

## Notes on Recent Cases

**A**N IMPORTANT investigation which commenced during 1934 and which is generally known as the "Tank Car Conspiracy Case," was recently concluded in the Montreal district.

Preliminary investigations indicated that alcohol was being smuggled into Canada en route to Montreal by means of railway tank-cars, the contraband being disguised as shipments of fuel oil. An examination of tank-cars arriving from points in New Jersey disclosed the fact that a number of the cars in question had been divided into three distinct compartments and later it was found that the centre compartment was used to convey a cheap grade of fuel or commercial oil, while the end compartments contained the alcohol. This method provided a good system of camouflage, since any examination of the contents of such tank-cars would invariably be made via the central dome, located immediately over the compartment containing the oil.

Investigation included a check-up of the firms in the United States who were engaged to do the welding work necessary in placing the compartments in the tank-cars, this after they had been leased from the General American Tank Car Company, and statements were taken from persons who actually did the work. The liquor partitions were also removed and photographed, these later proving invaluable as exhibits. An important factor in establishing that two compartments were used for alcohol was borne out by close examination of the metal partition, those abutting on the alcohol containers showing signs of rust, while those contacting the oil compartments were in a good state of preservation.

The rendezvous of the railway tank-cars under suspicion was traced to a small siding in the vicinity of Dorval on the outskirts of Montreal, where a business was carried on under the name of Eastern Equipment Company.

A search of the premises disclosed large submerged tanks, the tops of which were covered with several inches of cinder ash, and it was necessary that this be cleared whenever shipments were placed in or taken out of the tanks. It would appear that the principals concerned became suspicious while preliminary enquiries were being made and that the contents of the tanks were hastily removed before the containers were actually discovered by the investigators. Members of the search party were lowered into the tanks and, fortunately, were able to secure samples, which, upon analysis, showed distinct alcoholic content. It was also significant that the capacity of the tanks which had obviously been used for storing alcohol, was approximately 2,000 gallons each, and this corresponded almost exactly with the carrying capacity of the railway tank-car compartments which had been used for importing the liquor.

The tanks, also other miscellaneous equipment in the form of empty barrels, large boilers, pump and derrick, were placed under seizure. Upon examining the ground in the vicinity it was found that large quantities of oil had been dumped, it being obvious that the oil shipments received were only a secondary consideration to the main business of handling illicit alcohol.