

TEXTRON ACQUIRES ALSTOM GEARS

Textron Inc. has announced the recent acquisition of U.K.-based Alstom Gears, part of Alstom, a leading supplier of components, systems and services to the world's energy and transportation infrastructure markets. Alstom Gears is a manufacturer of gears and gearboxes, including high-speed epicyclic and parallel shaft gearboxes, for the industrial, rail and marine industries. The acquisition will be fully integrated into Textron's power transmission products business, part of the company's fluid and power systems group. For the fiscal year-ended March 1999, Alstom Gear's revenues were approximately \$10 million. Terms of the transaction were not disclosed.

"Textron's acquisition of Alstom Gears further strengthens our power transmission capabilities, adding a range of technologically advanced gearbox systems to our existing product brands, including David Brown, Cone Drive and Textron Industrial Gears," said Textron Fluid and Power Systems president Bob Geckle. "Furthermore, the acquisition establishes a multiyear preferred supplier agreement for Textron with Alstom for power transmission products."

EUROPEAN PATENT OFFICE RULES ON GLEASON'S PHOENIX PATENT

In July, 1999, the Opposition Division of the European Patent Office, based in Munich, Germany, upheld in modified form The Gleason Works' European patent No. 0-374-139. The patent, which continues to cover CNC multi-axis gear generating machines and processes that produce some of the most complex gears in use today, was challenged by two competitors of The Gleason Works. The decision can be appealed.

The Gleason Works also owns a corresponding United States patent, No. 4,981,402, which is the subject of patent infringement litigation filed in U.S. federal court by The Gleason Works against Oerlikon Geartec AG and Liebherr-America, Inc. In that suit, The Gleason Works seeks damages and a permanent injunction preventing the defendants from selling or using any infringing

machine in the United States during the remaining life of the patent, which expires in 2008.

David J. Burns, president and chief operating officer of Gleason Corporation, stated that "We are extremely pleased by this ruling in the European Patent Office. The Gleason Works remains adamant that our basic Phoenix technology, which embodies the subject matter of the patent challenged in Munich and the corresponding U.S. patent, is technology that remains proprietary to our company. We are gratified that the Opposition Division of the EPO recognized the validity of our patent."

In a response to the ruling and the patent infringement suit, Oerlikon Geartec AG has issued the following statement:

"On July 7th, 1999, the European Patent Office (EPO), after rejecting 117 original patent claims of the European Patent Application of 0-374-107 filed by The Gleason Works, confirmed the patentability of 8 patent claims of limited scope. The Klingelnberg-Oerlikon bevel and hypoid gear cutting machines C22 and C28 do not infringe the remaining claims. Nonetheless, we will appeal this decision on the basis of prior art published many years ago by Professor Segal, who has been our technical advisor for some years.

"The decision of the EPO reducing the scope of protection in the European Patent Application also increases (bodes well for) our chances of successfully defending the patent infringement litigation concerning U.S. Patent 4,981,402 filed by The Gleason Works in a Federal District Court in the United States. We are pleased by the success and acceptance of our C22 and C28 around the world." ◉

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