POLLUTION FICE

CONCENTRATES

Industry/Business

Plant utilization rates improve

There is more good news of improving plant utilization rates in the chemical industry (C&EN, March 6, page 6). According to the Fertilizer Institute, plants for several big-volume farm chemicals were operating at high rates during the last half of last year. Anhydrous ammonia plants were at 92% of capacity, wet process phosphoric acid at 90%, and diammonium phosphate at 84%. And B. F. Goodrich Chemical vice president George A. Fowles says that polyvinyl chloride resin plants will run at an average 92% of capacity this year. This exceeds the 90% rate reached in 1964 and 1969, the only times since 1960 when the decline in PVC prices has been at least temporarily halted.

Outlook for petrochemical feedstock

Petrochemical feedstock demand in this country will grow faster than most other oil demands between now and 1985, according to the Oil Demand Task Group of the National Petroleum Council, an industry advisory body to the Secretary of the Interior. By 1985 feedstock demand will be 2.1 million barrels per day, 8% of total U.S. oil demand of 26 million barrels per day. Feedstock demand in 1970 was 818,000 barrels per day, 5.5% of the 14.7 million barrel-per-day total oil demand. The council predicts that the U.S. will import 57% of its oil by 1985, up from 22% in 1970.

Du Pont expansions

Du Pont is in an expansionist mood. It has decided to go ahead with construction of a grass-roots fluorocarbon intermediate plant at Corpus Christi, Tex. Initial capacity will be 500 million pounds per year. And at New Johnsonville, Tenn., the company has just boosted its titanium dioxide pigment capacity from 110,000 tons to 140,000 tons per year. Further expansion will up capacity another 40% by late 1973.

GM bars dioctyl phthalate

General Motors has asked suppliers of polyvinyl chloride for auto upholstery and interiors to omit dioctyl phthalate (DOP) from their formulations. GM says the move is to cut down on the fogging problem and stresses that it is not related to the recent scare over the possible health effects of phthalate plasticizers. The GM move should not have a major impact on the DOP market as formulators have been moving toward less volatile plasticizers for some years.

Investment in pollution control equipment

Between 1972 and 1975, 137 member companies of the Manufacturing Chemists Association will spend [illegible] for control

49% will be for control of water pollution, 44% for air, and 7% for solid waste. C&EN estimates that the $1.34 billion total will represent about 10% of the companies' total domestic capital spending.

Industry briefs

- Hercules is looking for a 10% increase in after-tax earnings this year and will boost its annual dividend to $1.25 per share from $1.20 last year. First-quarter returns were significantly higher than for the first quarter last year.
- PPG Industries says that 1972 looks "promising." The company's new petrochemical complex in Puerto Rico should be a profit contributor in 1972 after being a drag on earnings during construction and startup.
- Rohm and Haas is predicting substantial sales and earnings gains this year. Development and startup costs should be down and the company's fibers division, which lost more than $6 million last year, should improve.

Government

Nixon's science, technology message . . .

President Nixon's special message to Congress on science and technology is viewed as a "watershed, a new day," by science adviser Edward E. David, Jr., for, among other things, the message sets forth in depth a Presidential commitment on science and technology. "One of the most important features of the message is that it even exists at all," Dr. David says. "Here our ideas and our words have been adopted by the President as his own," he tells C&EN, "and his name at the bottom of it is worth a great deal in terms of using this document as a charter for pulling together science and technology to aid the country the way we want to." Dr. David and the Office of Science and Technology get the key role in seeing that the programs, policies, and initiatives in the message are implemented.

. . . contains some new elements

The message in large measure reiterates and re-emphasizes programs, policies, and initiatives set forth in the President's budget for fiscal 1973 (C&EN, Jan. 31, page 13; March 20, page 24). Even so, some new elements are in the offing, such as an executive order allowing the National Science Foundation to contract with industry for research, a more active patent filing and licensing program for government-owned patents, Presidential prizes for R&D, and a commitment to support of basic research by all federal agencies.

Alaska pipeline impact report

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The Department of Interior last week [illegible] on

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