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THE EVENING TIMES-STAR. SAINT JOHN, N. B. SATURDAY, MAY 1, 1926

INQUIRY REVEALS BOYS ASKED MERCY FOR SILK SMUGGLER

Chief Conservative Whip
Seeks Man's Freedom
From Jail in Bribery

DOUBLE DUTY HELD
PENALTY ENOUGH

Release of Liquor Boats
Delved Into at Customs Probe

OTTAWA, April 30.—The name of W. A. Boys, chief Conservative whip and member for North Simcoe, was brought before the customs inquiry committee this afternoon. C. R. Kendall, now sub-collector of customs at Barrie, Ont., and formerly customs examiner at that

place, told of attempts to bribe him made by David Waisberg in the fall of 1922.

"He offered from \$2,000 to \$3,000 a year if I would pass one trunk of silk a week without examination," Mr. Kendall informed the committee.

OFFER REFUSED

He had refused the offer and warned Waisberg not to repeat it. A day or so after he attempted to pass a trunk laden with silk through the customs at Barrie. Mr. Kendall searched the trunk, the contents of which he appraised at approximately \$1,600, and placed Waisberg under arrest.

Waisberg, he said, had told him that he was going too far and that he (Waisberg) would see his solicitor. Following this a member of the legal firm of Boys and Murchison had seen his superior, former Collector of Customs T. F. Young, in regard to the matter. "Which member of the firm came to see Mr. Young?" the witness was asked.

"Mr. Boys," he replied. A number of letters which were exchanged between Mr. Boys and Hon. Jacques Bureau, then Minister of Customs, on behalf of Waisberg, were read to the committee by R. L. Calder, K. C., counsel for the committee.

While admitting the attempted bribe by Waisberg, Mr. Boys informed the minister that this was Waisberg's first offence. He asked that the offender be permitted to go on payment of double duty and sales tax on the goods.

CAPT. LECOUVEE CALLED.
Captain A. L. Lecoupee, master of the customs preventive ship Margaret,

was called to the witness stand and under examination by Mr. Calder told of the seizure of the schooner W. C. Kennedy in Northumberland Straits in June, 1923.

Captain Lecoupee produced the log and chart of his ship to establish the fact that the seizure was within territorial waters.

He was then examined by Mr. Calder on the seizure of the motor boat Jeanne D'Arc, which contained over 100 packages of liquor from St. Pierre to Nassau.

"Would you go to Nassau in a boat like that?" asked Mr. Calder. "I don't know about that, but the boat couldn't possibly get to Nassau running up the Straits of Northumberland."

The witness said that he had reported the locality of the seizure as so many nautical miles from land. Later the question had arisen as to whether he had not measured the distance in land miles. Had he done this the seizure would have taken place about in territorial waters. The captain said he understood the launch seized had been released.

Captain Lecoupee said he firmly believed that this launch had no intention of proceeding to Nassau. The captain of the launch had told him that the liquor was to be landed at Point du Chene.

LIQUOR CARGO SEIZED.

The witness told of having seized the cargo of liquor on the W. C. Kennedy.

"Where did you take this cargo?" he was asked. "To Quebec," was the reply. "On whose instructions?"

"On the instructions of Ottawa." When he got the cargo to Quebec, he had been instructed to carry it back to Halifax and transfer it to the owners. He had done this, transferring the liquor to the schooner Benson White.

It would be easier to prevent smuggling of liquor if all the waters inside of the Cabot Straits, including Northumberland Straits, were declared territorial waters of Canada, said Captain Lecoupee, in answer to a question from Mr. Doucet.

BENEFIT TO FISHERMEN.

Chairman Mercer suggested that for many a year smuggling had been a benefit and a pleasure to the fishermen. Captain Lecoupee admitted that it had always been so in his 20 years of experience. Ships had been cruising round outside the three-mile limit for 30 days at a time.

"It must have been right. There never was a comeback," said Mr. Doucet. "A case where might was right," commented C. W. Bell.

PROHIBITION BLAMED.

