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Muscletech Research & Development Inc., Re

IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES' CREDITORS ARRANGEMENT ACT, R.S.C. 1985, c. C-36, AS
AMENDED AND IN THE MATTER OF MUSCLETECH RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT INC. AND THOSE
ENTITIES LISTED ON SCHEDULE "A" HERETO

Ontario Superior Court of Justice [Commercial List]

Farley J.

Heard: February 6, 2006
Judgment: February 6, 2006
Docket: 06-CL-6241

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Counsel: J.A. Carfagnini, Caterina Costa, Tom Ringe for Applicants

Derrick Tay for Iovate Companies, DIP Lender, Gardiner personally

Jay Swartz, Natasha MacParland for Monitor

Steven Golick for Zurich Insurance Company

Jeffrey Carhart, A. Sambasivan, Bill Baldiga, Stephen Smith for Ad Hoc Committee of the Muscletech Tort Claimants

David Rothwell, Jere Smith for Plaintiffs, Jaramillo

Subject: Civil Practice and Procedure; Insolvency

Bankruptcy and insolvency --- Practice and procedure in courts --- Stay of proceedings

Creditors of company proceeding under Companies' Creditors Arrangement Act obtained initial protective order on January 18, 2006 — U.S. creditor had trial against company scheduled for April 3, 2006 in New Mexico — Canadian creditors brought motion to extend protective stay for three months — U.S. creditor raised concern that filing under Act was stall designed to defeat its looming trial date — Motion granted — Exercise of discretion to grant stay was warranted under circumstance — Abundant evidence supported view that creditors were proceeding in good faith and due diligence towards resolution under Act — Significant progress was made since initial order with respect to mechanics concerning global resolution — Any party, including U.S. creditor, could employ comeback clause provision

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of initial order and request termination of stay prior to end of proposed three-month extension — Award of pre-judgment interest was sufficient compensation to creditor not included as person affected by plan presented by creditors under Act for any delay caused by imposition of stay, should its action against company ultimately proceed and be successful.

Cases considered by Farley J.:

Campeau v. Olympia & York Developments Ltd. (1992), 14 C.B.R. (3d) 303, 14 C.P.C. (3d) 339, 1992 CarswellOnt 185 (Ont. Gen. Div.) — followed

Grace Canada Inc., Re (2005), 2005 CarswellOnt 6648 (Ont. S.C.J. [Commercial List]) — followed

Sierra Club of Canada v. Canada (Minister of Finance) (2002), 2002 SCC 41, 2002 CarswellNat 822, 2002 CarswellNat 823, (sub nom. *Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd. v. Sierra Club of Canada*) 211 D.L.R. (4th) 193, (sub nom. *Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd. v. Sierra Club of Canada*) 18 C.P.R. (4th) 1, 44 C.E.L.R. (N.S.) 161, 287 N.R. 203, 20 C.P.C. (5th) 1, 40 Admin. L.R. (3d) 1, (sub nom. *Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd. v. Sierra Club of Canada*) 93 C.R.R. (2d) 219, 223 F.T.R. 137 (note), [2002] 2 S.C.R. 522 (S.C.C.) — followed

Statutes considered by Farley J.:

Companies' Creditors Arrangement Act, R.S.C. 1985, c. C-36

Generally — considered

MOTION by creditors to extend stay of proceedings.

Farley J.:

1 This endorsement should be read in conjunction with my endorsement of January 18, 2006.

2 The essential aspects of the motion before me today were for an extension of the stay of proceedings to March 15, 2006, the sealing of the unredacted version of the Monitor's Second Report and recognition the U.S. Protective Orders. Allow me to deal with the two non-contentious aspects. Firstly, I note that there has been minimal redaction of the Monitor's Second Report as to sensitive commercial financial information, all in accordance with the principles *Sierra Club of Canada v. Canada (Minister of Finance)* (2002), 211 D.L.R. (4th) 193 (S.C.C.). The draft order contemplates a sealing of the unredacted version pending further order of the court; thus any interested person could apply to the court for an unsealing on proper grounds. The unredacted version may be made available to any party which executes a suitable confidentiality/non-disclosure agreement. Similarly, with respect to the recognition of the U.S. Protective Orders, this makes common sense and is in general accord with the principles of *Sierra Club of Canada*.

