

Switzerland's contribution to world chemicals

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Continual Water Inspection Instrument

Rivers, lakes and seas are so polluted by waste waters today that restoring them to their natural state has become a problem of vital importance. Consequently, those responsible for this pollution must now take steps to limit impurities to a permissible level; it is only by continual supervision of waste waters, in particular at the point of discharge itself, that it will be possible to detect dangerous sources of pollution and take the steps needed to return comparatively pure water to the natural environment. It is indispensable therefore to use measuring methods making permanent supervision possible, with minimum human intervention. To solve this problem, a big Swiss industrial firm at Baden has designed and built a new type of hydrometric station, which requires direct supervision by the personnel only at infrequent intervals even if the water is heavily polluted, in the case of sewage for example. The firm's engineers have combined a number of measuring and recording instruments carrying out a continual analysis of the chemical and physical data of the main criteria of water. At the same time, a check is kept on the degree of limpidity (solid matter in suspension content), oxygen content, temperature, pH (measurement of the acidity or alkalinity) and the electric conductivity of the water. Reading the data thus recorded enables a rapid diagnosis to be made of the pollution and the indispensable protective measures to be taken. (SODT)

Switzerland's Contribution to World Chemicals

In the Western world, the chemical industry has some 3.5 million employees. With a labour force of 66,414 in Switzerland, the Swiss chemical industry employs 1.8 per cent of the world's chemical employees, 2.5 per cent if the members of Swiss chemical firms both in Switzerland and other countries are taken into consideration. The output of the Swiss chemical industry and its branches abroad is estimated at 1 per cent of world chemical output. Although this figure may seem only a small part of the whole, a few examples prove quite clearly the dynamism and importance of the Swiss chemical industry in various sectors; for example, in that of medicines, the three Basle firms and their branches abroad together meet 10 per cent of the world's needs. In the field of dye stuffs, sales of the Swiss chemical industry and its companies abroad account for 13 per cent of world sales with regard to value and 8 per cent with regard to quantity. It is also interesting to note that Ciba-Geigy, in Basle and abroad, is first in the world for agricultural chemicals, that Geneva is the international centre for perfume and flavourings, it being estimated that Swiss firms in this field supply one third of all flavourings and perfumes used in the world. The Swiss chemical industry exports 82 per cent of its output and thus comes first in this field among exporting countries, ahead of Belgium (63 per cent), the Netherlands (52 per cent) and Norway (48 per cent). (SODT).