

sleighs everywhere but most of them were around the livery barn.

Now began the search for a sleigh with red bunks, and there were many of them — red was the most common sleigh paint, it seemed. But undaunted I crawled from under one sleigh to the next until — eureka! — there it was: a scratch in the bunk exactly where it should be, nine inches from the left runner. A team of horses, their faces white with frost, watched warily as I scraped some paint from the sleigh and placed it in an envelope which I sealed and initialled. Exhibit P-2?

After ascertaining the identity of the owner of the outfit, I checked at the grain elevators and learned that he had sold a load of the same grade and variety of wheat as that stolen about a week earlier, while his own wheat was usually of a lower grade mixed with wild oats.

Armed with all this circumstantial evidence I now confronted the suspect, a farmer of the district whose reputation for honesty was none too good. Questioning at first met with flat denials and it wasn't until the suspect had been shown the scratches on his sleigh bunk and I had taken him to the spot where they had been made that he broke down and confessed.

He later reneged on his confession, hired a lawyer and contested the charge, but was found guilty and sentenced to a jail term.

An interesting footnote: before the case came up for trial and while the accused was free on bail, he was approached by the complainant with an offer to have the charge withdrawn on payment of a sum of money far in excess of the value of the stolen wheat. The accused said he would consider the offer but first wanted to talk it over with his lawyer. The result was that the complainant was charged with attempted extortion, but because of lack of cor-

roborative evidence the case was dismissed.

Persistence on the part of the investigator paid off in another case that winter in the Foam Lake Detachment area. Over the years, Eaton's catalog was useful to the Prairie farmer for many purposes — from the ordering of merchandise to its perusal and functional use in the outdoor biffy.

But one ingenious fellow put the volume to more imaginative use — robbery of a post office. One Monday morning the postmaster at the rural post office at Winthorst, south of Foam Lake, found that the premises had been forcibly entered over the weekend. A number of parcels which had arrived the previous week from Eaton's in Winnipeg had been stolen.

We learned that a number of local people had called for their mail on Saturday but the parcels from Eaton's were still there at the end of the day and the addressee was unknown to the postmaster.

Could it be that someone had ordered merchandise under a fictitious name with the intention of stealing it when it arrived? If so, chances were that the culprit was a local resident who would be able to spot the parcels through the post office wicket.

Going on this assumption we began checking on the movements of likely suspects. Several leads were followed up and eliminated, but finally suspicion settled on a young man who had been seen in the post office lobby on Saturday and who was a visitor at his parents' farm at the time. A quick check with headquarters revealed that he had a criminal record.

From Eaton's we learned that the stolen parcels had contained jewelry and other valuables that could readily be converted into cash! We also obtained the order form which had been