

~~10/10/81~~ / File Arsenic

AMERICAN METAL MARKET

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Boliden Force Majeure: Arsenic Trioxide Crunch

By GEORGE COLLIE

NEW YORK—Boliden Metall AB, the Swedish metals producer, declared force majeure yesterday on all shipments of metals due to a strike at the company's operations in Sweden, an action that is expected to cause an immediate shortage of arsenic trioxide in the United States.

Boliden is a major supplier to the domestic market of arsenic trioxide and also ships copper, lead, zinc, arsenic metal, selenium and precious metals through Leonard J. Buck & Co. Inc. of Morristown, N.J., which is 50 percent-owned by a Boliden subsidiary in Switzerland.

There currently is a worldwide shortage of arsenic trioxide, which is used in wood preservatives and pesticides, and the only domestic producer, Asarco Inc., here, is operating an allocation system for its customers and cannot take additional orders.

Leonard Buck, president of Leonard J. Buck said the company did not keep stocks of arsenic material and that most shipments to United States customers from Boliden were based on long-term contracts and were delivered direct to customers. He would not reveal what proportion of the domestic market was held by the Swedish producer.

Asarco raised its prices for arsenic metal and trioxide recently. The company's new prices are \$915 per ton for trioxide in drums, up 12 per-

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Boliden Sets Force Majeure

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cent from \$815 a ton; \$685 a ton for bulk quantities up 8 percent from \$635 a ton. The trioxide prices became effective March 6. The price of arsenic metal was also raised April 21 to \$3.15 per pound up from \$3 per pound.

Louis Fitzgerald, manager of by-product sales at Asarco, said that the force majeure by Boliden could cause a "massive shortfall" of arsenic trioxide. He said that there was virtually no merchant material available and Asarco continued to operate an allocation system.

Arsenic is recovered as a by-product of copper production and the major producing countries apart from the United States are Sweden, France and Mexico.

A strike in May last year in Sweden similarly disrupted shipments to the domestic market. According to the Bureau of Mines, Sweden accounted for some 26 percent of imports last year, with Mexico supplying 38 percent and France 31 percent.

