

criminals of a generation was taken to the telegraph office in New Glasgow, [and] to jail, where within a short time he was arrested for the murder of Dryden, a hermit, who lived beyond the railroad at Glengarry.

## CHAPTER XIV

### *The Beginning of the End*

The agitation for Government Control of the liquor traffic had been growing in intensity throughout 1929. Foreseeing what might happen, I bought a Dodge car, the Dodges having at that time a great reputation for being tough. Politicians promised me a job on the new police force that would be formed but I didn't have the stomach to serve under any officer. I had plotted my own course and had planned my own strategy for too long to be shoved around by any officer. I wanted to be clear of it all and get into some other business. The struggle between Fred Milligan and the rest of the Council had become bitter and it was nerveracking to get the broadsides from both sides. Pressure was put on to raid and railroad bootlegger friends of both sides to the quarrel. In September I managed to get three weeks holidays and with the wife and three friends we went to New York and had a wonderful trip.

The plebiscite on Government Control was held shortly after we got back. The method of carrying it out looked mysterious as all the manipulators of both political parties joined hands to put it down. There was more to this than appeared on the surface so I took a walk down to Dannie's. With his worldly wisdom he would have the correct sights trained on the situation.

"Well, Dannie, it looks as though it was curtains for all the boys and girls in the Trade".

"Right you are, Cliff, and what a setup we are getting. Of course you will be looked after being a good party man, but a lot of us will be left like driftwood on the shore. No use of trying to continue further. The combination against us is too strong." A trace of bitterness crept into his voice, generally so even and placid. It looked worth while getting to the bottom of it.

"How come, Dan? I am baffled by the moves that's going on."

"You saw what happened election day? Deep down the dope is this. The big money men, the men behind the men who run the government, have been looking with envious eyes at the millions being passed around in the illegal liquor traffic. So some bright boys were put to work on propa-

ganda for Government Control, while they, the men behind the scenes schemed out a system that would bring in a steady stream of gold to the bond and stockholders of distilleries and breweries. They will have a bluecoated police force, a naval service yes, and perhaps an airforce to see that no one invades their sanctuary. And all the while the public will go merrily on their way drinking themselves into prosperity.”

“I hear that you and Dr. Grant were on the same sides on election day?”

“Certainly. He to protect his job and I to look after mine. I know that when Control comes in I will sell no more rum.”

“Strange bedfellows, eh, Dan?”

“No stranger than what we’ve seen on the other side in this past election. The system of organized hypocrisy under which we live makes it imperative for the hangers-on who make a fat living out of the setup to play ball with the powers that be. To be good ‘yes’ men and to stay in line. So, when we have greed for the dominating motive in our society and organized hypocrisy to guard its ramifications, we have created a Frankenstein that may destroy us all. Before the crafty minds behind our system would let go their hold on power they would destroy their enemies, themselves and the world.”

“Sometimes I figure it out as we are due for a crackup. What do you think, Dan?”

“The world is dizzy from mushroom prosperity, we seem to be due for a depression.”

The crackup was not long delayed. Black Thursday, that terrible October day in 1929 swept away millions of dollars from rich and poor, started the Great Depression of the Hungry Thirties and gave Hitler the green light: it was a day I’ll never forget. In New Glasgow’s bucket shops the wise guys and the suckers lost their shirts. Standing across the street from the brokers offices that afternoon was to witness some stooped and haggard figures coming out, stonybroke. How could this have happened to us, they would repeat.

I was glad I had followed Dannie’s advice and had put the few dollars I had made into real estate. For all over North America people were stunned as stocks moved lower and lower with suicides becoming quite common.

About this time there was an earthquake along the Atlantic seaboard that caused a great tidal wave along the Newfoundland and Cape Breton shore. I was sitting in my car outside the police station when the earth could be felt rocking. Soon the firebell rang for different fires from disconnected stove pipes and cracked chimneys. This act of Nature caused the superstitious to be filled with fear and foreboding. It all helped to make

that Christmas the most gloomy of years. How different from the bright happy days of 1926!

With the advent of 1930 the quarrel in the council broke into the open. George Grant came out for mayor and was organized against Fred. The row became bitter and to make it worse the Rev. Mr. Service, the Kirk minister began to preach sermons about the corruption of the liquor interests in the town.

