

Winchester closing will change their lives

BY SUSAN EDWARDS

Winchester Canada in Cobourg is closing at the beginning of the new year. The assembly and manufacture of guns, rifles and ammunition presently employs about 300 people in a town of 11,000.

"The prospect of being unemployed bothers you," said a woman employee who asked not to be identified, "because you don't know what's next."

The employee, a woman in her early twenties, works in the ammunition plant assembling and packing .22 calibre bullets. She has worked for Winchester in both the firearms and the ammunition factories for five years.

"You don't know how many shifts you'll be on," she said. "Right now I'm in a car pool with some people who work here and my babysitter knows my schedule."

She lives with her husband and young child in a hamlet near Cobourg. They have their own home and have a small loan to pay.

"There are going to be a lot of us out there looking for work," she said. "Chances may not be that good of getting something right away. You put your name in a few places and wait and see."

Winchester Canada is the second biggest employer in Cobourg. According to the town's figures for 1977, General Foods Ltd. employs 925 people, United Tire, 230, General Electric, 210, and General Wire and Cable around 200. There are a number of smaller factories with work forces of less than 100.

The employee said that she will be looking for a job in a plant after Winchester closes. She likes working in a factory,

she said. "The pay is better. You come to work, do your job, leave and you don't have to think about it."

Although she has received her notice -- along with 46 other employees who will be leaving November 23 -- she has not actively searched for work because there is a possibility that the manufacturing business may be purchased by another company.

According to Norman Cant, the director of operations for Winchester Canada, a company, so far unnamed, has offered to help finance a deal which would include the participation of both management and workers. A similar arrangement was made with the employees of Pioneer Saws in Peterborough a few years ago when it was scheduled to close.

Ever since the Winchester

management announced on August 21 that the manufacturing and assembly plants would be phased out, Cant has been looking for a new owner.

At the time of the announcement, Cant said that the company had three options to investigate for the disposal of the physical facilities. The first, he said, would be to find a group which would be interested in purchasing the business as an on-going concern. "We want to sell the plant with the equipment and the existing labor force."

The second, he said was to sell the plant, the machinery and the expertise of the employees to a metal-wood industry.

The third option which he mentioned was to sell the company's assets, the buildings which consist of two plans, one with 122,000 square feet and the second of 12,000 square feet, the equipment and the 63 acres of land, 32 of which are serviced, as separate parcels.

However, in August, Cant said that the management "was not ready to take that direction yet."

It is November and he is still negotiating to sell the business.

Cant has a vested interest in finding a company to purchase the firearm business. As soon as he winds up the affairs of Winchester Canada sometime towards the end of February, he too will be looking for work.

Cant who is fiftyish and has a house and family in Cobourg said, "I'm energetically seeking a new owner because that is the way I'm going to remain em-

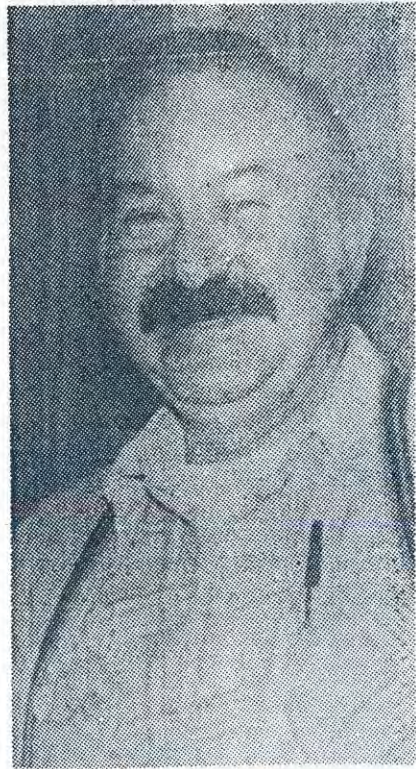
rifles throughout the price spectrum.

The operation in Cobourg produces the lower priced Coey range of firearms which, Cant said, no longer fits into the future of the Winchester Group.

Cant went on to say that because the lower priced firearms are being discontinued in the United States as well as in Canada, there is room in the American plants to make the Winchester rifles and guns which are presently assembled in Cobourg.



