

law enforcement as well as for their provincial laws, and for judicial administration within their boundaries; that the Force has exclusive police jurisdiction in the Yukon and the Northwest Territories. We learned that cities and larger municipalities have their own police forces to enforce criminal, provincial as well as municipal laws. We were informed that the Force had just signed contracts with each of the Maritime provinces and two of the Prairie provinces to take over their policing responsibilities and that their provincial police forces were being absorbed by the RCMP. Saskatchewan was already under such contract. (Newfoundland and British Columbia followed in 1950.)

We certainly did not spend all our time studying, however. Since the horses had to be exercised every day except weekends much of our time was taken up with mounted drill. On weekends and holidays two men were detailed as stable orderlies, responsible for feeding the horses and keeping the stable clean. They had to be on their toes, since the orderly officer might appear at any time to inspect.

This meant the men on duty had to be ready with the shovel every time a horse messed — and that was often. One smart recruit hit upon the nasty but effective trick of banging a shovel on the cement floor at regular intervals, scaring the animals and making them poop in unison. After cleaning up he could relax for a while. But most of us were too fond of our mounts to stoop to such tactics. In fact, since each recruit was generally allowed to keep the same horse for the whole training period he became very much attached to it, and the horse to him.

I had spent my first year in Canada on a farm in Alberta and done a lot of horseback riding. I was fond of horses and in no time "Dick" and I became

good friends. To be sure, we had our difficulties at the start because I was used to the stock saddle, which calls for a different posture from that of the military type. But Dick soon learned to respond instantly to my signals indicating change of direction, speed and lead foot, and it was as much to his credit as mine that I never suffered the indignity of a spill during my seven-month training period.

Our riding instructor was Sergeant "Jockey" Jones, a cavalry type seasoned by all the battles of the British Imperial Army, judging from the rows of ribbons on his chest. He fitted the stereotype of the tough and gruff drill instructor: woe betide the rider who goofed, acted smart or ill-treated his horse. Jockey would ride alongside him and give him the benefit of a vocabulary acquired over decades on the parade ground. The hapless victim would soon wish himself anywhere but on that riding range.

If, as sometimes happened, the whole squad performed below standard, he would order "crossed stirrups" — making us ride without our feet in the stirrups. This was not only hard on the buttocks, it also increased the risk of being thrown.

One day, when Jockey was obviously suffering from a hangover, he carried his form of discipline a step too far. He made us go over the hurdles with crossed stirrups. Several riders were thrown and suffered minor bruises and scratches while one left the ride with a broken clavicle.

In the end the tough cavalry sergeant turned out a squad of top-notch performers who, in addition to standard drill movements, could give creditable displays in other forms of horsemanship such as tent pegging (spearing a wooden peg from the ground while at a gallop), Musical Ride movements and, yes, going over the jumps with crossed stirrups.