

# England Has Holdup and Robbery Problems

By George Abell of Stouffville  
 If ever I mention the nice sunny weather here you can be sure that it will pour with rain for the next month or so. If I write about food coming off ration it would be the signal for controls to be increased. About a year ago one of my letters described how peaceful and law-abiding this country seemed to be. May I blush unseen, for ever since then the news of crime and assorted skull-duggery has taken up as much space in the papers each day as the Royal Family. As the British Press uses about half its space describing what each member of the Royal Family has for breakfast and dinner it can be seen that crime is on the upswing. You are used to the common or garden variety of break-in robbery,

mostly of business premises at night and this country has its share of the same. But the gum shoe boys here specialize in looting the homes of the very rich of fur coats and jewels. Douglas Fairbanks Junior's London house has been cleaned out so often lately that he has put up a sign at the gate, "Nothing left," gentlemen, try somewhere else." This gang apparently has the best of staff work and organization for they have got clean away with a half million pounds worth of jewels and furs in the last year and usually get in and out of the house when the occupants are at supper or looking at television. Scotland Yard and the insurance companies are talking to them

selfs just now over the recent series of mail bag robberies. There have been twenty of these and the loot in every case is soiled paper money being sent to the Bank of England to be destroyed. What a marvellous spy system the bandits have. How do they know which trains are carrying this money? How do they get in and out of the locked train compartments and not be seen? How do they know exactly which ones of a pile of mail bags hold bundles of paper money? The answers to these questions would be worth a lot more than 64 dollars. The prize effort in this line was last May when this gang got away with a whole truckload of old money, nearly a million dollars worth, that was being taken from one of the London stations to the

Old Lady of Threadneedle St. Must be easy loot to get rid of, well used pound and ten-shilling notes. Another line of endeavour that is popular at the moment is pay roll theft. It's got to the point when the big firms use every precaution to camouflage the routes, times, etc. of the week's payroll being brought in; but it doesn't do much good. As with the jewel thieves, these payroll bandits have a perfect spy system and get at least one good haul a week. The technique has become standardized and a little rough. Two and sometimes three stolen cars are used. One cuts in front of the pay roll car and drives it off the road. Then the thugs pull out the two company men, beat them up, take the money, jump in the remaining car or cars and roar away. It's something new here for violence to be used like that, and what is worrying the forces of law and order is that there is so much

of it lately. Just as in Toronto, there is a lot of hand-bag snatching and it has now become the accepted routine that the robber beats up the woman when he steals her bag, whether she tries to protect it or not. There are many theories put forward as to why this increase in brutality. The old whipping boys of gangster films and crime magazines are high on the list. The more violent type of American comics are also blamed. In this the English are just like the Canadians: always get around to blaming the Americans for things they don't like. But to many people the real reasons for the thugs getting tough is the abolition of corporal punishment and the shortage of policemen in the streets. Beside the rough type of crime there is also plenty of the usual style. The British armed forces seem well up on the list lately. As

a British major gets about the same pay as a Canadian lance corporal and has to live on a different scale, there are a half dozen officers in trouble every week. The favorite means of increasing pay seems to be embezzling mess funds or cooking the pay records. Can't blame them for being sticky-fingered though, especially when they see what other people with less responsibility get in the way of salary. This summer has seen the usual amount of wise ones try to beat the bookmakers with crooked bets. Betting off the tracks is as legal here as the Y.M.C.A. is in Canada, and must be done on credit and mostly by mail. The weird and wonderful schemes that come to light for getting poney postmarks on the envelopes make you think that the people who do it should try to make an honest living. They'd go far! Bye for now.