Then as town elections rolled around in February, Chadwick, a prominent Liberal and quite a public speaker, was elected.

The orders from the Town Council were to "clean up the town". Particularly Paddy Nolan's because he was a friend of Fred Milligan. They tried to use me as a club to get Fred. His enemies tried to drive him from the council. But he had been a good friend of mine in the days when things were black [and] dreary for me and I could not stab him in the back.

It so happened however, that in a big raid we conducted on Delores' joint that we had the evidence to put a case against her for conducting a bawdy house. Delores was buying a house from Fred on time instalments that she kept protracted because she was foxy enough to realize that there would be an element of protection in such a method. Fred's enemies spread the word that he was the owner of a disorderly house and his wrath came down on me for showing the thing up.

Towards spring we pulled another big raid on the dive and got a man with a bottle of rum he had just bought from Delores and he swore out an affidavit to that effect. He lived on a farm back of Thorburn and said he had to get home to feed his cattle but would come back to town on the day of trial. He didn't show up so I got a benchwarrant for him. This was all big news in the press. What with Rev. Mr. Service thundering in the pulpit, Chadwick orating in the council, the police committee chasing me up for more prosecutions, Fred Milligan bawling me out for turning against him, I was becoming distracted. To add to this while conducting a search for the missing witness in the slushy woods near Sutherland's river, I caught severe cold and the old pleurisy pains came back.

The situation was becoming impossible and while lying awake at night I saw a procession marching around the bed. Rev. Mr. Service, Chadwick, George Grant the Mayor, Fred Milligan, Dannie MacLennan, Delores, Paddy Nolan, The Queen, Alf Logan, Tom MacKay, Norman MacDonald, they were all there. Then and there I remembered the old strategy, "audacity, audacity and more audacity". If I was to be saved I must be my own savior. The job must be thrown in their teeth. But that would take patience, judgement and proper timing.

Towards the last of April the weather was nice and sunny so I got out on the job again. The hounds were soon yapping at me again but I had a

good advisor from an unexpected quarter. While in Magistrate's Sinclair's office getting some papers signed, he looked up with the trace of a smile, and said, "I see they have you in the winepress, Cliff."

"They sure have, sir. If I had my health back I would fight them."

"Don't heed them. I've seen this business operate a long time and anyhow it will soon be over. Let them rave on. What can they do to you?"

Grimly shaking my head I thanked him. It so happened on that same day I met my old friend A.J. Bannerman.

It was cheering to meet him for he had a different slant on things than the ordinary business man. It was common knowledge that lumbermen had lost fortunes with the slump and conditions looked far from rosy with them.

But he still had a smile and a twinkle in his eye as he replied to my greeting. "I feel happy, Cliff. I've lost my earthly accumulations. I've had power, position and money. They are all gone. But I have my health and I can still use an axe and I have a knowledge of the woods. A man can be very happy there. And how are you getting along? I see they are after you."

"The going is tough. You have something that I have lost, health. But during the last four years I have had a lot of fun, I have learned to laugh and I have climbed out of the financial quicksand in which I was stranded. Years ago you gave me some good advice, what would you now do in my case?"

"For what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? The fact is that in the eyes of most people you are not as good as the bootleggers, consequently you can't expect much from the Government. They want to start the new system with a clean sheet. If you are not able to take them by the throat and shake the life out of them, don't expect anything from them. Health is the most important thing, for the rest you'll have to use your own judgement."

"Thanks, A.J. I'll think it over."

To look back on those nerve-racked days is to wonder how a physical weakling such as I have been could have survived. It may be put down to the inscrutable will of God, Scotch stubbornness, and the strategic watchwords of a French revolutionist and a New Glasgow bootlegger.

So I penned my resignation in the following words, — "I, the undersigned hereby tender my resignation as N.S.T.A. Inspector for the Town of New Glasgow because I refuse to be the goat for those in authority".

I signed my name to it and went away on a fishing trip for a week and caught more fish than it has ever been my luck to catch.

The curtains of history were about to swallow up the era of prohibition and an actor in the melodrama was being shuffled off the stage. The

castigations I received from the councillors were severe but little did I care. I was free, free, free. I took up the hammer and saw, worked on my own account and got back a measure of health, something that I needed and prized throughout the Hungry Thirties. The Dryden Murder case broke with all its absurd detective blunders and as a public official I was soon forgotten. Such is life.