

completed and signed with a fictitious name.

Armed with a search warrant we now proceeded to the farm where the suspect was visiting. He denied any knowledge of the break-in and had a ready alibi for his whereabouts over the weekend in question. While he agreed to give us samples of his handwriting it was obvious even to a novice that he was making an effort to change the slant of his letters. A search of the premises yielded nothing incriminating.

The senior constable and I were just on the point of leaving when, in response to the call of nature, I paid a quick visit to the little red outhouse with the crescent moon cut through the door. The first thing that caught my eye, of course, was the Eaton's catalog resting in a rack beside the two-holer. In callous disregard for the needs of the next person to visit the sanctum I seized the book, which was still almost intact.

On returning to the detachment we scanned every page of the catalog and finally came upon a bit of evidence that was to cinch the case against the suspect. On one page in the jewelry section, indentations identical to the writing on the purchase order were visible. Under the microscope there was no mistaking it — part of the order had been written with the order form resting on the page.

While the stolen goods were never recovered, the accused was convicted on the evidence of a handwriting expert who identified the handwriting with that on the order form and the indentations in the catalog. Because of his criminal record, the accused was given a lengthy prison term.

## **7. THANKS TO THE MEDIA!**

In the early part of its history the RCMP was known as the Silent Force.

Its members went about their duties quietly and unobtrusively, shunning publicity and sensationalism. This tradition became ingrained and has remained unchanged to this day. However, as the years went by the Force became increasingly aware of the importance of good media relations and the role press and radio could play in crime detection and prevention.

In 1938 the Saskatchewan Division began broadcasting regular police bulletins over Regina radio station CKCK. The voice of Staff Sergeant Fryett became familiar to listeners tuning in on the twice-daily fifteen-minute broadcasts. Bulletins were confined principally to inquiries for missing or wanted persons, information about stolen cars, stolen checks or money orders, particulars of major crimes, accident prevention. In the days before the internal radio communication system came into use, the broadcasts also served as a medium for communicating information to detachments throughout the province.

A survey conducted by the radio station showed that the broadcasts had a large audience, and this was confirmed by the quantity of information received in response to police requests. The program was later taken over by the CBC and extended to include Manitoba and Alberta.

Some of the information was valuable in helping to solve crimes. The most notorious case in which the program proved its worth was a murder mystery in Saskatchewan. It began on a chill November day in 1938 when a Winnipeg suburbanite noticed a car, a Chrysler coupe bearing Saskatchewan license plates, parked near his residence. He paid little attention to the car at first but when it was still there the next morning his curiosity was aroused and he decided to take a closer look. He was shocked to see the seat and upholstery spattered with blood.