

part of your proposition about driving the Grits from their fat jobs appeals to me. I'll have to talk it over with the wife. She has a horror of publicity such as I'll get from this."

"I'll have to know before the first of April for I'm going to try to take over as soon as the roads open. Have a talk with Fred Milligan and the Mayor. You know politics. This will be worth your while. As for being scared of the bootleggers, make no mistake about it, we are going after them; that is the only way to get them eating out of your hand. You have a lot to learn. Common sense is all you need. Also your days of talking on a platform are over if you get this job where your tongue is like fire, — a good servant, but a bad master."

"Well, Tom, believe me I'll be glad of the day when I'll stop stumping. I'm sick of this talking about what I don't believe. I'll let you know by Saturday night."

The upshot was that after much backroom log-rolling on April 7th, 1926, the headlines announced, "Ex-labor leader appointed N.S.T.A. Inspector."

## CHAPTER IV

### *Into the Swim*

It was a pitiful and forlorn inspector who put in his appearance at the town office to be sworn in. Tom came with me for moral support, then took me to the Police Station and introduced me to the Force. Now it must be remembered that up to this time courts and the Law were as foreign to me as the moon. I was suspicious of and had a dread of lawyers and policemen. My wife was sceptical and opposed to this way of making a living, if living it could be called; seventy-five dollars a month was to be my salary for a start. How the authorities ever expected a man to be honest to the Law and to himself is a deep question, without the prima facie statement was accepted that the Inspectorship was a farce.

However I was determined by my tenure of office long or short, I would be no farce. If the semi-criminal wise-guys thought me a "fish" and a gullible fool, — well let them dream until my feet set. Then would be called into play the strategy learned from the old book on the French Revolution, "audacity, audacity and more audacity". This was something hard for them to understand except in results.

In the modern control of liquor there is no parallel office to the Nova Scotia Temperance Act Inspectorship. An Inspector to be successful had to be a mixture of lawyer, policeman, politician, fox and lion; and on top of that he had to have the element of luck.

As I re-read my old notebooks of those early days the memories come crowding back and it is difficult to adjust a starting point so that a correct sequence to four years of adventure, comedy, danger and tragedy may be recorded. This is but the record of a mercenary who played the game to bring his family and himself out of the shadow of debt and destitution but as Shakespeare said, "there is a special Providence in the fall of a sparrow". Although never a healthy or rugged individual yet I was in the prime of life, if I had any creed it was to live and let live.

Pitted against me were the resources great and strong of the Trade. I knew that the good wishes and prayers of many a starved wife and mother were with me for rightly or wrongly I had a reputation for decency. Clergymen told me that they would give me every assistance.

During that first day as Inspector, Chief-of-Police "Woody" Osborne took me into his office to give me some advice that was good and gave me confidence. "Cliff, you have lived a clean life; I have looked the seamy side square in the face. Make it a point to do your duty and don't be a goat for anybody. Anytime you want assistance from the Force, don't be afraid to call us day or night. Don't tell your business to outsiders. We must all stick together for the Force is the target of unjust abuse".

I had much the same advice from old and respected Archie Nickolson. He had been connected with Pictou County police work for over fifty years.

Another man who had his say to me regarding prohibition enforcement was my neighbour, John Calkin. John was the nearest thing to being a Christian of any man I had ever met. He had tried his hand at liquor inspector two years previous and had given it up in disgust because the men who should have supported him failed to do so in decisive moments.

Listening to these various advisors caused battle-lines of friends and enemies to be formed in my mind. It hit me with a wallop that in this business one could not get anywhere without friends.

The prosecuting lawyer was a Liberal, Rod G. MacKay, "Rod G." as he was known in police circles. Tom advised me that Rod G's law was sound. The lawyer of the Trade was generally R. Douglas Gbrame, [Graham] a clever criminal lawyer and prominent Liberal who seemed to have the bootleggers under his thumb. The Magistrate was D.C. Sinclair of an old established Liberal family.

