

# PIER 'FRISKING' IS DISCONTINUED AS UNDIGNIFIED

9/18/29 — *Trenton Times*  
Treasury Department Not  
Concerned with Small  
Quantities of Liquor

WASHINGTON, Sept. 18.—The undignified and often embarrassing custom of hip-patting and personal searching of passengers landing from liners arriving from foreign ports by United States customs officers is to be discontinued, and customs officials at the various ports have been so notified, it was learned at the Treasury Department.

While customs officials at many ports have already abandoned the hip-patting and searching procedure Assistant Secretary of the Treasury Seymour Lowman was advised today that it is being carried on by officials who attend the gang planks of trans-Pacific liners at San Francisco. Mr. Lowman then disclosed that this was not only against the orders of his department but that the Treasury now regards personal searching of passengers as undignified and unbecoming in the conduct of the customs service.

The assistant secretary stated that customs officials had been given orders not to embarrass individual passengers landing from liners. He agreed that some passengers might possibly be carrying a small amount of liquor on their persons, but that the majority did not, and in any event it could not influence prohibition enforcement as a whole.

The assistant secretary disclosed that hip-patting is to become obsolete when his attention was called to a recent personal searching episode when passengers landed from a Japanese liner in San Francisco.

The customs officials standing at the gangplank on which first class passengers issued were conducted to the pier, appeared to be working, according to the informant, for the amusement of a crowd of some 200 persons, who lined either side of the gangway, waiting for the passengers to leave the ship. The officer in question would permit individual passengers to pass before him and would then shout gruffly, "hey." The passenger he had singled out would be stopped and the officer would then shuffle forward and proceed to pat the passenger over, ostensibly to ascertain if liquor was being smuggled ashore. The crowd would titter and the embarrassed passenger would then be permitted to proceed.

Assistant Secretary Lowman today branded this procedure as both undignified and unnecessary on the part of customs officials. He further disclosed that no customs official is authorized to frisk passengers on the pier unless there was strong reason to suspect that the individual was attempting to smuggle liquor. The Secretary agreed that it would be virtually impossible to smuggle any important quantity of liquor in this manner. He indicated

that the situation at San Francisco would be looked into at once.

The Treasurer, Mr. Lowman indicated, is not concerned with comparatively infinitesimal quantities of liquor which some enthusiastic passenger might desire to bring ashore. While this is against the law and the customs would be justified in preventing it if possible, he is of the opinion that frisking and hip-patting is no way to greet either Americans returning to their home country or foreigners, distinguished or otherwise, entering the United States. He disclosed for the first time that it will definitely be stopped.

The customs, asserted Mr. Lowman, is naturally concerned with liquor which may be found in the baggage of passengers coming into the country. It is mandatory, he said, to confiscate liquor so found.

Customs officials on the Canadian border, he disclosed have even devised an ingenious method of examining automobiles by asking the driver to halt over a mirror so that the entire bottom of the car may be seen. If suspicious appearing containers are observed, the driver is asked to submit his car for a more studied examination. At ocean ports, and also at land ports, on the Canadian and Mexican borders, Mr. Lowman asserted there is no authorization for customs officers to frisk passengers except in most exceptional and suspicious cases.

## Quillan Due to Get Dry Permits Post

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Joseph Quillan, chief chemist in the New York prohibition unit many years, probably will be appointed assistant administrator in charge of New Jersey permits by October 1. William J. Calhoun, administrator, said today he was

confident the appointment would be made.

The appointment will fill the position vacant since the transfer of Ludo C. Pickett, after a fist fight with Chief Inspector Abraham Miller, who also was transferred. Miller was replaced by William Sullivan, who had been attached to the New York unit.

Calhoun intends to obtain experts to fill positions in the state dry unit.

"In picking my staff," he said, "I intend to get the best men in the country and I'll keep after each one I want until I get him. If we are to clean up the state we should get the men who are best qualified to do it."

## Truck of Beer Seized

A large truck loaded with seventy-five half barrels of beer was seized early today by Federal prohibition agents in a garage at 287 Halsey street. Prohibition officials are conducting an investigation to locate the owners of the truck and beer. *News* 9/24/29