

## BOOTLEGGERS GET OFFICIAL SANCTION

Authorities Hunt Robbers of Puget Sound Rum-Runners.

CONVENTION FIXES PRICE

Law Declared to Have Recognized Property Rights in Liquor Possessed Illegally.

This is the first of a series of three articles dealing with some recently developed phases of the liquor-running and retail bootlegging industry on Puget sound. In this region, by reason of its proximity to the "wet" province of British Columbia, there are unusual opportunities for observation. The other articles will follow.

PUGET SOUND BUREAU, Seattle, May 23.—Joker Hunt, Mr. Valstead and his act are beginning to limp; they are not so funny as they used to seem to be. There was a time, under the dry law, when every whimsical reference to liquor was good for a laugh. Even in regions arid of their own choice before national prohibition, such as the states of Oregon and Washington, some humor could be extracted from variations on the general theme of "How dry I am" and more or less faithful tales about how to get it or make it.

The element of surprise or novelty constitutes about 95 per cent of the gross content of liquor. The novelty of existence under statutory prohibition is now pretty well worn off. There is nothing screamingly funny about a bootlegger in these days, because bootleggers have become too common. Everybody has one, or can have one. No great hilarity can be provoked in discussion of home brewing, since the experiences of each home brewer match those of countless others who continuously have a brew in readiness for or already in the bottles. And when a thing is too common or too stale to joke about it is losing much of its usefulness as a topic for more serious conversation.

### Liquor Supply Close.

Seattle, Tacoma, all the cities, towns and hamlets of Puget sound, have enjoyed a rare privilege in the matter of prohibition—and still enjoy it, whether viewed from the angle of the strict prohibitionist or that of the man who feels that he must have his stimulating tipples. This is the privilege, shown on every authentic map, of closest possible proximity to a major source of illicit booze supply. It is here, on Puget sound, that the strict prohibitionist, filled with faith in the law, finds his finest opportunity for close range observation of the actual processes of attempted enforcement. And it is here, in what Dr. Woods Hutchinson calls "this favored climate," that the man who wants a drink and has the price to pay for it can get it easily, at any time of the day or night, and in practically unlimited quantity.

### Retail Cost Reduced.

Another advantage accrues to this region by reason of its closeness to the Canadian boundary line—and here is an argument that might be made of use by advocates of lower rates for shorter hauls everywhere. Contraband liquors can be and are laid down in Puget sound cities at less cost in the operation of smuggling and less risk of loss to the runners than would be incurred in effort to carry it farther to the south and southeast. Consequently the retail price, which means by the shortest bottle, is less in these cities. This in turn means heavier sales; so that the bootlegging business finds basis in the sound merchandising principle of getting greater profits by increase of gross receipts.

Much of this ground has been covered before in news stories and editorial discussions. Such brief re-statement as has been made seems desirable as preliminary to consideration of some new phases of the situation. The fact is that liquor-running and bootlegging seem to be making some headway toward recognition as "regular" occupations, and not only as regular, but as possessed of legal rights and entitled to a degree of official sanction and protection.

### Law Protects Bootleggers.

When a bootlegger can procure the arrest of another man on the charge of stealing some of his contraband liquor, he is accorded the same right that would be granted any honest citizen who had been robbed of his lawful property. According to charges made in court actions and undisputed newspaper accounts, this sort of thing has occurred in certain Puget sound cities. Several complaints have lately been made to prosecuting attorneys and the police by bootleggers who said they were robbed by other, and presumably lesser, bootleggers. In these cases there appears to have been no hesitancy about admitting the possession of contraband liquor and claiming its ownership. No action was taken on this score; but justice has willingly reached out after the secondary offense, determined to punish them, not for bootlegging in the second or third degree, but for robbery—or for burglary, if the first



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bootlegger's premises had been invaded to get the liquor.

This shows how far some bootleggers have traveled along the road toward regularity and the establishment of legitimate business privileges and rights. When a bootlegger can get a warrant for the arrest of one who has robbed him of his liquor, there certainly should be some legal recourse for the hitherto chagrined, shamed and disappointed citizen who has paid bootleg prices for a case of cold tea or colored water.

