

Notes on Recent Cases

IN COMMON with others who "go down to the sea in ships", the Masters and crews of vessels engaged in smuggling contraband liquor into the Maritime Provinces become accustomed to facing the usual risks arising from storms, gales and fog which endanger navigation. In addition, there is always the peril in their case of pursuit by the patrol cutters when they venture inside the territorial waters of Canada with their illicit cargoes on board.

When, however, as happened in a recent case, a member of this Force (and a land officer at that), in his capacity as a Customs Enforcement Officer, dropped down from above on to the deck of a liquor laden vessel, effecting seizure of the craft and its cargo, the event must surely have been a new experience to the rum-runners.

The circumstances surrounding this incident are briefly as follows:—

During the night of October 26th, 1937, a patrol from Buctouche, N.B. detachment proceeded to the mouth of the Chockpish River, as it was suspected a landing of liquor would be attempted in that area. Taking up a position under cover near the river bank, the patrol saw a motor boat heading in from the sea toward the mouth of the river. When about three hundred yards from shore, five large dories went out to it and, after loading liquor, proceeded up river past the patrol who did not break cover until these had gone, and then made for a bridge higher up the river where the loaded craft would be likely to pass under. On the bridge they surprised a man who had a flashlight in his hand for signalling a warning to the boats should the police be sighted in the vicinity. Before he could give the alarm, his flashlight was taken away and he was removed from the bridge.

Shortly after, a vessel heavily laden approached the bridge and the occupants were challenged and called upon to stop. As this order was ignored, one member of the patrol took a leap from the bridge, a distance of ten feet, into the boat. His arrival on board caused quick action on the part of the two occupants of the liquor vessel and they immediately jumped overboard and started swimming to shore; one was captured in the water, but the other made his escape. A check up of the liquor cargo seized revealed 97 cans containing a total of 240 gallons of alcohol.

The woods in the vicinity were later searched with the assistance of the police dog "Black Lux" and a total of approximately 700 gallons of alcohol was uncovered. This was found cached in different parts of the bush where it had undoubtedly been placed after unloading from the dories which had proceeded up the Chockpish river while our patrol was waiting for the arrival of the vessel that was seized under the circumstances outlined.

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An interesting case arose in Saint John detachment area in which medical opinion was at variance with apparently insurmountable facts. During September last a human skull was handed to one of our men by a resident of Saint John who had, while hunting with a party of friends, found a complete skeleton and later guided a police party to the remains. The skull