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The Swiss chemical group Sandoz (Basle) has acquired a majority share in the American firm of Vital Assists (Salt Lake City), specialising in haemodialysis equipment. The latter will continue its work in the field of renal therapeutics, but will also be responsible for the sale in the United States of a certain number of other Sandoz products. (SODT).

## SWISS NOVELTY IN ELECTRONICS

About 1950, cold cathode tubes attained their technical maturity. For many years, they were considered as advanced electronic components; but the appearance of semi-conductors gradually ousted them from their position of supremacy. Recently however there has been a veritable rebirth of cold cathode tubes. Their great stability, insensitivity to overloading and peak voltages, wide range of temperatures, reliability and long life make them ideal for many uses in simple automatic controls and regulating circuits. It is above all miniature welding diodes for printed circuits that triggered the present demand for these components. A specialised Swiss factory at Mannedorf (Zurich) presented a number of high-power switching diodes for welding in printed circuits at the recent Electronic Components Exhibition in Paris. These diodes come in two versions (striking voltage of 200 and 400 V respectively); they make it possible to produce impulse generating sweep circuits of very simple design and are both reliable and economical. Their main fields of use are appliances for lighting natural gas, starters for sodium vapour lamps and other high pressure lamps for lighting roads and sports fields, appliances for electric fencing etc. (SODT).

## INCOME TAX IN SWITZERLAND

Switzerland is one of the countries in which the part played by income tax in the overall fiscal revenue is the biggest. According to the most recent OECD statistics, 42.0 per cent of Switzerland's total fiscal revenue (including social insurance taxes) in 1971 came from income tax and tax on profits. Of all European countries belonging to OECD, the proportion of these taxes was higher only in Denmark (48.2 per cent), Sweden (46.8 per cent), Finland (43.0 per cent) and Luxembourg (41.9 per cent). Great Britain was on a par with Switzerland. On the other hand, the proportion of income tax and tax on profits in the total fiscal revenue was much lower in all other European countries: Netherlands (34.2 per cent), Belgium (32.8 per cent), West Germany (31.3 per cent), Norway (29.4 per cent), Eire (29.1 per cent), Austria (26.0 per cent), Portugal (24.3 per cent), Spain (20.8 per cent), Italy (18.6 per cent), France (15.9 per cent) and Greece (14.1 per cent). (SODT).