

also a fact that most law enforcement agencies cannot afford them. The RCMP's eight forensic labs provide their services to all Canadian police agencies, other government agencies and the courts. Lab services include a number of disciplines or sections: serology, alcohol, chemistry, hair and fibre, documents, firearms, toxicology and counterfeits. The Serology Section analyses blood and other biological stains as they relate to a victim or crime scene. The Alcohol Section determines blood alcohol levels in impaired driving cases, supports the RCMP Breath Testing Programs and also analyzes home-brew or "moonshine" samples. Chemistry Section provides forensic services in arson cases, and in hit-and-run cases, where a single fleck of paint can be traced to a specific make, model and year of vehicle. Hair and Fibre Section can trace samples back to an individual or suspect and can even physically match materials like aluminum foil (used in wrapping illicit drugs), linking a foil exhibit to a specific roll. Documents Section examines altered handwriting, signature forgeries or typewritten samples which can be traced to a specific make and model of typewriter. Firearms Section determines if a weapon is restricted or legal, or if a particular bullet found at a crime scene was fired from a suspect's gun. Toxicology Section can receive blood and tissue samples from drug overdose victims or suicides, then determine whether the drug was the cause of death or if other factors were involved. Counterfeit Section analyses bogus currency or other illegally altered documents and samples are examined and catalogued for future reference.

RCMP laboratories are also researching new identification processes using DNA probes. This futuristic research, conducted by a molecular geneticist, is a ground-breaking technique in the field of forensic identification. The process involves matching genes from one sample to another, and would enable investigators to identify suspects without

the aid of fingerprints, positive eyewitness identification or a weapon. The suspect or victims genes can be compared with another sample for a positive match, because no two people, even twins, are genetically identical.

But too often the spotlight shines on the remarkable advances in scientific methodology and equipment and the people involved are overlooked. The following excerpts from a speech by retired Insp. Bob Kropinak (former OIC Forensic Laboratory, Regina), at fiftieth anniversary celebrations, shows the importance of people in the success of the Forensic Laboratories.

"The beginning was small but times have changed. Now we talk about the Crime Detection Laboratories, the Forensic Laboratories... at times we tend to relate to the laboratories as almost an impersonal entity... Yet, when you take a moment to reflect, when you come together for a meeting, a conference, a workshop or a course, when you gather for a "Robbie" (curling bonspiel) or to celebrate an anniversary such as we are doing this weekend, it becomes very apparent that the labs are first and foremost a group of **people** — and more than that, a cadre of working associates and friends...

Now, to those young men and women here today and to those unable to attend this celebration, who are beginning their professions as forensic scientists and support personnel. You know who you are. I refer to those of you who are understudying, those preparing to write exams and get through that "mock" trial; those waiting impatiently to get that first court case "under your belt" — but at the same time apprehensive because you may not get qualified. Believe me when I say, "You have inherited