

However, a further glance at the situation quickly gave them a true impression of the actual state of affairs. Hellyer was then ordered to come through a swinging gate near the vault and over to where the other two men were standing. His failure to obey this command almost cost him his life; he walked instead, directly toward the gunman, who without a moment's warning, shot at him over the counter. The manager fell with a wound in the fleshy part of his thigh, and the miscreant without further ado bolted out of the door. On a shout of warning from Mars, all dropped to the floor in case there should be more gun-fire but no further shots were fired. Hellyer then managed to crawl to a nearby telephone and notified the Police.

All members of the RCMP detachment under the NCO in charge immediately attended the scene. Medical aid was called for attention to Hellyer's wounds, but before being removed to hospital he was able to relate his experience in full detail and gave a good description of his assailant which was corroborated by his fellow victims. Two members searched the interior of the building for the expelled cartridge case and bullet and were able to locate both. At the same time, the village was subjected to a close check at all hotels, rooming houses and auto camps for likely suspects. A patrol car with the remaining two constables drove out to Rich's Mill with the object of gleaning any information regarding an ex-employee who had a considerable amount of money owing him. These inquiries produced negative results.

The first definite lead on the fugitive was established when the NCO and a constable completed their inspection of the bank building and drove to the village garbage dump to search for the expelled shell case from the shot fired previously in the evening. Although they were not immediately successful in this, they did observe footprints in the fresh snow leading north along the highway. Undue

significance was not attached to them at the time but they were followed for two miles north across the P.G.E. railway tracks and eventually onto a road which led toward Rich's Mill. In this area they frequently led behind trees and back to the road again, indicating that the maker had endeavored to avoid being seen from passing automobiles. These suspicious moves indicated to Police that they were on the right track. The prints were followed up to a point where they disappeared alongside a wire fence, and inspection of the area revealed no sign of the tracks having crossed the fence or returned to the nearby road. It was observed, however, that the new-fallen snow still clung to the barbs to the left while strands to the right were clear of snow. The fence was checked for a distance of about 50 feet when the footprints were again observed, this time on the opposite side. It was obvious that the person responsible for these imprints had walked along the strands of wire in order to confuse any trackers.

The hunt was on!

Two more constables joined the party after returning from Rich's Mill and a general survey of the terrain toward which the tracks led was made. The whole area rested at the bottom of a large basin extending toward the east, intersected by a logging road and a newly constructed highway which had been cut through. The slopes of the basin were steep with an abundant growth of saplings and scrub bush. Gullies and open patches of stubble field were interspersed throughout the area surrounding a creek bottom edged with willows. To the east heavier bush and timber growth pushed its way through the dense marsh grass. All in all this was the type of country more favorable to the pursued than the pursuers, and as the former in this case was armed and dangerous, the NCO discussed the situation with his men and it was decided to return to the detachment to formulate an immediate and comprehensive plan