Allan Jeffers



Joe Leduc

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Cobourg Daily Star



COBOURG, ONTARIO

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 1979

20 CENTS

Cobourg





director John Taylor has set up supermarket type checkouts, including one labelled "for eight items or less."

In the photo Deanne McFadden looks over one wall of sale pictures.

Winchester Canada sometime towards the end of February, he too will be looking for work.

Cant who is fiftyish and has a house and family in Cobourg said, "I'm energetically seeking a new owner because that is the way I'm going to remain employed." He added immediately, "I firmly believe that this business could make a go of it."

His statement is not just wishful thinking. The H.W. Cooley Machine and Arms Company operated in Cobourg from 1929, the year it moved from Toronto, to 1961, when the Olin Corporation bought it and placed it under the supervision of the Winchester Group, whose head office is located in New Haven Connecticut.

In fact New Haven is the place where the decision to close the manufacturing and assembly plants of Winchester Canada originate. The sales and distribution offices will remain open.

The Winchester Group is one of five within the multi-national Olin Corporation, whose head office is in Stamford Connecticut. Apart from the Winchester Group which produces fire-arms, ammunition and components for military, industrial and recreational use, the Olin Corporation also owns chemical, paper, home, ski and water businesses in 23 countries around the world.

According to Cant, each group within the Olin Corporation, including the Winchester group, operated as a separate entity and must "stand on its own feet."

Winchester however, has not been standing firmly for a while. Duncan Barnes, a spokesperson for the Winchester Group in New Haven, said that the company has not shown a profit for several years.

He said that the group's losses were one of the reasons that Olin's third quarter profit for 1979 dropped to \$10.8 million from \$18.3 million in 1978. He said that the gains in the other groups covered the losses in Winchester.

The poor profit record of the Winchester Group, Cant said, resulted in a study in early 1978 of its world-wide operation in order to learn "what the company was doing wrong and what it was doing right."

The report, Cant continued, recommended that the group concentrate on manufacturing the higher-priced recreational firearms rather than guns and

Joe Leduc

The parent company's decision to specialize, Cant said, also fit with the fact that the assembly division of Winchester Canada became unprofitable when the Canadian dollar started to decline.

He said Winchester which was a net importer of goods was losing 14 to 17 per cent on the dollar whenever a shipment of parts for the Cobourg plant crossed the border and each time Winchester Canada transferred money to the Winchester Group in New Haven.

Consequently, in August, Winchester Canada announced that "production would be phased out in an orderly manner over the next few months."

One woman employee remembers that Tuesday afternoon. She said that they had heard a lot of rumors beforehand. "We thought the place had been sold and they -- the management -- had not told us. When we heard that it was going to close down we said 'That's it!'"

Joe Leduc, a shipper, and the vice-president of the International Association of Machinists, local 788 had also heard rumors before the announcement. He thought that there would be layoffs and cut-backs, but not that the business would be closed down.

He said that he was shocked when he heard the announcement. "Then after about two weeks I became disappointed. Disappointed because it seems that a multi-national corporation has come into this country, taken what it wanted and pulled out. When the company fell onto hard times in Canada, it left."

Continued on page 2



"Gentleman of the Court"

See page 17

County to meet

There will be a meeting of County Council on Thursday, November 22 at 10 a.m.

The Warden's banquet this year will be held on November 28 at the Cobourg Legion hall.

Veterans

The veterans Remembrance

may reduce requirements

Thursday that the requirement of 1,200 floor space needed

a house in the s in his opinion, too id that with cost of erials and the price

township.

He said that he had discussed the matter with a builder and had been told the 960 square feet "fit with the cut of the lumber."

Councillor Henry De Jong recommended that the mem-

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Perhaps, Leduc is luckier than most of the 207 people who presently work in the plants. As he sits on the union committee, he will remain on the job until the end of the year.

Nevertheless, he will be out of work in January and despite an array of working experience which includes waiting on tables in a cocktail lounge, driving an

ambulance, guarding prisoners and working in a garage, the 51-year-old, Leduc thinks that he will have a hard time finding work. "It's tougher now to get a job," he said. "My age will be a problem."

Leduc has not started to look for another job yet as he has not been given his notice -- Winchester is giving 12 weeks notice to every employee -- and he said

it would be unethical to look for work until he has received it.

