



MEN FACING ARMS EXPORT CHARGES

The probability that we may fail in the struggle ought not to deter us from the support of a cause we believe to be just.
— Abraham Lincoln.

Fifth man on export count

N.T. NEWS 20/9/76

A fifth man was charged in the Magistrate's Court this morning in connection with exporting firearms to "a foreign country."

John Tomlinson, a public servant, of Fannie Bay, pleaded not guilty to aiding and abetting.

A Crown prosecutor, Mr John Peluso, said Tomlinson was arrested by Customs officers last Thursday

He said the Crown intended to prefer further charges against the other four men.

These were in relation to the exportation of a large quantity of medical preparations.

(On Friday, Robert Wesley-Smith, James Zantis, Harold Morris and "Manny" Mavromatis were charged with exporting firearms from Australia. Evidence was given that the arms comprised four shotguns).

Mr Bob Kimber, for Tomlinson, successfully applied to have the charge heard separately.

The Chief Magistrate, Mr Kirkman, remanded Tomlinson to October 29 and allowed bail of \$1000 in his own recognisance with one surety of \$1000.

Four men, including the master of a 48ft fishing boat, were charged in Darwin Magistrate's Court this morning with exporting firearms and ammunition.

A Crown prosecutor, Mr John Peluso, said four shotguns were involved.

He said admissions made by the master indicated that the boat was proceeding under charter to a foreign country.

Those charged under Section 233 of the Customs Act are Robert Wesley-Smith, of Woods St, Darwin, James Sydney Zantis, of Bondi, NSW, Harold Clifford Norris, of Deniliquin, NSW, and the master of the vessel, Manuel Mavromatis, of Arnhem Street, Wagaman.

Mr Peluso said the Crown would be alleging that the vessel Dawn, owned by Mr Mavromatis, was seen by Customs leaving the Port of Darwin last night.

The boat was approached and ordered to stop. It was then boarded by Customs officers who found the four guns and a quantity of ammunition.

"Admissions subsequently made by the master indicate that the vessel was proceeding under charter to a foreign country," Mr Peluso said.

"No passports were found on the vessel.

"It will also be alleged that the master did not obtain a Customs clearance prior to leaving the port."

Mr Peluso said the Crown would be seeking a three-week adjournment.

Mr John Waters, who appeared for the four men, said the matter would be proceeding on a not guilty basis.

He said the offence was "something of a farcical nature."

The Crown had stated that two of the defendants had no fixed address in an apparent attempt to portray them as shady, shiftless characters.

One of them, Mr Morris, owned and ran a farming property near Deniliquin in NSW.

Mr Waters said Mr Wesley-Smith was employed by the Agricultural branch of the Department of Northern Territory and was very well-known and respected in Darwin.

Mr Mavromatis had lived in Darwin for 10 years and was supporting a wife and six children.

His vessel, the Dawn, was valued at \$50,000.

The Chief Magistrate, Mr Kirkman, remanded the four to October 15.

He allowed Zantis and Morris bail of \$1000 cash each.

Mavromatis was granted bail of \$1000 in his own recognisance with one surety in the same amount.

The question of Wesley-Smith's bail was stood over to later this afternoon.

When bad men combine, the good must associate; else they will fall out one by one, an unpitied sacrifice, in a contemptible struggle.

— Edmund Burke.

SOCIAL

Customs had seized a VW Kombi van owned by the Regional Council for Social Development in Darwin it was claimed today.

A social planner at the council, Mr John Tomlinson, said this morning the van was impounded last night.

He said that when he approached Customs, they refused to give him a notice of seizure.

On Monday, Mr Tomlinson was charged in the Magistrate's Court with aiding and abetting the

PLANNER SAYS

VAN SEIZED 22/9/76

export of four firearms to "a foreign country".

He pleaded not guilty and was remanded on bail to October 29.

Asked to comment this morning, the Deputy Controller of Customs, Mr Murray Smith, said he had not been able to pin down the actual section which had impounded the van.

However, he believed it was one in which Mr Roy Neil was in charge.

Mr Neil, he said was "responsible only to Canberra".

Mr Smith added that the only person who could make Press statements was the controller himself Mr Noel Balzani, who was en route to Gove.

Mr John Peluso, who appeared for the Crown in Monday's court hearing, said the Crown Law office had not been told the council's van had been seized.