3 That leaves the question of the extension of the protective stay to March 15, 2006. Let me observe that all the parties represented before me today, except for counsel for the Jaramillos, were supportive of this request. Those supportive indicated that very significant progress had been made since the January 18, 2006 Initial Order with respect to the mechanics concerning a global resolution and as to initial discussions concerning substance; in contrast, the Jaramillos were concerned that this CCAA filing was designed to derail their trial scheduled for April 3, 2006 in New Mexico. In defence of the attitude of the Jaramillos in this regard, I would observe that I can understand their frustration and suspicion that, vis-à-vis them, the CCAA filing was a ploy and/or a stall designed to defeat a looming trial date. If that were shown to be the case, then this (Canadian) court would not tolerate such tactical game playing. However, I am satisfied on the evidence before me (and as supported by the other parties represented here today,

including the Monitor, being an officer of the court — appointed by the court, with special responsibilities to the court, including neutrality as to all stakeholders (including the Jaramillos)) that the CCAA applicants have been proceeding in good faith with due diligence towards a CCAA resolution (and with the timetable addressed in the material having to be met demonstrating that they are presently proceeding in good faith and with due diligence) that it would be appropriate in these circumstances to extend the stay to March 15, 2006. I pause to note that at any time and from time to time any interested person may employ the comeback clause provision of the Initial Order and in this regard the Jaramillos (or others) are perfectly at liberty to request that the stay be terminated even before the March 15, 2006 date. One would ordinarily assume that that use of the comeback clause would be triggered by some adverse happening or negative result; however, the comeback clause is not so restricted.

4 Allegations by the Jaramillos of bad faith as to *past activities* have been made against the CCAA applicants and the Gardiner interests. However, the question of good faith is with respect to how these parties are conducting themselves in *these CCAA proceedings*.

5 It was suggested by U.S. counsel for the Jaramillos (I would observe that US counsel were variously present in the courtroom as shown in the list of counsel) that the CCAA applicants were attempting to pit this (Canadian) court off against the U.S. court (this would include Judge Rakoff's court and the court in New Mexico). I would observe that this court has a long tradition of comity and cooperation with the courts of the U.S. and it will not engage in such an activity. As discussed in Judge Rakoff's hearing transcript of January 25, 2006, he would be calling me and I would confirm that he and I had a very pleasant and productive discussion as to coordination and cooperation — and we will continue with that liaison and endeavour. I know that he is waiting to see how this hearing in Canada goes, before dealing with the matter in New York on February 9.

6 In that regard, and as I pointed out, I have absolutely no difficulty with the element of Judge Rakoff having to be satisfied as to the appropriateness of how to deal with the Jaramillo litigation in New Mexico. It will be up to him to assess whether that litigation should be carved out, as to which see his previous consideration in this regard. I advised counsel (and Mr. Ringe specifically acknowledged) that they would have to be up to speed re the New Mexico case if Judge Rakoff did not find favour with the process as presently contemplated.

7 In that regard, I would also advise that I impressed upon all parties/counsel that they would have to continue with the lightning (choice of that word being that of one supportive counsel) progress that had been made to date. I found it very helpful to have the Monitor's interim report as to transactions affecting the CCAA applicants with related parties. That report will have to be finalized forthwith, including all aspects of "reviewable transactions". I was advised by the Monitor that the CCAA applicants and the other Gardiner entities plus Mr. Gardiner personally recognized the importance of this and that the Monitor was receiving full cooperation and candour in this respect. I am certain that the Supplemental Objection to Motion For Temporary Restraining Order and Preliminary Injunction (headed up with the style of proceedings in the CCAA matter, but clearly addressed to the U.S. court) of the Jaramillos will be of assistance in allowing the Monitor to give special attention to the concerns addressed there. Originally, it was thought that the final report could be completed by February 15, 2006, but with the additional workload forthcoming, it was suggested that February 22, 2006 would be a more manageable date. I would therefore expect a draft interim report by February 15, 2006 to demonstrate that real progress is being made in this regard. Given the future dates in question, it would be better to consider February 22, 2006 as an outside date and better to provide same earlier.

8 I understand that later this week the Ad Hoc Committee will be requesting a representation and ancillary order incorporating a joint funding agreement. [Note: as this is being typed up February 8th, I would note that I have just granted such an order.]

9 I would reiterate my observations in *Grace Canada Inc., Re*, [2005] O.J. No. 4868 (Ont. S.C.J. [Commercial List]) at paragraph 5 and 11:

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5. It would seem to me that the various class proceedings would benefit from cooperation and coordination — using the 3 Cs of the Commercial List (communication, cooperation and common sense). Otherwise, they will be faced with the practical problem of fighting amongst themselves as to a turf war and running the risk of being divided and therefore susceptible to being conquered.

11. It would seem to me that the insolvency adjudicative proceedings would, at least under presently anticipated circumstances, result in a more effective efficient process than would a full-blown class action proceeding.