Some twenty-five years previous we had gone to the same school but in the meantime there had been no occasion for us to exchange words. The prohibition forces called him all sorts of names. Drunks and sinners said, "he'd give a guy a break". Police and lawyers were afraid of him. So it was with apprehension that I approached him to have twenty-five search-warrants signed.

“Some search-warrants to be signed, Mr. Sinclair”, I said, being resolved to keep my mouth as tightly closed as possible. He signed them, said nothing and went on reading the Halifax Chronicle.

To write of the Trade in the Roaring Twenties is to mention rum most frequently. The reasons for this is that rum could be smuggled ashore much more profitably than whiskey or gin. The profit in rum was immense, West Indies rum being capable of absorbing a lot of water. It was also easy to handle coming in ten-gallon kegs capable of rough usage. Rum also suits the damp foggy Nova Scotia climate.

At that time the advent of a new Inspector sent a thrill of fear through the little underworld of our town. The dives closed up solid, Tom told me that they wouldn't re-open until the grapevine reported my behaviour.

Tom and Jim Caldwell, the senior officer of the force, took me around on a series of raids. I was amazed and astonished at the number of joints, at the squalor of some, at the opulence of others, at children being brought up in an atmosphere of crime.

“Tom”, I asked, “why don't bootleggers with children get away from this life of crime?”

“Where could they go? What else could they do that would give them the easy money they get out of selling a gallon of rum? And don't forget the sociability that goes with bootlegging helps bind them to this kind of life.”

“In other words, empty stomachs and the boredom of life are the causes of bootlegging?”

“Correct. But don't get to thinking about causes, these things have been going on for a long time. Without bootleggers we wouldn't have jobs. And your job is to get convictions. If you scare the Trade too much there will be no convictions to get. We can't afford to kill the goose that lays the golden egg. The Chief tells me that one of the officers is sick tonight. You take over for the shift and learn for yourself what is going on.”

It is hard to describe the mixed feelings of awkwardness and fear that took hold of me as I tramped the streets of my home town as Liquor Inspector that April night. All kinds of gang warfare and killings rushed through my mind. But Officer MacCann was a stout fellow and steered me in the right directions.

It had been a long cold winter with lots of snow and as yet Spring had brought few thaws to melt the banks of snow and ice in backyards and alleys. Casey's was a famous joint in those days. It was on the second floor of a building next to the Norfolk Hotel. It had the reputation of having more “Hides” than any other dive in town. On the back there was an open balcony without a stair to the ground and during the winter Casey had shovelled the snow until it made a heap that I thought was high

enough to stand on and pull oneself up to the balcony. I suggested this idea to MacCann. He said he was too heavy weighing over two hundred pounds but said as I was more wiry I could throw off my overcoat and try it, keeping as quiet as possible. This we tried and I pulled up MacCann. We crept close to the window and through it was my first glimpse at the gay life. Casey kept his place clean as his patrons were of a better class than the joints across the track. Being close to the town's best hotel, the guests used it as a place to have the odd drink with friends. Casey's wife, Hilda, was known to be an able dealer. When customers got too drunk to notice her move she served them black tea as rum at twenty-five cents per small glass.

Beside the sink laughing and carousing were three travellers and two ladies of pleasure above the grade of street-walkers. The rum that Hilda served them came from a pitcher that she constantly watched. MacCann and I considered whether the kitchen door was locked. Quietly I turned the knob then pushed. Glory be! Lady Luck was with us, the door opened. We rushed to the sink but Hilda was too quick for me but one of the travellers left his half-filled glass of rum that I grabbed. MacCann ran to the door that led to the street, telling all the "guests" to stay where they were. As Tom directed I took the names and addresses of all present. There were several patrons in the different rooms, one man high in the ranks of the Liberal party. This looked to me like good pickings.

After having a sleep next morning, I looked up Tom with the intention of telling him about the raid but the street was buzzing with the news of the raid and the audacity of the method used.

"Catching that old Grit buzzard in Casey's is worth a lot to me. He was the man that had me fired as County Inspector. He is a deacon and I wonder how he will like getting a summons served on him and appearing in court with those two broads. Good work, Cliff, good work".

