phillips Petroleum has joined the movement for imported liquefied natural gas. Like El Paso Natural Gas and others, Phillips sees an acute shortage of the energy material developing (C&EN, Oct. 27, 1969, page 23). Phillips president John M. Houchin says the company has overseas reserves in the North Sea and Africa which might be imported. At present, the company's natural gas and gasoline department is spotting around for potential purchasers with eventual import date in three or four years. The department developed an Alaska-to-Japan LNG project which started up last year.

French glass producer Saint Gobain may sell its majority interest in American Saint Gobain. The Kingsport, Tenn., glass firm has been plagued with poor earnings over the past few years, posting profit deficits in both 1967 and 1968. In the first nine months of 1969 it had an earnings loss of about \$1.2 million on sales of \$30 million. Major reasons for the miserable showing are a slowdown in the number of housing starts and stepped-up competition from foreign firms exporting glass to the U.S. Saint Gobain has been pumping money into the U.S. firm but recently informed American Saint Gobain that it "was not in the position to assure a further supply of funds." Saint Gobain is exploring with certain U.S. investors a program for recapitalizing and refinancing the Kingsport firm. The program would involve the sale of all of Saint Gobain's interest in the company.

Polyester may become the dominant tire yarn of the 1970's, according to J. S. Little, of Millhaven Fibers, Ltd., Kingston, Ont. Speaking at the winter meeting of the Akron Rubber Group, he projected that the use of polyester in the U.S. and Canada will surpass that of nylon, current tire cord leader, in about 1973. Nylon owes its current tire cord leadership to the replacement tire market. He stresses that polyester tire yarns are in a relatively early stage of development and that research on the polyester molecule now being conducted will help the fiber gain acceptance for belts and carcasses in radial tires and as belts in bias-belted tires. Standard on most 1970 model cars are tires with polyester carcass and glass fiber belts. Mr. Little says that many in the tire industry believe radial tire design will gain considerable acceptance in the mid-1970's.

FMC Corp. forecasts a gloomy market situation for pesticides in the coming decade. Edward K. Hertel, manager of FMC's Niagara Chemical division, points to high research costs of developing new pesticides and predicts that costs will rise as pesticides meet stiffer government regulations designed to protect the environment. Profits in pesticides have fallen off, he says, and a number of companies have dropped out of pesticide manufacture, with more to follow. Mr. Hertel says that an atmosphere of declining profits always makes capital difficult to attract, and current high interest rates compound the problem. He thinks that the U.S. pesticide industry appears to have met urgent pest control needs of the 1960's, and future products will tend to be specialties.