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First Swiss Solar Generators

After a period of laboratory research and development, a firm at La Chaux-de-Fonds (Neuchatel—Switzerland), which specialises in the conversion of solar energy into electricity (photovoltaic conversion), recently displayed the first Swiss industrially produced solar generators at the "Ineltec" exhibition in Basle. These solar generators (sometimes called solar batteries) have an output power of 3 to 12 W at 6 to 12 V, when exposed to full sunshine. The silicon solar cells of which they are composed are fixed on a substratum made of epoxy reinforced with glass-fibre and coated with resin which is particularly resistant to the elements and in particular to ultraviolet radiation. An aluminium frame makes for perfect steadiness. Depending on clients' demands, the Swiss firm can also supply more powerful "systems" of solar generators by grouping a number of standard 6 W or 12 W generators (e.g. for TV relay stations in the mountains, water pumps in the desert, etc.). In this case, the solar generators are usually permanently connected to accumulators so as to keep them charged. These accumulators are designed to supply the required power during periods of insufficient sunshine. The main advantages of these solar generators are that they are absolutely non-polluting (there is no radiation, no release of gas, and no noise), require practically no maintenance (deposits of dust are usually removed by rain), have a long life (they have no mobile parts and undergo no chemical changes) and, finally, are highly reliable. In the field of telecommunication and telemetering equipment out of reach of the normal electricity supply, the use of solar generators becomes almost inevitable if it is wished to avoid transporting fuel for Diesel generators or the periodic changing of chemical batteries.—(SODT)

Swiss Contribution to the Treatment of Denmark's Chemical Wastes

A big Swiss engineering firm, Von Roll Co. Ltd. (Gerlafingen—Solothurn) has just completed a plant in Denmark for the treatment of chemical wastes; it will burn 30,000 tons of chemical and petroleum waste a year, the steam thus produced being used to heat the town of Nybourg. These incineration works form part of the big waste processing centre built by the Danish government on the Island of Fyn. From all over Denmark, chemical and petroleum waste is beginning to come in for treatment at the rate of some 100,000 tons a year, to which should be added other wastes from Sweden, Norway, Germany, Belgium and Great Britain. The cost of running this national plant for the protection of the environment, which costs 12 million dollars to build, will be covered by the charges made to industrialists sending their waste there and by the sale of recycled products.—(SODT)