Captain Lecoupee said the situation did not become acute until about five years ago. He agreed with Chairman Mercer that it was prohibition which had established liquor warehouses in St. Pierre, Miquelon, and laid the foundation for the present liquor running traffic. In answer to a question, he said that if Nova Scotia and New Brunswick were not dry provinces, his preventive service would have considerably less trouble. "We would be happy."

A. J. Doucet suggested that if the excise was less than ten dollars per

gallon the problem would not be so acute. Captain Lecoupee—"I don't know. We had smugglers when the excise was only \$2.50 a gallon. A reduction in excise might make it cheaper for the importer, but not for the smuggler."

FIGHT COSTS MONEY.

D. M. Kennedy asked if the witness would suggest that Canada should back down and refuse to fight the smugglers.

Captain Lecoupee replied, "We could fight them. But it takes money to fight money. An addition of several cruisers would have to be made to the preventive service."

Answering a question from Mr. Bennett, the witness said that of the ships which he had seized during his term of office he could only remember one that was forfeited to the crown. That was a sloop which sold for \$75.

TERRITORIAL WATERS.

Captain L. A. Demers, Dominion Wreck Commissioner, was called and interpreted as to what waters were considered territorial for the purposes of his investigations. Since 1901 he thought that the whole of the Straits of Northumberland (which were particularly involved in the seizure of the W. C. Kennedy) would be territorial waters. Asked if a seizure 12 miles out would be legal, he said, "Yes."

BOYS LETTERS READ.

Committee Counsel Calder read a series of letters exchanged between W. A. Boys, M.P., for North Simcoe, and Hon. Jacques Bureau, Minister of Customs, in November, 1922. Mr. Boys interceded on behalf of David Waisberg who had attempted to bribe a customs officer. Waisberg had offered

\$50 to the officer and generally employed such "crude efforts" that he was obviously "green to the business," said Mr. Boys. He had been charged double duty on the trunkload of silks he was smuggling in, he had been charged a sales tax and Mr. Boys thought he had been sufficiently punished for a first offense. Further prosecution would be a blow to his family and Mr. Boys suggested that the minister might very well show clemency in this case.

Mr. Bureau sent Mr. Boys a part of the departmental file which, he said, would indicate that Waisberg's offer had been greater than he obviously had admitted to Mr. Boys. There was every indication from reports of customs people in Barrie of an attempt to establish a smuggling ring, and "Waisberg must have been in the ring."

PROSECUTION CALLED OFF.
Mr. Boys then asked that decision be postponed until the following week so that he could discuss the matter with Mr. Bureau during a visit to Ottawa that week-end. The decision apparently took place, and after he returned to Barrie, Mr. Boys wrote to the minister expressing the hope that the local customs collector would be instructed to call off further prosecution.

C. P. Blair, general executive assistant to the department of customs, on the stand, told the committee that he had prepared a recommendation that the goods be released on payment of double duty and sales tax. Mr. Farrow, said the witness, was very anxious that prosecution be proceeded with.

Mr. Farrow, however, had told him that the minister (Hon. Jacques Bureau) intended not to prosecute because of representations made to him by Mr. Boys.

The committee adjourned until Tuesday.

