

Electronic backgammon a fraud

Conman makes off with \$135,000 in gold

by Sandy MacDonald

If you believe that the era of the con man ended with Henry Gondorf and Johnny Hooker, then a recent sting of 8000 Canadians, including some local residents, might awaken you to the realities of modern crime. A dapper, chain-smoking 'entrepreneur', operating out of a west-end Montreal office, is suspected of absconding with half a million dollars obtained through falsely advertising a non-existent electronic game in a number of major Canadian dailies.

"I've never seen such a clean operation", said Detective Sergeant Gilles Gagnon of the Montreal Police commercial fraud section. After a month-long investigation, the police have drawn this view of the Danworth Sales caper together.

A month after opening a west-end office, an out of town businessman, purportedly in the electronics industry, set about establishing a set of credit ratings. He first went to the registry office at the Montreal Court House and after declaring that he was a "businessman . . . intending (to sell) electronic components", he was given a duly approved document endorsing his credibility.

He then had a mock-up of the electronic game made at a metal firm, explaining that he was initiating an advertising campaign and could not wait for the prototype to arrive from Japan. Taking the hollow simulated computer to an advertising agency, he then invested five thousand dollars for a professional looking newspaper presentation and a respectable credit rating, so important for the success of the scam.

As a last step in his preparations, he opened an account at the Toronto Dominion Bank at a branch, not coincidentally, that had no security surveillance cameras.

The first ads appeared in the Montreal dailies during the last week of October and the order forms and the money came rolling in for the Christmas rush. Having run the ad in the **Montreal Gazette**, the Danworth Company used the added credibility to advertise in other newspapers, including the **Dalhousie Gazette**.

On the 25th of October, the **Dalhousie Gazette** received a solicitation from a Brian S. Gould of the Danworth Electronics Company to run an advertisement for a product called the Danworth Twin-challenger, an electronic back-

gammon chess game.

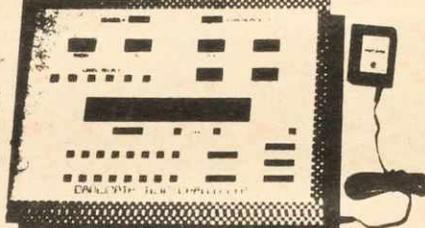
In the accompanying letter, he outlined details of the design of the advertisement, and then enclosed a list of credit references, which impressively included the **Montreal Gazette**; **WPTZ Television** in Plattsburgh, New York; **IBM Canada**; and the **Toronto Dominion Bank**.

After checking with Youthstream, a national ad agency for student press in Canada, the **Gazette**, finding no irregularities, opted to run the ad. The Danworth ad received two full page ads in color, and the firm was billed immediately. To this date no money has been received for these ads.

"He was a nice enough guy, but a little weird", said secretary Janet McIntosh. He rarely left the office, ate hot dogs constantly, and "wore surgical gloves so as not to get his hands dirty while handling order forms".

The schiester, using the alias Brian Gould, left Montreal about November 26 taking \$135,000 in gold coins and possibly heading for Taiwan, investigators believe. Somewhat in awe, one of the investigating detectives said: "This is as close as a criminal can come to committing the perfect crime".

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Michelin in for Battle

Labour prepares to fight Bill

by Paul Clark

On December 28, when the Buchanan government passed the controversial "Michelin Bill", labour representatives left Province House gloomily

chanting "shame, shame, shame," but they promised that they would fight back.

They proved true to their word last Tuesday morning at the Credit Union Building as

the Nova Scotia Federation of Labour (NSFL) announced a "long term program to promote an understanding and repulsion of the Michelin Bill."

Gerald Yetman, president of the NSFL, said the organization's ultimate aim is to bring down the Buchanan government for "disregarding the fundamental rights and freedoms of workers in the province of Nova Scotia." He said when the government takes away the democratic rights of one segment of the population, it should be of concern to all citizens.

The program includes:

- Having all labour representatives on provincial government boards and agencies to resign immediately.
- Advising all labour representatives not to meet with the Buchanan government while it remains in office.
- Forming a "defence fund" to finance the program.
- Using this fund to begin publishing a labour newspaper with a circulation of about 100,000 to "be the voice of the worker in Nova Scotia".
- Taking unspecified economic sanctions against Michelin Tire and employers aligned with them.

Yetman has since said that while labour representatives on more than twelve government boards will be resigning immediately, representatives on the Labour Relations Board and three other judicial boards will stay on.

The "Michelin Bill" refers to Bill 98, an amendment to the Trade Union Act which was passed in the House by a vote of 26 to 16 on December 28.

The amendment, which is generally thought to be aimed at the Michelin Tire plants in Granton and Bridgewater, makes it impossible for "interdependent manufacturing plants" to form unions separately, but requires they form one bargaining unit.

Kell Antoft, of the Institute of Public Affairs at Dal and chairman of the joint Labour-Management Committee, said he doubted whether the NSFL's actions would be effective in making the government change its mind.

He said, however, that labour was "highly upset" with the bill and saw no other alternative but to demonstrate their "profound dissatisfaction" with it.

Antoft said the legislation had no precedent in other provinces or countries where judicial tribunals or labour relations boards decide appropriate bargaining units. The Labour-Management Committee rejected the first draft of the Michelin Bill, he said, and the Labour Relations Board last fall rejected the proposal that the Granton and Bridgewater plants be included in one bargaining unit.

"So the government has reversed a judicial tribunal", he said.

Dr. Michael Cross, vice-president of the Dalhousie

Faculty Association (DFA), said, due to its affiliation with the Canadian Association of University Teachers, the DFA could not join the NSFL and be directly involved in the fight against the bill.

But he said "unhappiness" had been expressed at the DFA's last meeting and that action would probably be discussed at their next general meeting.

Reg Fenerty, a business representative for the local of operating engineers at Dal, said the operating engineers were protesting the government's action through the NSFL, of which they are members.

Prior to the bill being passed, they prepared newsletters, had a postcard campaign and gave donations to different funds opposing the legislation, he said.

Andrew MacKay, vice-president of Dal, said the administration had not taken a stand on this issue.

"The university as an institution represents a great diversity of interests and it would be unusual for the university to take any kind of a stand", he said.

Graham Wells, vice-president of Dal's Student Union, said if council wished to take a stand on the Michelin Bill, "it would certainly be within their prerogative".

He said, however, that he wouldn't be the one to suggest it be brought up at a council meeting.

