

alumina plant & bauxite mine under study

The Costa Rican government announced that it has awarded two separate contracts to a Norwegian consulting firm, North Consult, and to a Rumanian consultant company, Metaron, for feasibility studies for a smelter plant in Moin, Puerto Limón, and the extraction of bauxite in San Isidro respectively.

Two North American companies, Martin Marietta Aluminium of Bethesda, Maryland, and the Aluminium Company of America (ALCOA), of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, had previously undertaken a joint feasibility study for the installation of a smelter plant, estimated to cost a total \$616 million.

The proximity of dock facilities, presently under construction by the Refinadora Costarricense de Petroleo (RECOPE), will facilitate the export of ingots, or, if bauxite is not mined in Costa Rica, raw material for the plant will be imported from Aruba, Surinam, Gran Cayman and other Caribbean islands.

In November, 1976, the Costa Rican Development Corporation (CODDESA) signed an agreement with the Instituto Inmobiliario Italiano and the Banco Central de Costa Rica for the financing of a smelter plant in Limón. The cost of the plant then was estimated at \$52.2 million to be jointly funded by the Instituto Mobiliario Italiano (85o/o) and the Banco Central

(15o/o). The Italian firm, Tecno Engineering Hunter, which is part owner (30o/o) with CONDESA of the company Aluminios de Centroamerica S.A. (ALUCASA), was contracted to install the plant.

Bauxite Extraction Said Unfeasible

At the same time, Costa Rica has signed a contract with Metaron, a Rumania-based company, for a feasibility study to determine bauxite reserves and extraction in San Isidro.

An earlier study by ALCOA and North Consult on the possibility of mining bauxite in the same area concluded that the project was economically unfeasible given the low percentage of alumina content—26o/o—found in the deposits tested.

The latest bauxite study is scheduled for completion this month while the Norwegian plant study results should be available in May.

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