

## Booze Is Big Business, Even Booze in the Bushes



This pair of king-sized backwoods stills is shown just after they were blown up by ABC officers last week just north of Kinston. Each was built of welded sheet steel, 12 feet long, six feet wide and three feet deep, they had a capacity of about 1,500 gallons each, and were fired by at least four oil burners each.

The cap of these stills was a 55-gallon oil drum, which is frequently the size of an entire still. The condenser was a 500-gallon vat. They were capable of turning out 600 gallons of non-taxpaid whisky per week and officers estimate they had been in operation eight to 12 weeks. — See Story on Page 4.

In the past week Lenoir County ABC officers destroyed two backwoods booze factories with rated capacities of 1,000 and 3,000 gallons each.

These are among the largest illicit elixir factories recently found and destroyed in this neck of the woods.

Based on a one-for-ten return these bootleg industries had a capacity of turning out something near 1,600 gallons of pure headache drops per week. One had obviously been in production for several months and the other was dynamited before it made the first drop of liquid

dynamite.

No one can possibly know what percentage of the booze consumed in the United States comes from these stump-hole production centers, because the owners and operators are reluctant to reveal their output and income figures to anyone, much less government-type statisticians.

But the government keeps exceedingly good books on the legal grog trade, and it is a considerable part of the national economy.

For the last fully documented year (1965) legal production of

those assorted alcoholic beverages went thisaway:

Across the nation 197 breweries made 100,306,000 barrels of 31 gallons each of beer — or 3,109,517,000 gallons, or 15.5 gallons for every man, woman and child in the land.

In the same year 153 legal distilleries squeezed out 117,930,000 gallons of booze, the vineyards of the nation fermented 565,055,000 gallons of "still" wine and 6,358,000 gallons of effervescent wines. And these figures do not include all the Scotch hauled in from Scotland, wines from a dozen or more lands, and a smaller assortment of whiskies and beers from other countries. These imports, in dollars and cents added up to \$426,000,000 in '65.

The per capita consumption of these beverages amounted in '65 to 1.35 gallons of booze per year, 16.19 gallons of beer and .95 gallons of wine.

The kind of booze milked out of backwoods operations such as that pictured with this article quite correctly is called, by the government "non-taxpaid".

To the drinker there are countless kinds of booze: Bourbon, Scotch, rye, blends, gin, vodka, cognac, brandy, rum and sometimes combinations of these. But so far as the government is concerned there are on-

ly two kinds: Taxpaid and non-taxpaid.

On that taxpaid variety in 1965 there were \$3,793,000,000 (that's billions) paid in federal taxes and state governments collected another \$917,000,000.

The federal tax is \$10.50 per proof gallon on the hard stuff. That "proof gallon" phrase means 50 per cent alcohol by volume.

On beer the tax levied by the "feds" is \$9 for each 31-gallon barrel.

The federal tax on wine begins at 17 cents per gallon for wine with not over 14 per cent alcohol, 67 cents per gallon for wines with more than 14 per cent but not over 21 per cent alcohol and those wines between 21 and 24 per cent alcohol are taxed at \$2.25 per gallon. Effervescent wines are taxed at \$3.40 per gallon, liqueurs and cordials are taxed at \$1.92 per gallon.

Then comes the state tax after all this federal collecting is done.

For fiscal '65-66 North Carolina collected \$12,349,350 from

liquor taxes (12 per cent sales tax) another \$13,008,328 in beer tax and \$1,617,181 wine tax.

Then comes the county ABC store tax: This amounted to another \$11,451,301 in the most recent fiscal year reported.

The North Carolina tax on beer is \$10.50 per barrel — worse than the federal, of 3½ cents per 12-ounce container, or 9.33 cents for containers over 12 ounces up to a quart. The state wine tax is 80 cents per gallon for unfortified wine and \$2.40 per gallon for fortified wine — which is wine to which grain alcohol has been added.

Legal booze sales in North Carolina for '65-66 totalled \$118,304,629; on which counties, cities and special alcoholic rehabilitations funds took out another big chunk.

Lenoir County grossed \$1,692,682 that year, set aside \$11,358 for law enforcement, another \$30,881 for sobering up drunks and reported a net profit of \$214,904.

Jones County for the same year grossed \$346,237, with net

(Continued on page 5)

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