Although he owns his own house outright and does not owe any money, Leduc doubts that he would be able to manage on less than his present pay cheque. "I don't think I live extravagantly or have a high lifestyle," he said, adding, "I live on the lean now."

"I would take a job within a 25-mile radius of my house, he continued. "I don't want to move. I have worked all my life for the home I have now."

Winchester is trying to help Leduc and others find work. Allan Jeffers, the director of administration and personnel, said that the company has joined forces with Employment and Immigration Canada, and together they have organized two committees, one for salaried and one for hourly-rated employees to place people in new jobs. The committees are staffed by two members of the group concerned, two people from management and the chairman of the program, Mr. Clifford Cadd, an outsider with no interest other than to help.

Jeffers said that the employees are asked to complete a questionnaire listing their skills and interests. Then Cadd, he continued, "goes out and pounds on doors."

The company is also holding outplacement seminars for managers, technologists, and supervisors, who, too, will soon be out of work.

Jeffers explained that the seminars are conducted by a representative from Olin. Their purpose, he went on, is to put people in the right frame of mind to find a new position, through self-analysis and evaluation, resume and letter preparation and recruitment and interview plans.

Finally, Winchester has taken the management from other local industries on a tour through the two plants to show them the variety and types of skills which their employees possess, Jeffers said.

Jeffers is concerned about the problems the employees will face while looking for work. In the new year, he will be facing them too.

Although Jeffers, who is 40,

married and has two children and a house to support does not want to be unemployed, he said that he was not frightened by the prospect. "I'm going to be as positive as possible, he said. "I will move if a good career opportunity develops. I'm not closing the doors to any job."

It has been the union, the International Association of Machinists, local 788, which has been actively seeking support from all levels of government for any company which purchases the firearm business from Winchester Canada.

Ben Burd, the president of the union, and the union committee has talked with Alan Lawrence, the federal minister for corporate and consumer relations and Larry Grossman, the provincial minister for industry, trade and tourism. Both promised unspecified aid to the company which offers to purchase the firearm business.

Burd and his committee have also approached the Cobourg town council to ask for a 50 per cent reduction in municipal taxes for the first year or years to the company which purchases the business. Members of the

council said that they thought the proposal had merit and that they would discuss it further.

In spite of the efforts of management to find a buyer and the union to round up government support for it, the business remains unsold and the company is starting to wind down its operations.

Thirty-six people will be laid off on November 10 and 47 on November 23. By the end of December, all 207 plant employees will be out of work as well as about 30 of the office staff.

In Cobourg with retail sales of approximately \$50 million a year, Winchester's annual payroll of \$3.5 million will be missed; however, probably not as sorely as the individual pay cheques.

"I'm working now and getting a paycheque," said one woman employee. "When I don't have my pay cheque, then I will know what it is like."

"Right now, when I go shopping, I don't worry about prices," she continued. "When I am through here, I will have to think about them."



Dear Abby

Wasn't a Party To His Birthday

DEAR ABBY: My husband recently had a birthday. His ex-wife and children invited him over for dinner and a birthday celebration. I was excluded. He accepted and I was left alone for the evening.

I believe that what he did was inconsiderate and unfair to me. He could have invited his children over to celebrate his birthday with us, or arranged to do something with them at another time.

What do you think?

I am going to arrange my funeral with another undertaker, but what do I tell my husband? He'll be astonished that I didn't take my business to his friend.

SERIOUS IN CONN.

DEAR SERIOUS: Don't tell your husband anything. Simply leave instructions with your lawyer, physician, clergyman and a few close relatives. You may outlive your husband AND the mortician. Or decide on

Noon stocks

Alcan	-43 -43%
Bank of Montreal	21 5/8 -21%
Bank of Nova Scotia	21 1/2 -21%
Bell Canada	197/8 -20
Brascan "A"	21 1/2 -21%

NEW ROMANTIC COMEDY-DRAMA



"This movie contains what may well be the year's funniest sequence." TIME MAGAZINE

...uly magnificent looking young woman ...ed Bo Derek...tums out to be ...st as funny as Dudley Moore." NEW YORK TIMES

"Riotous." NEWSWEEK