

Canadian Companies In ASEAN



Polysar's headquarters and plant in Sarnia, Ontario. A drawing of this plant graced the back of the Canadian \$10 bill until 1986.

Asian Headquarters for Polysar

The world's largest manufacturer of synthetic rubber and latex, Polysar Ltd., a C\$2-billion Canadian-based international petrochemical company, opened a regional headquarters in Singapore last November.

Polysar's Japan, Hong Kong and Australia operations will now report to the Singapore office. By the end of this year, it is expected that the Singapore operation will include a laboratory and employ 40 people.

\$100 m annual sales

Polysar has been doing business in the region for 35 years resulting in annual sales of \$100-million.

Commented Michael Hicks, Polysar's Vice President, Asia Pacific Region, "We felt the time had come to increase our presence in the area. We need better regional technical services, a lab and more local distribution facilities."

On choosing Singapore as the site for the new office and laboratory, Mr. Hicks noted, "The applied chemistry of

synthetic rubber is the same as for natural rubber. In Singapore we have access to a ready-made supply of trained rubber technologists."

While the company's primary production centres are in Canada, the United States and Europe, for many years Polysar has been actively and successfully pursuing markets in Asia and the Pacific.

Polysar looks to this region as its "third geography" for future development and is determined to capitalize on its successes in the area.

According to Mr. Hicks, by locating next door to the world's largest producer of natural rubber, Polysar intends to investigate producing blends of natural and synthetic rubbers.

Said Mr. Hicks, "Contrary to what many people think, natural rubber and synthetic rubber are complementary products not competitive ones."

He added that it is impossible to have a world class rubber industry without using both kinds of rubber.

"Malaysia now recognizes this and is

determined to become the centre of the world's rubber industry. The country has even removed its tariffs on synthetic rubber."

The Singapore laboratory will provide technical support to customers and specialize in application development instead of original research.

"We will use existing materials and develop new uses for them, including adapting our products to better suit tropical conditions," said Mr. Hicks.

Since its 1942 formation in Sarnia Ontario, Polysar has expanded its operations to almost every corner of the world. With plants and offices in 15 countries, the company employs more than 6,500 people worldwide.

Polysar sells its products in over 95 countries and now markets products and derivatives that have more than 40,000 applications. These are used in industries such as automobile manufacturing, construction, engineering, mining, textiles, packaging, agriculture and medicine.