

DETROIT RIVER FLEET VANISHES WITH LIQUOR

Rum-Runners Slip Away Before Canadian Exporters Meet to Plan New Moves.

Special to The New York Times.

DETROIT, Aug. 18.—Mysteriously, yet truly, the fleet of approximately two dozen rum-running craft, anchored for several days at liquor export docks along the Detroit River, had disappeared this morning. Where they had gone—to American shores or out into Lakes St. Clair and Erie to effect a favorable entry, thereby avoiding customs and other prohibition officers, could not be ascertained.

Last night, the rum fleet lay at anchor, loaded to capacity with cases, sacks and half-barrels of hard liquor and beer. The smugglers were all set to go. This morning, residents of the border cities who passed by the docks were amazed to find no boats riding at anchor. They had disappeared. Only one dilapidated craft remained and dockmen said it was disabled.

It was admitted, unofficially, that between one-half and two-thirds of the liquor stocks of the Erie Transit Corporation and the Interstate Transit Corporation, which were seized two weeks ago by provincial authorities on grounds of illegal possession, had been moved. It also was reported that liquor stocks at other export docks had dwindled overnight. Where they had gone was a mystery.

Customs officials on the American side denied that more rum than usual had attempted a crossing. They expressed the view that the liquor was hiding somewhere other than on American shores.

Alarmed by the threatened death knell of liquor smuggling, exporters from all the border cities gathered today in Windsor for a council to devise ways and means to save their lucrative industry from both Canada and United States officials cooperating in a war of extermination on rum-runners.

Smugglers have been ordered from their present base in the district near Niagara Falls. This move has left exporters in that section with no place to carry on but Port Colborne, Ontario, which is now blocked by the United States rum navy.

The exporters' meeting has been called to discuss the ruling of Magistrate W. A. Smith of Windsor that storage of beer and liquor in export warehouses is in violation of the Ontario Liquor Control Act.

Windsor exporters say Magistrate Smith's decision, if it is upheld by higher courts, will stop exportation of millions of dollars' worth of liquor to the United States each year.

Magistrate Smith's decision, which promises to be far-reaching in the international liquor smuggling problem, was made yesterday, when he fined Ward Irey, a rum-runner, \$200 and confiscated his boat for illegal possession of liquor.