

MAR 28 1947

Russ Explosive Experts Had Run of RDX Plant

Montreal, March 27 (CP).—A former Munitions and Supply Department official testified in King's Bench court today that in the summer of 1944, on instructions from his superior, he had taken two members of a Soviet technical mission through the RDX plant of St. Maurice Chemicals Limited.

Nothing deliberately was hidden from the Russians, who took copious notes, the testimony continued.

It was given by Kenneth Heward Cheetham of Lansing, Ont., a chemist who was assistant to the director of the explosives research and development division of the department.

He was testifying before a French-speaking jury as a defense witness in the conspiracy trial of Dr. Raymond Boyer, Montreal scientist accused of having conspired to communicate information unlawfully to Russia.

Signed In at Plant

Mr. Cheetham identified his own signature, and those of the Russians he said he had accompanied, in the guest book of the Lac a la Tortue, Que., plant under date of Aug. 8, 1944. The Russian names signed were B. Fomin and P. Solodov.

In a "thorough" visit through the plant, lasting a minimum of two hours, Mrs. Cheetham testified, the Russians had been started on their tour in the section where the raw materials arrived and taken right through the reaction and the working up of the final product.

The Russians had asked "plenty" of questions. They had been answered each time.

Explosives Experts

"Were the Russians familiar with such matters?" Mr. Cheetham was

asked by Marc Drouin, KC, of defense counsel.

"Yes, they were both explosives experts."

Both had taken notes on the questions they asked; the answers they received and their impression of the plant.

"The questions were about the manufacture of RDX."

Mr. Drouin: "The new method or the old?"

Mr. Cheetham: "The new method."

The questions had been answered by the representative at the plant of Allied War Supplies Corporation and by an official who was either manager or assistant manager.

Asked to describe in brief what information was given the Russians, Mr. Cheetham mentioned "the names of ingredients," "proportions of ingredients," and "rates of addition to reaction vessels."

He added that the Russians could have taken the temperature of reaction from the reaction vessels "and I think they did."

"They were taking notes all the time."

The witness said he did not recall whether the Russians had taken a sample of the product. They could have had one and it would not have been refused them, he said.

Mr. Cheetham testified that on the train back from the plant to Montreal the Russians still talked about RDX with him part of the time.

They had taken out their notes in order to fill any gaps by questioning him.

Visit Officially Arranged

Cross-examined by special federal prosecutor F. Philippe Brais, KC, the witness said the plant management had been informed before-

hand officially by Allied War Supplies Corporation of the visit.

Mr. Cheetham said the visit was arranged by official sources and was not in any way clandestine.

He had testified that his instructions to accompany the Russians had come verbally from Dr. James Hamilton Ross, his superior.

Mr. Justice Wilfrid Lazure, presiding over the trial, asked Mr. Cheetham whether it was the same Dr. Ross who directed explosives research at McGill University for the National Research Council. Witness said it was.

The court then asked if Dr. Boyer was aware that the visit was being made. Mr. Cheetham said he did not think so.

Earlier, Dr. George F. Wright, chemistry professor at the University of Toronto, testified that the new ingredient in the method developed in Canada for mass production of RDX was named in a book published in May, 1943.

199-842-033

149
WAR
EUROPEAN
1939
WEAPONS
BOMB
ATOMIC
CANADA
SPYING
TRIALS
BOYER