10 As well, it is helpful to recall what Blair J. (as he then was) said concerning CCAA stays of proceedings against third parties in *Campeau v. Olympia & York Developments Ltd.* (1992), 14 C.B.R. (3d) 303 (Ont. Gen. Div.) at paragraphs 13, 17, 20, 24 and 25:

13. The second motion is by National Bank, which of course opposes the first motion, and which seeks an order staying the Campeau action as against it as well, pending the disposition of the C.C.A.A. proceedings. Counsel submits that the factual substratum of the claim against the bank is dependent entirely on the success of the allegations against the Olympia & York defendants, and that the claim against those defendants is better addressed within the parameters of the C.C.A.A. proceedings. He points out also that if the action were to be taken against the bank alone, his client would be obliged to bring Olympia & York back into the action as third parties in any event.

17. By its formal title the C.C.A.A. is known as "An Act to facilitate compromises and arrangement between companies and their creditors". To ensure the effective nature of such a "facilitative" process it is essential that the debtor company be afforded a respite from the litigious and other rights being exercised by creditors, while it attempts to carry on as a going concern and to negotiate an acceptable corporate restructuring arrangements with such creditors.

20. I agree with those sentiments and would simply add that, in my view, the restraining power extends as well to conduct which could seriously impair the debtor's ability to focus and concentrate its efforts on the business purpose of negotiating the compromise or arrangement.

24. In making these orders, I see no prejudice to the Campeau plaintiffs. The processing of their action is not being precluded, but merely postponed. Their claims may, indeed, be addressed more expeditiously than might have otherwise been the case, as they may be dealt with — at least for the purposes of that proceeding — in the C.C.A.A. proceeding itself. On the other hand, there might be great prejudice to Olympia & York if its attention is diverted from the corporate restructuring process and it is required to expend time and energy in defending an action of the complexity and dimension of this one. While there may not be a great deal of prejudice to National Bank in allowing the action to proceed against it, I am satisfied that there is little likelihood of the action proceeding very far or very effectively unless and until Olympia & York — whose alleged misdeeds are the real focal point of the attack on both sets of defendants — is able to participate.

25. In addition to the foregoing, I have considered the following factors in the exercise of my discretion:

1. Counsel for the plaintiffs argued that the Campeau claim must be dealt with, either in the action or in the C.C.A.A. proceedings and that it cannot simply be ignored. I agree. However, in my view, it is more appropriate, and in fact is essential, that the claim be addressed within the parameters of the C.C.A.A. proceedings rather than outside, in order to maintain the integrity of those proceedings. Were it otherwise, the numerous creditors in that mammoth proceeding would have no effective way of assessing the weight to be given to the Campeau claim in determining their approach to the acceptance or rejection of the Olympia & York plan filed under the Act.

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2. In this sense, the Campeau claim — like other secured, undersecured, unsecured, and contingent claims — must be dealt with as part of a "controlled stream" of claims that are being negotiated with a view to facilitating a compromise and arrangement between Olympia & York and its creditors. In weighing "the good management" of the two sets of proceedings — i.e., the action and the C.C.A.A. proceeding — the scales tip in favour of dealing with the Campeau claim in the context of the latter: see *Attorney General v. Arthur Andersen & Co.* (1988), [1989] E.C.C. 224 (C.A.), cited in *Arab Monetary Fund v. Hashim*, supra.

I am aware, when saying this, that in the initial plan of compromise and arrangement filed by the applicants with the court on August 21, 1992, the applicants have chosen to include the Campeau plaintiffs amongst those described as "Persons not Affected by the Plan". This treatment does not change the issues, in my view, as it is up to the applicants to decide how they wish to deal with that group of "creditors" in presenting their plan, and up to the other creditors to decide whether they will accept such treatment. In either case, the matter is being dealt with, as it should be, within the context of the C.C.A.A. proceedings.

3. Pre-judgment interest will compensate the plaintiffs for any delay caused by the imposition of the stays, should the action subsequently proceed and the plaintiffs ultimately be successful.

4. While there may not be great prejudice to National Bank if the action were to continue against it alone and the causes of action asserted against the two groups of defendants are different, the complex factual situation is common to both claims and the damages are the same. The potential of two different inquiries at two different times into those same facts and damages is not something that should be encouraged. Such multiplicity of inquiries should in fact be discouraged, particularly where — as is the case here — the delay occasioned by the stay is relatively short (at least in terms of the speed with which an action like this Campeau action is likely to progress).

11 I am satisfied on a balancing of interests, weighing the benefits and the detriments, that it is appropriate to exercise my discretion to extend the stay. Order is to issue as per my fiat.

12 This endorsement was written over the lunch hour. I directed counsel to have their lunch together usefully discussing how this matter may productively proceed. I then returned to court to give them this endorsement and read it to them. I was advised that counsel (including those for the Jaramillos) had had an open and frank discussion.

Motion granted.

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