### Outlaws Feel Secure.

All men are presumed to be equal before the law. The private tippler who has been bilked by a bootlegger has so far kept discreet silence for fear of getting himself into trouble. The bootlegger who has been robbed by another seems to be untroubled by any such fear. He goes to the authorities and demands that justice be done, seemingly secure in the righteousness of his own position in the matter.

How many of this feeling of security may be due to the general stabilization and extension of the bootlegging business on Puget sound, it would be difficult to say. Probably it is an outgrowth of the bootleggers' convention in Seattle a few months ago. At that time, in the course of a three-day session in downtown hotels, a schedule of case-lot and single-bottle prices was agreed upon, proportioned to the cost of various brands of whiskey on the Canadian side, plus transportation costs and a fair allowance for the risks. Retail trade areas were also blocked out; a general arrangement perfected to prevent too sharp competition, and a standard of probity and efficiency fixed for the retail canvasser among the bottle customers.

### Business Robbed Frequently.

Before that convention was held competition had been running riot. It extended to the frequent "knocking over" of a liquor-runner on his way across with a full load, by motor car or power boat. Many hundreds of cases of liquor forcibly changed hands by this knocking-over process. The runner with the load would be held up, sometimes by men representing themselves as officers of the law, but just as often by plain-speaking and straight-shooting highwaymen. In either case he would have to give up, and either go back for more or go out of business if the experience was costly enough to break him.

The bootleggers' convention must have adopted a code of professional ethics covering this contingency. There has been a noticeable decline in knocking over. Occasionally real officers of the law insist on butting in; but not often enough, or at any rate not with enough success to affect materially the constantly available supply this side of the line.

### Further Steps Taken.

The next step, bold as it may seem to the ordinary citizen, bootleg patron or not, is right in line. Having by

convention agreement minimized the chances of knocking over among the accredited members of their own association, the bootleggers now go straight to the halls of justice when any scoundrelly outsider tries to get away with their stuff. Peace officers of several Puget sound counties have lately been notified of such crimes—that is, of robberies—and have been set on the alert to capture the miscreants.

### BOY SHOT ACCIDENTALLY

Hugh Wildgrube, 8, Hit by Bird-shot While in Woods.

KALAMA, Wash., May 23.—(Special.)—Hugh Wildgrube, 8, living with his parents south of town, was shot accidentally by some unidentified person in the woods when he went after the cows Saturday. The charge, presumably, came from a shotgun, several of the shot lodging in the face and neck and in one hand.

The child was taken to Dr. Roach, who dressed the wounds. No trace of the one who did the shooting has been found.

### COWLITZ INDIANS MEET

Tribal Association Holds Annual Election of Officers.

CHEHALIS, Wash., May 23.—(Special.)—The association of the Cowlitz

tribe of Indians held their regular annual meeting in Chehalis yesterday. The old officers were re-elected and routine business transacted. In 1921 the Cowlitz Indians got together at a big meeting held at Chehalis and organized the association.

These Indians have a claim against the United States government that is being pressed by a Washington attorney. It is their contention that their land was taken from them without the formality of a treaty, although a treaty was promised them, and that they are the only tribe of Indians with which the United States government has never made a settlement of some kind. They now demand a settlement on the basis of \$5000 for each man, woman and child, of whom there are about 350 living.

### Centralia to Observe Memorial Day.

CENTRALIA, Wash., May 23.—(Special.)—Centralia will observe Memorial day by decoration of veterans' graves, a luncheon for veterans of all wars, a parade and exercises in Main-street park. Herman Allen of Chehalis will deliver the address. Another feature will be unveiling a marble bench placed in the park as a memorial to George Washington, the city's founder, who donated the park site.

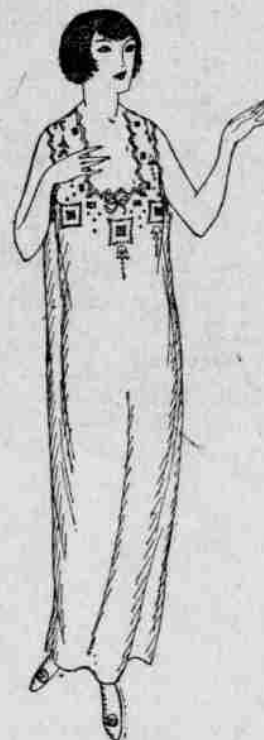
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