

TOUR REPORT

8th International Scientific Tobacco Scientists' Conference
of CORESTA

Vienna, 7-12 October 1984

There was a good attendance of nearly 600 representatives from around 50 countries. It was hosted most effectively by Austria Tabak, who celebrate this year their 200th anniversary. The cost must have been very high; I wondered whether financial support came from the Austrian Government.

Erhard Rittershaus and Dr Seehofer gave the opening address to the Conference, "Modern Aspects of Research and Production in the Cigarette Industry". It was well received.

Philip Morris are clearly the most powerful member of Coresta. They unashamedly press to get representatives on all task forces and study groups, as well as on the Scientific Commission and the Council. They must see Coresta as strategically important to their worldwide operations.

We have the possibility, if we so wish, of getting Dr J Hollweg of BATCF elected to the Scientific Commission next year. It would require a concerted effort by all our Operating Companies who have voting rights, plus some lobbying of other companies, eg Imperial.

In apparent contrast to the last major Conference (Manilla 1980) the quality of most of the papers presented was good. Several on the fundamental aspects of cigarette tissue left me with the feeling that we must be more active scientifically than we are - especially in respect of sidestream reduction.

Despite the launch of BARCLAYS in Germany, there was no sign throughout the Conference (formal session or informal talk) of any hostility towards BAT or the brand. This was confirmed by Erhard Rittershaus, Dr Seehofer and Dr Artho [ex Chairman of the Swiss Association and now adviser to BAT(Suisse)].

Overall, I had the impression of a desire for unity within the tobacco industry; and of guarded optimism for the future.

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Austria Tabak

I visited, with Erhard Rittershaus, the factory at Hainburg to see the ARL reconstituted sheet plant and the secondary production.

The ARL plant has been in commercial operation for 3 years, supplying the needs of Austria Tabak (15 bn cigarettes per year). It is highly automated, with a total staff of 14 to cover two shifts, 4½ days a week. (In fact I saw only one operator during some 20 minutes at the plant.)

The product was said to have a higher filling power than any other sheet, with superior smoking properties. Certainly I found the straight sheet to be smokable - almost mild - in contrast to other reconstituted sheets I have tried.

Austria Tobaks are selling the plant in conjunction with Patent Machinebouw BV of Eindhoven. The first has been sold to Rothmans, South Africa and will come on stream next March.

I shall recommend that PP&D/GR&DC get updated on both the process and the product.

The cigarette factory was impressive. The bright and airy building (recently made a Listed Building) has been re-equipped with five units of 2 Mark 9V's linked via Oscar to a GDY 1. The building is now only half occupied - and is quite the smartest factory I have seen to date. The average unit efficiency of the machine groups was said to exceed 90% on a consistent basis - albeit manufacturing only three 80mm brands.

Reentsma Nitrogen Expansion Process

Mr P Herbert, Production Manager of Reentsma, told me that the plant is now in full operation - but is only 50% optimised.

Surprisingly, he said that there have been no problems relating to the extremely high pressure of 800 atmospheres - only the fact that few people have the experience or confidence to operate such plant.

Nicotine and sugar losses were said to be virtually zero. The overall capital and running costs were said to be comparable to that of DIET and G 13 at a scale of 1000+ kilos per hour.

Dr Herbert, who was 11 years with HAG on decaffeinated coffee, thought that Reentsma had been premature in trying to licence the process two years ago. He thinks it will still require some years to get it optimised - but it is already profitable for Reentsma. It does not, of course, follow that it would be the obvious choice for a company to operate under licence .

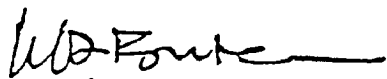
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US Tobacco

Dr R Manning, Research Director of US Tobacco, told me that both the DHSS and the UK Committee on Carcinogenicity were very active in their assessment of smokeless tobacco in general, and Skoll Bandits in particular. Only last week further written evidence was submitted on carcinogenicity, their earlier negative (ie, good) Ames test results having been dismissed as 'not proving anything'. The Committee is currently consulting with experts in Sweden and the US, including the Smokeless Tobacco Research Council in New York. Dr Manning believes that smokeless tobacco will be given a rough ride in the UK.

RJR Research & Development

Dr R E Morse, Director of Research, confirmed that they have strengthened their research on Biology of smoke, Aerosol Physics and Psychology. Dr Wally Hayes, a toxicologist, has been recruited to head-up the much expanded Biological Group. He has been put on the Board of RJR.



L C F BLACKMAN

16 October 1984

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