But no one had to go to court for that raid. Casey came down to the Police Station, pleaded guilty and was fined "Two Hundred dollars and costs".

It was my first victory and my friends were well pleased. The Evening News spread the headlines for in those lively days of the "Roaring Twenties", prohibition all over North America was the foremost topic of conversation. From New York to New Glasgow the ferment bubbled and foamed. The white light of publicity beat upon the forces of enforcement. I have seen some men go raving crazy through the talk of it.

Then there were the women. If a cop with a roguish fearless twinkle in his eye keeps his clothes snappy and clean and "gets around", some women are sure to take a lot of risks on the chance to get into his arms. It matters not their rank or station for Judy O'Grady and the Colonel's lady are all the same under their skin.

This twisted female thinking happened a few days after the Casey raid. We raided a homebrew joint run by a woman about whose conduct several complaints had come to the police. We found a lot of rank home-made beer and had it analyzed by a chemist who found that it had an alcohol content of 5%. She was arrested and locked up. Before the trial she sent word she wanted to see me. Whispering through the bars of her cell she said, "Mr. Rose, I have a pretty daughter of seventeen. If you will let me off I'll give you a note to her and you can take her out. She's O.K."

I didn't avail myself of the opportunity so she went to jail for three months. Some time later the daughter was pointed out to me and she was pretty.

On one of those April days the Mayor, J.J. Fraser, phoned me to say that Rev. Dr. Grant was at his store and wanted to talk to me. "This is it," I said to myself. At that time the Rev. H.R. was the head of the Moral Reform forces in Nova Scotia being their Secretary. His letterheads were a fearsome thing suggesting the tramp of Onward Christian Soldiers. In his younger days he had been quite an athlete and there was no questioning his courage.

I knew the Mayor to be a good business man, shrewd, wanting to make a record of good administration for his tenure of office. He introduced me saying, "that he was sure I could learn much from Dr. Grant's experience".

He questioned me as to drinking habits and familiarity with bootleggers, cautioning me "that their polish and niceness were but cloaks to cover their deception of frail humans who were beguiled by such devilish pleasantries".

Said he, "I have two names of men who have come forward and are willing to buy liquor from the bootleggers and go on the witness stand and swear to it".

"You would have me commit a crime to catch a crime?"

"It is no crime to do anything legal to help stamp out the accursed Traffic".

"I cannot see it that way, Dr. Grant. The bootleggers are dealing in an illegal article. If I am lucky or smart enough to catch them at it they are going to be chased hard and fined".

"But I don't want them fined, I want second-offences laid against them. This fining is only a license system".

"You are advocating a course that would soon put me back at sawing boards for a living and temperance would be no further ahead. My intentions are to lead a decent life at this business and make good".

Here the Mayor cut in, "Cliff, I want you to cooperate with Dr. Grant in the prosecution of the liquor Traffic. Get together and work out a

plan". That settled the conference. I knew from a close friend in the Council that their attitude as a whole was for the town to get from the trade all the money it could for civic purposes. The councillors were practical men anxious to do all they could for the town. So from that angle I had little to fear in being reprimanded. However, this business of being an agent provocateur seemed to be bad in itself.

That night I looked up Officer MacCann and suggested that we go down and raid "Dannie". For "down to Dannie's" was a famous term used by drinkers who came to town. Although I had never spoken to Dannie MacLennan, his reputation had for years been dinned into my ears as being a man who only lacked the horns and hoof to make him the devil. For three generations the MacLennans had sold rum in New Glasgow with the laws getting stricter all the time. But Dannie had never a conviction registered against him. He was reputed to be worth a sum in six figures; was a force in politics and the detection of crime. He kept a crowd of destitute has-beens eating from his table, had his finger on the pulse of all activities that would be liable to affect his business and had amongst business men the reputation for being "wise".

"Down to Dannie's" was across the railroad track on Kempt Street. It was a big rambling house that exuded an air of mystery as forms silently shuffled away in the darkness. I had not come down with the expectation of making a haul but wanted to familiarize myself with the famous place and its host. MacCann advised me, "go right in the front door, it won't be locked. I've been here often before I went on the Force".

