

Carpet company

tries export market

By BILL WHITE LAW
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With 25 carpet mills in Canada, it's important to get into the export market, says Gerry Blanke, distribution manager of Constellation Carpets, a division of Peeters Ltd.

And that's exactly what the company is doing as it now exports carpet to Australia and England. That's in addition to Canada-wide distribution for its products.

Through Simpson Sears, Eatons and Hudson Bay stores and company warehouses in Belleville, Mississauga and Calgary, Blanke says the country is pretty well covered.

Although it does not have a factory outlet, the company's products are available at several businesses locally.

Constellation has been in Belleville for 10 years although some people may remember the factory, located at the intersection of Dundas Street East and

Haig Road as Chromalloy, said Jean McGhee, personal manager.

"We're still really a baby," she said. "Lots of people don't even realize that we're here."

Mrs. McGhee explained that the company has undergone another name change with the addition of "a division of Peeters Ltd." Constellation merged with Peeters, another carpet manufacturer, in 1976 although it wasn't made public until last year. With the merger came a

change in ownership. Previously owned by the Canada Gypsum Co., Constellation and Peter Peeters are now subsidiaries of Hollytex Ltd. which in turn is a subsidiary of U.S. Gypsum.

Granby, Que., is the site of another factory owned by the company. It carries out the first step in carpet manufacturing - tufting. The tufted carpet is then sent to Belleville for finishing. While the Belleville plant used to finish carpets for other

manufacturers, it now works solely with the Granby operation. A constant flow of newly-tufted carpet from Quebec keeps the Belleville workers busy.

The finishing process carried on at the Belleville plant involves dyeing the carpet, installing the jute or foam backing and preparing it for shipping and storage.

Blanke explained that Peeters cater mostly to the export and domestic market and larger orders. Constellation is mainly responsible for Ontario and western Canada, he added.

The peak period of the carpet industry ties in with those of the construction and lumber industries, explained Mrs. McGhee.

"The increase in interest rates and the subsequent rise in mortgages have affected our business but we're hoping 1981 will be a better year," she said.

Inflation too has taken its bite.

"The cost of raw materials is up. It's very competitive right now but we're try to keep our prices to the public as low as possible," said Mrs. McGhee.

Over 500 hundred color variations are available in several styles of Saxony carpet from Peeters and Constellation. Saxony, the new trade name for shag, can be scrolled sculptured or plain.

Mrs. McGhee expressed disappointment that people are not taking advantage of the groups tours offered at the factory. Tours are available during the working week.

"The quality of our carpets has really been upgraded even though there is still a lot of business in the lower priced lines," she said. "We are really proud of our products."