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RCMP paid snitch \$80,000

By Marc Edge
Staff Reporter

RCMP paid a civilian agent \$80,000 to finger a Gibsons man on cocaine charges, a judge heard yesterday.

Michael Cahill is facing three counts of trafficking in the drug and one of possession.

RCMP Cpl. Barry Bennett told Vancouver county court Judge Marion Allan that Cahill

came under suspicion as part of a 15-month sting known as Operation Deception.

Bennett said a small-time criminal who has been a paid RCMP agent since 1983 tipped police to Cahill, saying the construction superintendent could provide quantities of cocaine.

For this the agent was paid \$80,000, he admitted in cross-examination.

"He faces a lot of dangers," Bennett said in

justifying the payment. "He leads a lonely life. We pay a lot more on other (cases)."

Bennett said Cahill — who was site supervisor on the Save-On Foods project in Burnaby — fits the profile cocaine dealers are assuming.

"We're finding a target doesn't have to have a criminal background any more to have cocaine, and can in fact be pretty good at it," he said. "They're well-educated. They're nice people." The trial continues.

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