

Actonian loses \$8,000 deal, U.S. foreign policy cause

By MAGGIE HANNAH
Herald Special
A small Canadian company has run afoul of Canadian export regulations dating back to the Second World War which prohibits the shipment of certain items to Cuba.

As a result, Vector Holdings Ltd. vice-president Anthony Smith, an Acton resident, claims his company has lost an \$8,000 sale and wound up with freight and storage charges which can't be recovered even if another buyer can be found.

The Mississauga firm purchased an electrical discharge machine for a United Nations Educational Scientific Cultural Organization

(UNESCO) contract after winning a tender early last year.

The machine was purchased from Brodhead-Garrett of Cleveland, Illinois, a company for which Vector acts as agents in Eastern Canada. Vector prepaid the cost of the machine and the shipping but after it arrived they learned the ministry of industry, trade and commerce would not issue a permit to ship the item to Cuba.

Until a recent visit from Canada Customs, prompted by a ministry request, the company was unaware that an export permit is needed to ship goods to countries other than the United States, Mr. Smith said. They had simply followed shipping directions from UNESCO.

A spokesman for UNESCO in Ottawa, told the Thomson News Service Tuesday, he is appalled at the government action.

The firm wholesales and distributes machinery, hand tools and educational instruction equipment to the federal government, educational institutions and foreign countries through UNESCO.

At the time of their visit a customs audit showed the company made an honest mistake and was unaware that a permit is required to ship goods to Cuba. No one warned them that there would be any difficulty in getting a permit to ship to Cuba, Mr. Smith said.

The company now has the machine in stock and very little possibility of selling it since it is relatively expensive and could only be used in such places as trade schools or community colleges.

An electrical discharge machine is used to make precision cuts of any type or design in any metal through a highly technical process. Since this is a training machine only and is much smaller than a production machine, Mr. Smith said it couldn't be used to manufacture anything.

"I suppose it could be used," he said, "but it's so small it would be very slow and very expensive and the company trying to use it would go broke."

The export control list includes high technology items such as computer equipment, strategic goods such as metals and minerals used for armaments, and nuclear-related goods. It also includes goods of U.S. origin.

Mr. Smith's machine is blocked on two counts. It is a high technology item and it was made in the United States.

The only way he could circumvent the permit problem would be to take the machine apart and replace portions of it with Canadian manufactured parts. He is reluctant to do this because he feels this is simply playing games with the law to get around a technicality.

Mr. Smith said Halton MP

Otto Jelinek has promised to look into his problem when he is returned to Ottawa but in the meantime he is disturbed because it appears that "Ottawa hasn't the guts to stand up to Washington."

Since Canadians are not forbidden to trade with Cuba he interprets the embargo as intervention in Canadian politics by American politicians.

Ministry spokesman Howard Wilson says the fact the machine originated in the U.S. means Ottawa would automatically seek American permission before issuing the permit just as a matter of courtesy. Since the U.S. and Cuba aren't trading the permit would be denied.

More oil may exist in Halton

Herald Special
The Ontario government has no interest in developing Halton's potential energy sources, according to a spokesman for the ministry of natural resources.

Bob Heyward of the petroleum resources branch, said last week there "very well could be" amounts of natural gas remaining in pockets in the area, but the ministry is plugging existing wells which have been abandoned and left to deteriorate.

Any new discoveries will result from exploration by private industry.

Halton gas and oil wells resulted from exploration more than 50 years ago by Tony Seynuck, a Ukrainian-immigrant who settled in Acton prior to 1920. He sold his company, Anthony Gas and Oil Explorations, to Amtex of London, Ontario, in the mid-1960s.

The company became more interested in water purification than energy and allowed leases to lapse. When it went into bankruptcy several years ago, the crown notified land-owners the wells must either be put into production or plugged.

A number of the wells were in production for 20 years or more, Mr. Heyward said, but due to low pressure they are no longer commercially viable.

The ministry offered the wells to farmers for a nominal sum so that farmers would take them on for their own personal use. Only one person has done so, he says, and as a result the ministry is now the process of plugging the remaining wells.

Mr. Heyward said there were 12 to 15 wells originally. Although there was a trace of oil in one or two, it was never worth putting into production and therefore they were only seen as gas wells.

All wells are 1,000 to 1,900 feet deep and tap into the Trenton formation, which has produced prolific wells in Essex, Kent and Lambton counties.

Since the ministry requires owners to plug wells when they are no longer in use at a cost of \$5,000 there have been no really serious inquiries about Halton's wells to date.

"There have been a couple of nibbles," Mr. Heyward said, "people who checked over the leases. But it's a bit complicated legally and so far they are only looking at it from a distance."

"Maybe in light of the energy situation Halton's sources could become more important. Present circumstances are forcing a redefining and re-evaluating of our sources. It will all depend on economics, whether there are sufficient reserves to justify the expense of putting them into production."

A well under Ontario Hydro's proposed 500 KV Bruce to Milton transmission corridor will not be re-opened under any circumstances, Mr. Heyward added.

"It wouldn't be safe," he said. "We couldn't allow a well to be drilled within 20 feet of the corridor. I believe the well in the corridor is dormant and if it isn't, we'll still have to plug it to let the corridor go through."

Resident is killed in car crash

A Brampton man has been charged with careless driving following an accident last week in which a Georgetown woman was killed.

Marjorie Matheson, 62, of Georgetown was killed when her car collided with a car driven by David Timbers, 67, of Brampton. The accident occurred February 12 at about 11:45 p.m. Mr. Timbers received minor injuries.

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