Sure enough the door was open and Dannie's brother, "Buttons" came from a side room. Years ago we had gone to the same school. "Hello, Cliff, haven't seen you for years. You want to see Dan? I'll get him for you. And how are you Enoch? I've got something for you on the Burnette case. Step this way to Dan's office. He'll be down in a minute".

Scarcely had we made ourselves comfortable in huge easy chairs when Dannie slipped in. He was smooth even in his walk.

"Good evening, Enoch. Our new Inspector, Cliff Rose? So glad to be in when you called. Make yourselves comfortable or do you want to look the house over?"

"That is what we came down for, Dannie, but it isn't hard to see that you haven't anything in. I thought this would be as good a time as any to get acquainted".

"Right you are. Things have been quiet down here since you moved in. Strange for us to have lived in the same town and never to have met. It has come to my ears that you are a serious man who never had much fun in your life, that kind of an Inspector is dangerous to my business. But you'll find as you move around that it is better to learn to laugh. If Dan

MacLennan stops selling rum someone else will start. It is all a game, every man plays it from his own corner, even Dr. H.R. Grant. All we ask is that you play the game fair. If you catch us, we'll pay up. I know that the councillors want all the money they can get for civic purposes. In order to survive we must be able to change with the changing conditions. Have you ever gone fishing in your life?"

"Not since I was a boy".

"You'll have to learn, Cliff. It mellows one's life and is good for the soul."

"As soon as the roads open I intend to get a rod and line and wet them. But as regards the enforcement of the law, it's the man who pays the fiddler who calls the tune. No one except Dr. Grant wants to hear about second offences in liquor cases. What do you think about it?"

A fleeting moment of hostility, then the pleasant urbane face lit up with a smile as his dark eyes danced with mirth. He was thick-set of medium height with long fingers that spoke of familiarity with pool and billiards.

"Prosecutions for second offences mean a fight for every first offence. The law entanglements that would follow if the boys in the Trade put their heads together wouldn't look good to the town council. To be sure none of us like to pay two hundred dollars and costs but we take that risk."

"Well, Dannie, I'm glad we called. We will look the house over. There is something about this place that tickles my fancy".

Dannie came with us and showed every possible courtesy as we looked for hides. He was a smooth actor alright and I told MacCann so when we got outside.

"He's smooth, alright, but that's a laugh when he says he is not selling. Does he think we are a bunch of rubes? He has three joints selling for him on George Street. The one upstairs is the slickest. You'll have to go some to get that one. Those old bums that live off Dannie carry the rum in cans, but try to catch one of them, they are watching all the time".

Next day was Saturday, payday at the Steelworks and mines. Early in the morning I looked over Dannie's building on George Street. There was a stair to the second floor at the back of the building. Otherwise there was little chance of getting in. Several complicated schemes went through my mind but experience told me that for me audacity was the best strategy. So at noon hour I climbed the board fence at the back of the building and waited until three men in working clothes went in. They seemed to get in without any trouble. Slowly I sauntered over and climbed the stair and opened the door. It was a daring stunt, afterwards Tom MacKay told me never to try it again.

Several men were in the room. The sink and pitcher of rum were there

just as it had been explained to me. One man, an old printer that I had known in labor union days yelled to the proprietor but I had that pitcher and was out the door before they realized that a serpent was in their midst. The surprise had stunned them. Believe me, I was glad to be on the street again. Town authorities had given me a cell to store evidence and two expensive locks to protect it. The success of this raid puffed me up somewhat.

I had expected to have a big trial, but that evening Officer MacCann told me that "Dannie had given his bartender Hell for being careless and that the fine would be paid as soon as the papers were served if it could be arranged in the Magistrate's office."

This unexpected turn of event suited me fine. All the boys on the force told me that I would get a bad tumble if I had taken it to open court. This could well be believed, so the town was two hundred dollars richer. Walter Weir was chairman of Police and a squareshooter. "Rose", he said, "If you keep up that clip we'll raise your salary right away". And they did.

