

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

got several convictions without a fight in the courts.

There was a big audience for the trial as Doug Grahame had quite a reputation as a criminal lawyer and the fight between the cops and the underworld was becoming common gossip. That was my first experience on the witness stand and Doug Grahame went after me in grand style. But having stood up to some stormy sessions in the Labor movement this cross-questioning did not, as Rod G. put it, "turn a hair on your head".

We got a conviction and the old girl had to fork over "two hundred dollars and costs". It was not the money so much as the prestige it gave the police force that mattered in that vital case, for Mother Robertson had been defiant and the repercussions did a lot to clear the officers when they went on trial before a jury.

That trial also knocked the pins from under the strong hold the Liberal machine had on the Trade, so, for the next two years the local Tories held sway. I got several approving remarks from the temperance workers and the Mayor was well pleased. Even James Roy the town clerk thawed enough to smile when I went into the town office.

The weather had become fine and hot and the tramping around on foot was making things tough and unpleasant. I envied Tom MacKay and Pearle Baillie travelling in their cars so the idea came to me to get one also. The wife and family were also of the same mind. She had saved a few dollars and agreed to put it into part payment of a car. The Mayor went on a note for me at the bank and the finance corporation took up the rest.

I bought a Star touring car, used to get thirty miles to the gallon and have never got such service from any car since. The charges of grafting that were now levelled [at] me were furious for seldom had a man in straitened circumstances on the small salary of ninety dollars per month blossomed out with a new car in two short months.

Complaints were made to the councillors but they knew the rights [of] the story, so in the leafy month of June, 1926, that Star could be seen on the highways with the Inspector's family and friends going to places I had never expected to see in my life.

One of the first trips I had was to take my mother to have a look at the old home in which she was born. Those grand people of that old generation had an attachment to the home and soil that must have come from Scotland. It is hard to get the present generation to understand that such a thing ever existed. My mother was pleased and happy at that simple experience.

At that time the by-roads were just beginning to be graded and opened up for cars. Lawyers gave me a lot of constable work and it wasn't long until that note was paid at the bank. Oh, it was grand that experience of driving along freshly graded roads with the smell of the sea and damp

earth in one's nostrils. There was sunshine in my heart and the blood sang in my veins as we often drove along the Shore road to Antigonish on that drive of surpassing beauty.

One such drive I particularly remember. I had often wanted to see the Gulf shore after a Nor'easter. We had had quite a blow towards the last of June and as luck would have it I had some legal papers to serve at Merigomish. After serving them I kept on going towards what was to me unexplored country, past the good farms of Big Island, the Ponds and Lismore where the Gaelic is still spoken to the wild rugged country of Arisag. Here the wheel track wound perilously near to the hundred foot cliff above the sea. Parking the car, I got out. "Here", I said, "This is it".

Such wild forbidding beauty I had never seen, as I pinched myself to be sure it wasn't a dream. There at my feet the rollers surging down from the Labrador were breaking and tossing their salt spray in my face. Down to my right on wild rocky Arisag point the lighthouse was often drowned in the spray even in that bright sunshine that had followed the storm. To my left a small waterfall murmured between the crash of the breakers and a cowbell tinkled on the mountainside behind me. How long I stayed there I do not know as it was hunger of the body that pulled me away. For hours afterwards I was dazed by the impact of such wild beauty so near to my home. Poets and writers have written about the Annapolis Valley and the Bras D'or Lakes but surely the finger of Deity was just as evident on the Gulf Shore as on those famous landscapes.

It was after seeing that and subsequent scenes of Nova Scotia's beauty that I began to ponder the causes of the poverty of my countrymen living with such natural advantages and scenic beauty. But it was to be many, many years of experience and reasoning before a satisfactory answer could be obtained to that problem.