

Japanese investment powers Canadian production of super-batteries for a huge market

MOLI ENERGY

Backed by an investment of some \$70 million in research and development, including \$13 million in plant equipment, a Japanese-owned plant in British Columbia has commenced production of a revolutionary new rechargeable battery for compact high-technology equipment.

B.C. Premier Mike Harcourt threw the switch at ceremonies marking the launch of production at the Moli Energy Plant in Maple Ridge on February 2. Also on hand were Hajime Sasaki, Executive Vice-President of NEC Corporation, and Kazuo Sato, Senior Managing Director of Mitsui and Company who made the trip from Japan to be present at the opening.

Moli Energy is a privately-owned corporation in which NEC Corporation and Mitsui are majority shareholders. At its state-of-the-art facility at Maple Ridge, the company is manufacturing MOLICELL™ rechargeable batteries, the first lithium-ion batteries to be produced in North America.

Initially the plant will serve the Japanese and North American markets — to which test shipments have already begun. Eventually it will export to the entire Asia-Pacific region including China, and also to Europe.

Speaking at the opening ceremonies, B.C. Premier Mike Harcourt said: "This production facility is a working symbol of the message I have been taking to Pacific Rim countries. British Columbia is a great place to invest, and is the gateway to the North American market."

Based on technology originally developed at the University of British Columbia, MOLICELL™ batteries are designed to power laptop, notebook and sub-notebook computers, personal digital organizers and personal data terminals. Other applications include cellular and portable telephones and mobile radios, as well as mini-compact disc players and video camcorders. Environmentally friendly, the batteries contain no cadmium, lead or

mercury and yield twice the energy by weight of nickel cadmium and nickel hydride rechargeable batteries.

include development of basic materials, optimizing of cell chemistry, and cell development and evaluation.

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Initial production at Maple Ridge will run at 30,000 cells per month. This will rise to 300,000 cells per month within eight months, at which time the plant will be operating three shifts daily. Moli expects production to rise to 1.5 million cells per month by mid-1996.

A full-spectrum plant, the Moli facility includes research and development, product design engineering and engineering groups. The company's R&D activities

The global market for rechargeable energy systems is already immense, and Vic Seki, president of Moli Energy, projects a bright future for the company. "Until now, battery development has lagged behind the electronic industry," he says. "The new MOLICELL™ will provide manufacturers with a lighter, more powerful rechargeable battery for their products."