Dannie's personality and power aroused my curiosity and I lost hours of sleep trying to correctly assess the facts. Dr. Grant wanted me to use spies to catch men who were living by an illegal game forced on them because of economic necessity and the boredom of life. Dannie MacLennan suggested that it was all a game. If all hands played fair he was sport enough to ante up when caught. Plainly, these bootleggers had a code of honor. Were the "bad" men good and the "good" men bad? That would be a subject for mental investigation on dull days when things were quiet.

Then there was his remark, "in order to survive we must be able to change with changing conditions". The more one conned it over the more the truth of it sank in. Yes, I would put that slogan on a signpost in my mind for dangerous corners.

Magistrate Sinclair had a stromy brow when he tried the case of Dannie's bootlegger in his office, and it didn't improve matters any when the accused pleaded "guilty". Saying nothing I walked out of the office with the money in my pocket but felt that there was a storm around my head.

Amongst the many "retail" bootleggers of that time was Newman Betts and his wife Liz. They lived in the old Captain Walker house near the East River, a house that had been a palatial residence in the days of Nova Scotia windjammers. Another tenant was "Pitcap". Dan MacDonald and an old girl he had living with him. Sometimes "Pitcap" went away on weekends and his girl took in another man. On one such Saturday she took in Duncan MacKenzie. Duncan MacKenzie bought a quart of rum from Liz to make merry that pay night. He was in the big pay



brackets in the steel plant and had a roll of two hundred and fifty dollars on him but awoke on Monday morning broke; he had been rolled.

Such victims receive scanty pity from police but they must do their duty. While Duncan had been getting the rum an Indian had also [been] seen buying a pint. This Indian was arrested for being drunk that Saturday night but hesitated to tell where he got the firewater. When Duncan told his story he also told about the Indian getting the rum.

There are severe penalties provided in the Indian Act for anyone who sells liquor to an Indian. There is also a provision that gives the informant half of the fine. Rod G., my lawyer, saw a chance of a prosecution under this act with the consequent large fees paid by the Department, so we decided to go after Liz under that law. I was to be the informant.

We got out a warrant for her and when Magistrate Sinclair signed it he looked grimmer than ever, asking the question, "Why are you taking her up under the Indian Act"?

"On the advice of my lawyer".

"Does the Town Office know about this?"

"Not yet".

"Well they will". The town clerk, James Roy, was very zealous about getting all the money he could for the town and the idea of two hundred dollars going to Ottawa was hard to swallow. The town clerk sent for me and gave me quite a lecture. But I shut him off with the remark, "that there was lots of money where that came from".

When the chairman of police heard about it he laughed and told me not to let it happen again. But it got under my skin to have this skullduggery going on behind my back. I was new at the game and was thinskinned.

Liz was arrested, pleaded "guilty" and was fined two hundred dollars and costs. The joke in the affair was that Duncan lost his case and we later heard by grapevine that Liz had known about the "rolling" when Duncan and his girl were asleep. It was Duncan's money that paid the fine. It took three months to get my share of that money from Ottawa and even then I had to write Colonel Cantley our Federal member to intervene to get it. Someone had tried to spike my gratuity.

That month of April, 1926, must have been one of the worst on record. The account of the breakup of the ice in Pictou Harbor sets it down as April 26th of that year. On one snowy slushy morning while Tom and I were sitting in the police office we got a hot tip that seven barrels of beer were coming into the freight shed. Tom told me that he didn't have his papers as yet and it would be better for me to make the seizure and have it locked in the cell.

When we got to the freight shed the seven barrels of beer were there. I

declared them under seizure but the station-master said that the C.N.R. didn't come under the jurisdiction of the N.S.T.A. Not being sure of my legal ground we left Officer Caldwell sitting on one of the barrels while I looked up Rod G for law. It must be remembered that in those days no police officer in New Glasgow had a car so we had to plough through snow and slush.