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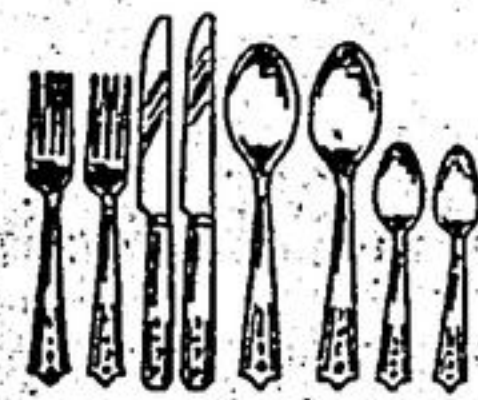
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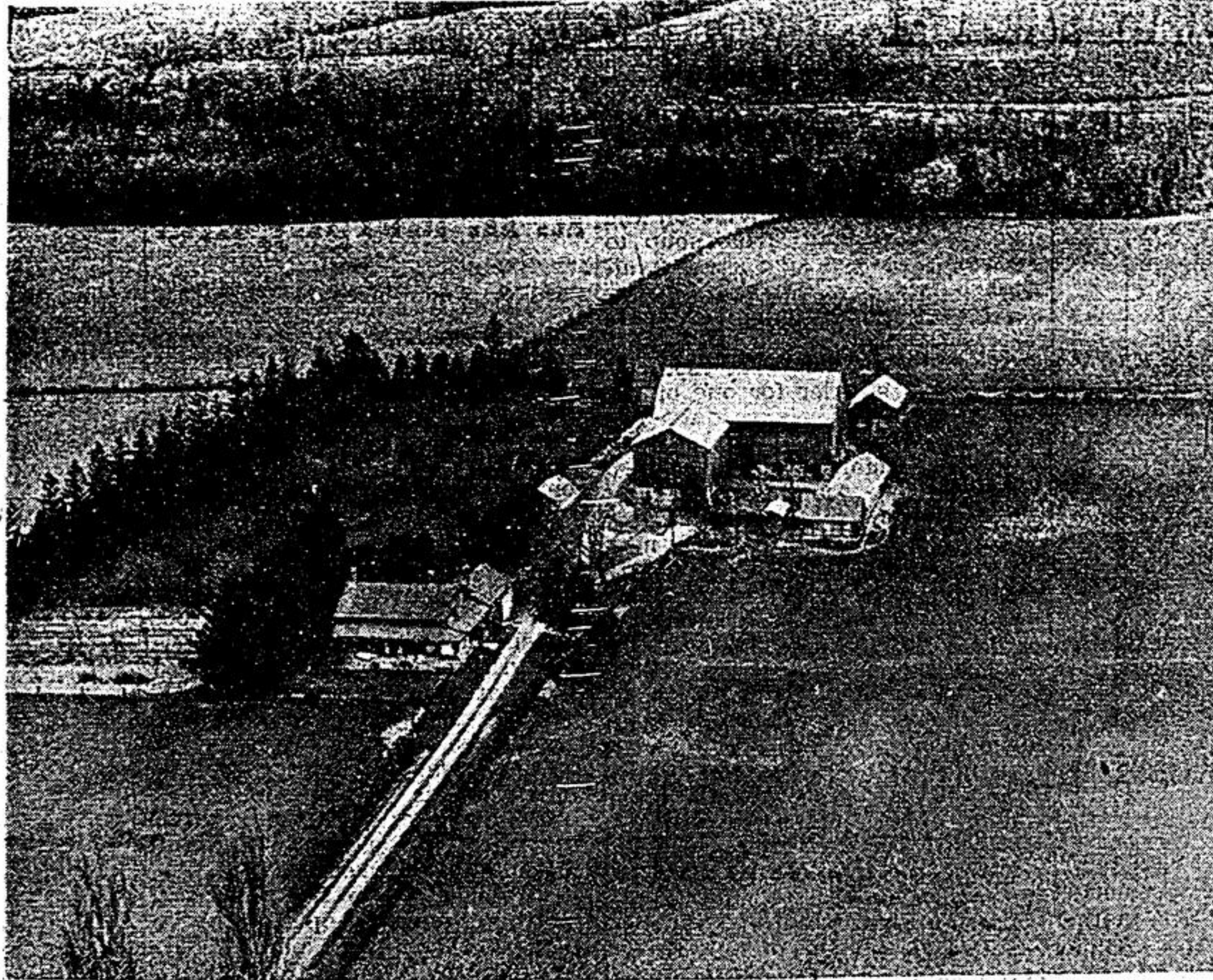
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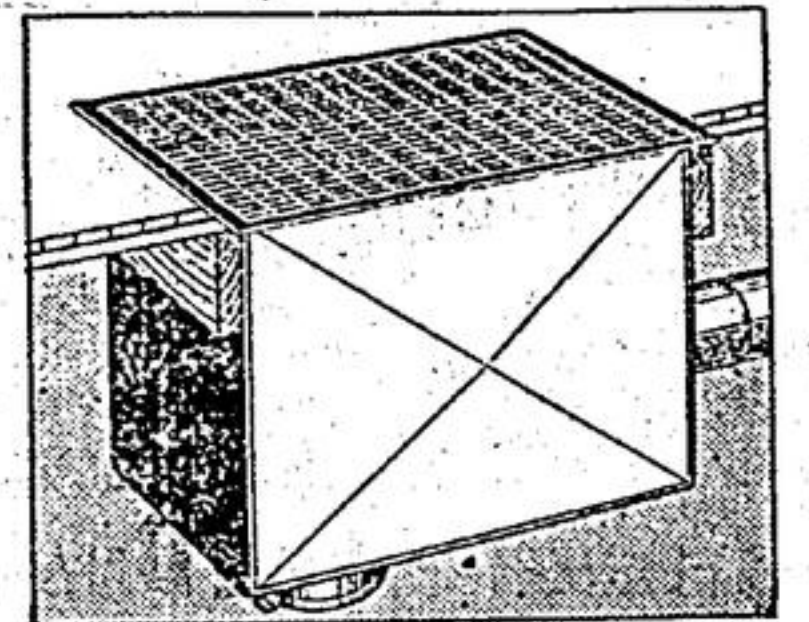
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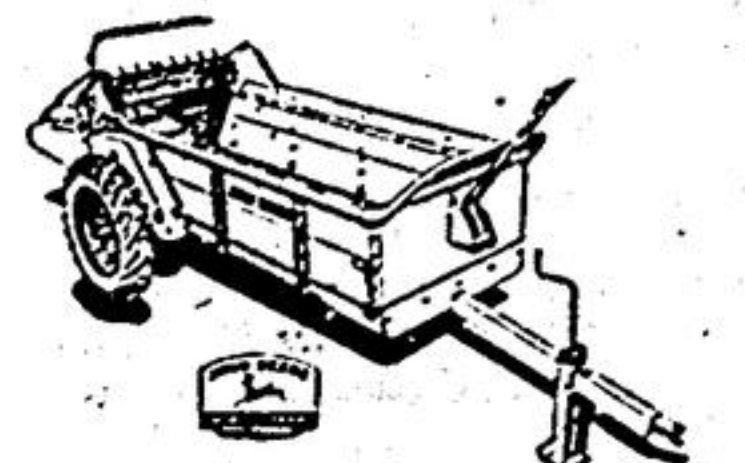
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