

WANTED: Real Men

By ANDREW SNADDON

IN THIS day when group insurance, pension plans, holidays with pay, chances for advancement and good starting-wages are the lure for potential employees in almost every line of business, the following advertisement seemed like something out of the past.

"A law enforcement career is available to a limited number of young men who are prepared to accept the rigorous training, strict discipline, self-denial and often long hours of work, which are requisites of the service.

"In return they will receive satisfaction, prestige and a measure of adventure while serving in all parts of Canada", Qualifications, "basic" qualifications, include: Character; Exemplary, Health; Perfect, plus excellent physical condition.

A yellowed clipping from an old newspaper file?

No. A 1955 advertisement for the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

The force undoubtedly needs men.

But it is not begging anybody.

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The RCMP could stress the fact that there is a good pension. It could point to the fact that dental and medical care are available to its members. The pay (I hope my friends in the local detachment will forgive me) compares with other police forces. The RCMP could draw on a great fund of romantic fiction to lure young men to a life of excitement, but it is coldly realistic.

Our armed services are looking for men too. They know their own recruiting problems and have to meet modern conditions. Their advertising rarely ever mentions that a man may have to work for a living, that he may have to put up with a lot of discomfort, or might get killed. It tends to stress the fact that Jolly Jack will have a wonderful life on south sea cruises, or jet-planing about Europe on a taxpayer's tour. There's always the theme about learning a trade, with the implication that once you've done that, you can get out and have it made on civvy street.

Perhaps the RCMP ad is too honest. Let's hope not, because if Canadian young men are solely interested in what they are going to get when they are old enough for a pension, and strictly an eight-hour day, this country is not going very far. I'm told the recruiting is going fairly well—but not because it is easy to get in.

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police has a fine reputation. It did not get it the easy way. It won't keep it the easy way. The men at the top know it won't keep that reputation if the men who come in are men who are looking for a soft touch.

For it is a tough job. Probably no other police force in the world has such a wide variety of duties, or covers such a vast area. The responsibility that can fall on a young policeman in a remote detachment is tremendous. The hours of work can, and often are, long, although one NCO used to like to tell me "we never ask a man to work more than 24 hours in any one day".

Naturally it is not all bad, either. Mounted Policemen, among themselves, will natter long and loud about the service. Let an outsider cut in with complaints and he'll find they close ranks to uphold its virtues. For they are Mounted Policemen and they are proud of it. That "rigorous training" and "rigid discipline" is no understatement, but a man who goes through it has something to be proud of, for not all men can do it.

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Does the training and the discipline lead to regimentation and destruction of individuality? It doesn't seem to, for the Force seems to run to men with a broad streak of independence and enough individuality to classify as "characters". Like the one who filled an NCO's baggage with whitewashed rocks—but that's another story.

Of course there must have been RCMP officers who have gone crooked. There have been cases of them exceeding their authority. There are incidents of laxity and carelessness. But the Force has a way of policing itself and orderly-room punish-