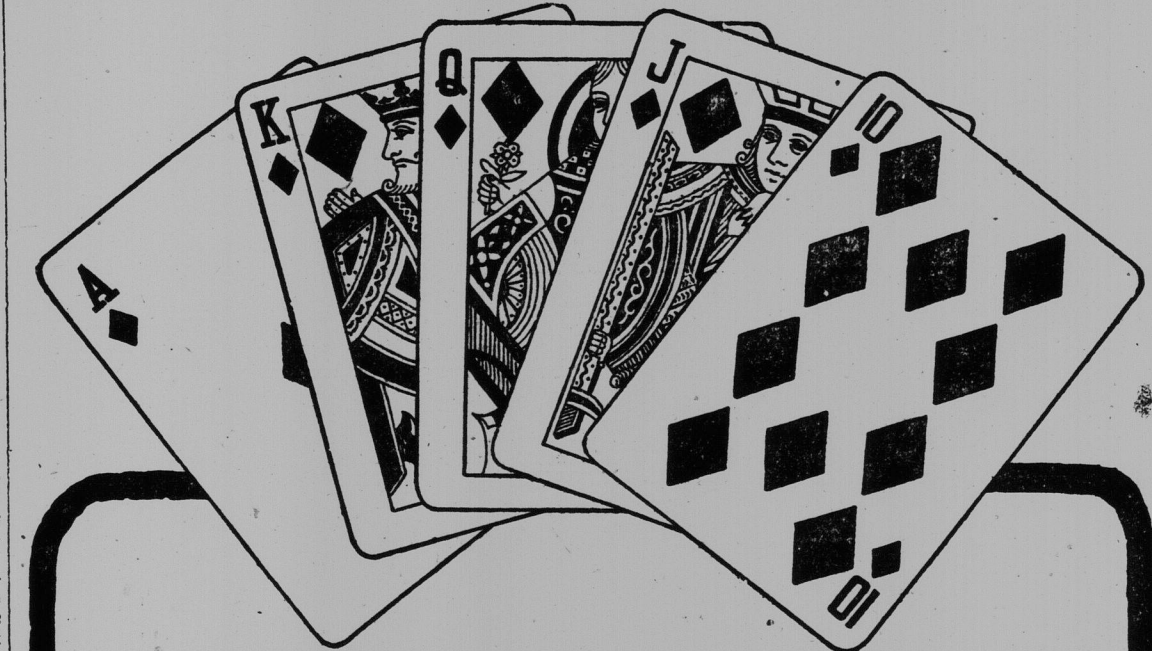
JUNIOR W. A.

The Junior W. A. of the Church of the Good Shepherd, Fairville, held its regular meeting in the church hall yesterday. The superintendent, Mrs.

Gerhard DeGeer, presided. Rev. F. J. LeRoy led the devotional service. Miss Elsie Gorrie gave the scripture reading. The Juniors have been very busy during the past month. Two quilts have been completed and other articles

made. Games were enjoyed. Miss Elsie Gorrie and Miss Jean Armstrong served dainty refreshments.

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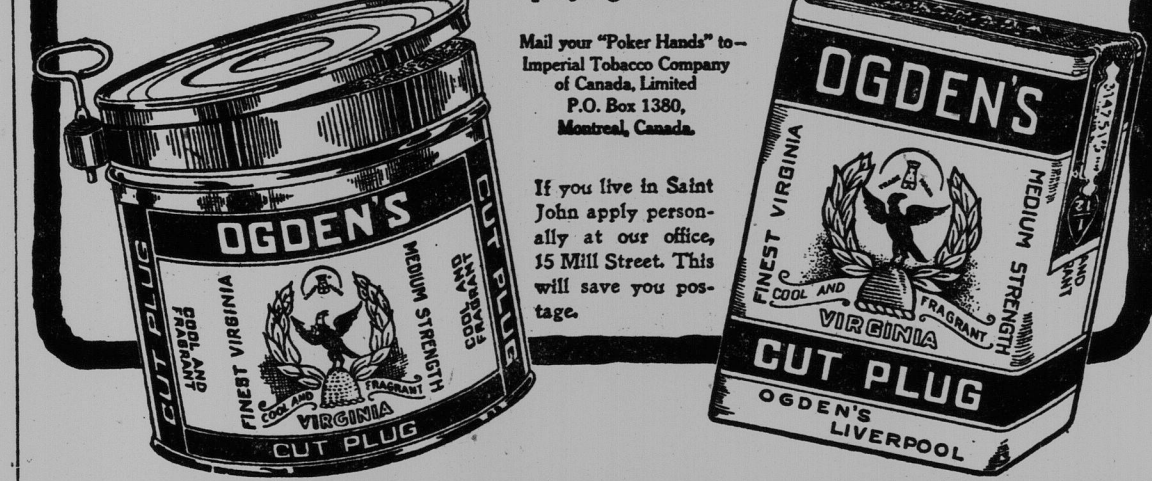


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