

Africa-bound doctor's shelter relied on local technology



Alfred Neumann, president and general manager of Condecor Products of Acton, stands alongside a house his company built using special insulation techniques. Now bound for Africa, the house will provide comfortable quarters for a mission doctor in Tanzania and both the Tanzanian government and the Canadian High Commission are interested in seeing similar, easily-built, relatively inexpensive structures more widely used in the country.

(Herald photo)

By CHRIS AAGAARD
Herald Staff Writer

An insect-resistant, super-insulated house built by a Halton Hills company will find a permanent location near the east coast of Tanzania in Africa by early summer.

Joining a number of other Canadian firms, Condecor Products Ltd. of Acton is supporting an unusual mission project co-ordinated by the Precious Blood Fathers and Brothers and the Roman Catholic diocese of Toronto.

Insulation research and fuel conservation-minded housing designs worked out at the Condecor centre, about three miles west of Acton, have created a lightweight, easy-to-build doctor's quarters for the mission which can withstand temperature extremes between 40 degrees and 120 degrees Fahrenheit.

Much of the technology which built the house, Condecor general manager Alfred Neumann told The Herald Monday, was developed to withstand Canada's drastic climate variations. A special wooden "dome" built at the Condecor centre uses the same type of rigid urethane insulation which shrouds the building destined for Africa.

The experimental dome consumes barely 25 cents of electricity per day to maintain its eight-foot by 12-foot interior temperature at 65 degrees (F). Although the doctor's residence is built with steel support struts as a precaution against termites and is considerably larger (20 by 30 feet) Mr. Neumann expects that it should remain comfortable with minimal heating and air-conditioning.

The tongue and groove locking of the 3 inch thick urethane sandwiches (developed under a Condecor license by Georgetown's Con-

serve Cover Products Ltd.) prevents air leakages around the house, keeping cool air inside during hot weather and cold air out in the winter.

Under Tanzanian winter conditions, Mr. Neumann said all that the house's residents would need for heat would be a small 1000-watt heater.

Complete with a bedroom, living room, kitchen facilities and a cold storage room for medicine and food, the house is easy to build and light enough to transport without much trouble. Mission officials, like Toronto-based Precious Blood order's Brother Anthony, hope that the doctor's house experiment will grow to house other villages near the mission.

"We chose this house be-

cause it's quite suitable for our needs," Brother Anthony said. "It's light, keeps out insects and requires minimal building skills from the local population."

Eventually, the order hopes that, through arrangements between the Canadian High Commission and the Tanzanian government, the entire building process, including making the insulating urethane slabs, can be done in Tanzania.

But, for the moment, the house's ability to keep its residents comfortable will be closely documented before either government get actively involved with the project.

"It's a giant step forward for these people living in mud huts," Brother Anthony said, adding that the building

would be erected in the Kunduchi mission near the capital sometime in July and is being readied for shipment this week.

In an area plagued by acute water shortages, the Precious Blood order and its group of young adult volunteers will have constructed 47 watermill pumps by the end of the year. The doctor's residence will join two schools built by the mission since 1976.

Though still a prototype bound for an arid African climate, Mr. Neumann said the Condecor building's construction is equally adaptable to Canadian demands with few modifications. The building's lightweight makes it mobile and its low heating demand promises uses in the mining industry or with the Armed Forces.

Free legal aid

Lawyer David Craig of the Halton Hills Community Legal Aid Clinic brings his expertise to the Georgetown public library April 8 between 7 and 9 p.m. for a free legal aid session.

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Hotel rescue earns award for Bill Cunningham

Continued from Page 1
couldn't see for the smoke but Mr. Crichton appeared through the smoke carrying the unconscious Mrs. Herrington.

Her hand, side and stomach had been badly burned and at first Constable Cunningham thought she was



BILL CUNNINGHAM

dead. When they got her out into the hall and fresher air, she began to revive.

No one was certain whether she was alone in the room although they couldn't find anyone else. Constable Cunningham went back into the room with a fire extinguisher and tried to put out the fire himself but the smoke forced him out.

He was treated at Georgetown and District Memorial Hospital for smoke inhalation and suffered a "tremendous headache", but Mrs. Herrington was in hospital for a lengthy period.

The fire is assumed to have started as a result of smoking in bed, P.C. Cunningham said.

Nearby crash kills area man

A 22-year old Oakville man died Sunday when the car he was driving hit a tree on Derry Road south of Georgetown.

Christopher Etherington drove onto the East shoulder of the Ninth Line south of Derry Road and crossed over the roadway, hitting a tree on the west side.

A passenger, 20-year old Karen Dob of Bramalea, received minor injuries.