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Australians may supply uranium

SWITZERLAND'S search for another regular supplier of uranium for its nuclear power plans may soon be over.

Swiss Radio International's Michel Walter reports that Switzerland and Australia have had secret meetings to discuss an agreement that would give Swiss nuclear power plant operators access to Australian uranium.

Switzerland has been looking around for another supplier ever since Canadian authorities blocked uranium deliveries to Switzerland because of "insufficient guarantees" that nuclear material won't be exported to third countries for military purposes.

Australia also has the same

concerns, Michel Walter reports, but its conditions should be less strict and less complicated than those set by Canada.

Australian mining companies have already offered to sell uranium to certain Swiss nuclear plants.

Swiss government officials in Berne say that preliminary talks with the Australians have had good results – but these officials won't say when the real negotiations will begin. A Swiss delegation could leave for Canberra this summer, or even earlier.

Any agreement between the two countries has added interest because Swiss industry is actually at the forefront in prospecting for uranium in Australia.

At the moment the principal

suppliers of uranium to Switzerland are the United States, South Africa, Namibia, Niger and Gabon. Until 1977 Canada was also a supplier, but then the federal government in Ottawa decided to strengthen controls on its export of nuclear material.

The reason for this was India's test in 1974 of an atomic weapon made from the by-products of nuclear material sold by Canada. As a result all of Canada's customers were put on a blacklist until they accepted new stricter conditions set by Canada.

In the case of Switzerland negotiations dragged on and on until, in 1977, Canada blocked all deliveries – including those that had already been paid for.

Finally in 1979, the Swiss accepted certain of Ottawa's



Pierre Aubert... looking for a new source of uranium

demands and a draft agreement was drawn up. But the Swiss government has since refused to ask Parliament to ratify the controversial document. Berne is afraid of the political repercussions and it hopes that Ottawa will one day soften its stand.

Swiss Foreign Minister Pierre Aubert is scheduled to visit Canada soon and it will be seen then if the apparently less severe Australian conditions will influence the Canadian position.

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Sweet results

ACCORDING to a report published by Chocosuisse (Union of Swiss Chocolate Manufacturers), sales of chocolate and other cocoa-based products broke all records in 1980. This big increase is due to a large extent to the growth in exports all over the world.

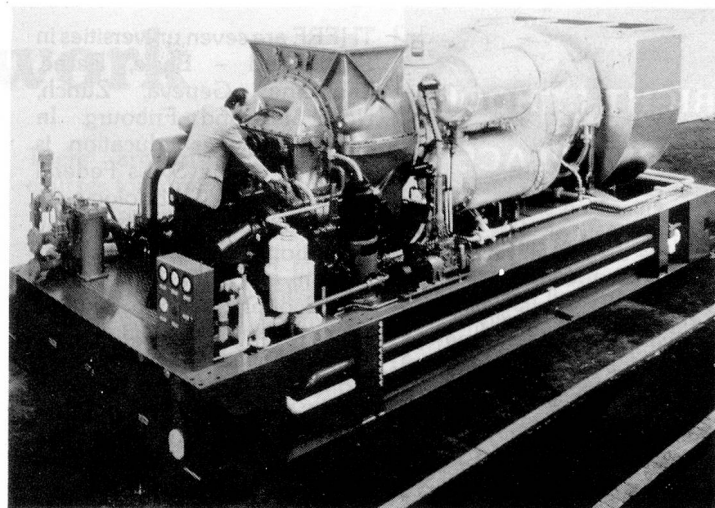
The part played by exports is once again much larger than that played by imports. Consumption per head of the population—taking into account sales of chocolate in frontier regions and to tourists—also increased to a considerable extent.

Heat from the air

A SWISS firm has produced a heat pump with a roof solar energy captor based on the principle of thermal liquid circulating through heat absorbers which remain in permanent contact with the air.

In passing through the absorber the liquid cooled by the heat pump heats up—even if the sun is not shining—by absorbing the heat of the ambient air, as well as rain, frost or snow.

If the temperature of the liquid, and consequently of the absorbing surfaces, is kept sufficiently lower than the temperature of the air, the liquid will “heat up” even when operating below 0° C. The whole system therefore works equally well whether by day or



SWISS engineers Sulzer Brothers are helping to supply power for the rapidly developing Shetland Isles, where the Queen has just opened Europe's biggest oil terminal.

Pictured above is one of two gas turbine generator sets which Sulzers have sold to the North of Scotland Hydro Electric Board for installation at Lerwick, capital of the Shetlands. Value of the contract is around £1.5 million.

Not surprisingly, the turbines are powered by oil.

night.

The great advantage of the roof energy captor lies in the fact that it can capture energy from the environment, even if the sun is not shining, merely from the cold ambient air passing over an even colder roof or facade by sending the special thermal liquid towards the heat pump to be raised to the heating temperature.

Well covered

IN the total annual expenditures of Swiss households, the “insurance” heading is the biggest, since it accounts for nearly 16 per cent of a household's expenditure.

The average amount spent on

insurance per household is: social insurance 4.6 per cent, professional insurance (pension and provident funds) 3.8 per cent, health and accident insurance 3.5 per cent, private

life insurance 1.3 per cent, motor insurance 1 per cent, other personal insurances 0.9 per cent, property insurance 0.4 per cent, and other insurances 0.1 per cent.

The tendency of the Swiss to take out insurances to cover every contingency is shown by the fact that in 1979 the premiums paid per head of the population averaged as much as Sfr. 1,460. According to the most recent estimates, Switzerland comes an easy first in international statistics in this field.

Mr Dennis Frost

MR Dennis Gordon Frost, assistant manager at the Swiss Bank Corporation, London, has died at the age of 51.

Mr Frost, who joined the bank in 1946, had many friends among the Swiss community in the United Kingdom.

He leaves a widow, Sheila, and son, Tony.



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