Rod G looked up the law and found that the railroad came under the Canadian Temperance Act so a search warrant was made out accordingly. I had to go to Magistrate Sinclair's office to have it signed. He was home to dinner by this time and told me on the phone that he would be over when he got good and ready. By this time I was getting hungry, cold and mad and knew that Officer Caldwell sitting in the draughty freightshed would be the same. I called a taxi — a brazen thing for an officer to do in these days — and had to sit until 2 p.m. until the Magistrate arrived at his office. Keep my temper I must even though he delivered me a tirade on the "gaul" of officers and Rod G's law.

If the Magistrate was cross the old Station-master was raving mad. He swelled up as though he would die of apoplexy. But we loaded the beer on a truck and hauled it to the jail. It was big news for the papers and we got the headlines in great shape.

With Chief-of-Police Osborne I talked over the matter of the Magistrate's hostility. He told me that this attitude was old stuff with him, but I had now a lever with the Inspector-in-Chief, D.K. Grant. The N.S.T.A. could never be enforced if, prima facia, police officers were to [be] treated as criminals. He advised me to write the Inspector-in-Chief stating the facts. After some misgivings this was done and soon had results.

The Magistrate cornered me in the police station for informing against him. Respectfully, I told him that all I wanted was fair play and not to be looked upon as a malefactor until such had been shown to be the case. From that date onward I found him to be fair, sometimes he decided against me but that was to be expected. His attitude towards criminals was that of British law, "a man is innocent until he is proven guilty".

One fine May day Liz Betts approached Officer Langille asking protection from her husband while she removed the furniture. She had got tired of living with him and had found a man more to her liking. I went along with the officers and there was Newman stretched across the bed, drunk. She grabbed the mattress dumping Newman onto the floor. He cursed and babbled about her infidelity. She knocked the bed apart and threw it downstairs. Then she took the pitcher and basin of the toilet set and set them in the hall. When she came back Newman was on one elbow,

saying, "My God, Liz, leave me the thunderjug".

The weather broke nice and fine in May and I felt that it was good to be alive. Truly, nothing succeeds like success. I got a commission as Provincial Constable and Tom MacKay took me along in his new car on raids throughout his district. Sometimes Pearle Bailey, assistant Customs collector and interested in liquor smuggled without paying duty, also came along. I thought that I was learning fast but a lot of it was just the luck that goes with an amateur's audacity. From lawyers I got constable work that paid well and for the first time in my life found ready cash in my pocket.

My first fishing-trip with the gang was to Fisher Archibald's lake in the backwoods of Guysboro County. It is a big lake on the headwaters of the St. Mary's River. There is a walk of some three miles to the lake but that only added to the fun. After all those years of toil and treadmill struggle it was like being wafted to another world to arise early that first morning in the shack while the fog was still on the water; to smell the fresh damp moss and get the aroma of wet hemlock; then back to the camp and sit down to a breakfast of bacon and eggs washed down with hot strong tea and a dash of smuggled rum. Good old rum, my emancipator! So long as I live I'll never forget the call of the loon that first misty morning on Archibald's Lake.

## CHAPTER V

### *Through the Woods*

Coming back to town, temperance enforcement had a different meaning. Now Dannie's reference to it as being a game could be understood. A grim game it was for Officers Langille and MacCann.

There were several joints run by women at the time known to patrons as "Mothers". Mother Robertson had a bouncer, one Jimmy Johnstone from Springhill. He was an ex-miner, tough and hard. One Saturday night he was creating a disturbance on Front Street and the officers were sent to arrest him. They had to use their billys freely and he was a bloody mess when he landed in jail. Mother Robertson hired R. Douglas Gbrame [Graham] to prosecute the cops for beating up her bouncer and they were sent to Supreme Court for assault. They were let out on bail and Walter Weir, Chairman of Police stood right behind them.

They watched her joint like hawks and one night when we were sure there was rum inside we pulled a raid in fine style. Doors went down like ninepins. Customers, white as sheets were herded and searched and we got considerable rum. Mother was arrested and locked up. She got out on bail and a date was set for the trial. I had been seven weeks on the job and had