

# Cop in the Closet

by ex-Sgt. Jack Fossum

*Cop in the Closet, a book chronicling Mr. Fossum's twenty-one years with the Force, is scheduled for release by Hancock House Publishers Ltd. in late September. Sometimes poignant, often humorous, Mr. Fossum's story provides an entertaining look at his career in the RCMP.*

*Due to the book's length it will appear in five installments in the Quarterly, beginning with this issue. Should anyone wish to buy the book and find it unavailable, it can be purchased directly from the publisher, Hancock House Publishers Ltd., #10 Orwell Street, North Vancouver, B.C. V7J 3K1 Price: \$16.95 in hardcover, cheque or money order, postage paid by the publisher. Ed.*

## 1. ROOKIES, HORSES AND NUDES

In the frozen North they were tracking down the Rat River Mad Trapper; in the Maritimes they were chasing rumrunners; on the Prairies they were corralling cattle rustlers and in British Columbia they were busting drug pushers.

It was in the hope of getting a piece of all this action that I went to the Vancouver headquarters of the RCMP in the winter of 1932 to inquire about joining the Force. To my dismay I learned that some 3000 other young Canadians had beaten me to the punch. But, a genial sergeant said, I might as well add my name to the list and complete an application form. "Naturally we pick only those best qualified," he added.

While I felt it was an exercise in futility, I did proceed to fill in the form. In the process I happened to mention

that I was proficient in some foreign languages — the three Scandinavian and German. The sergeant eyed me with renewed interest. To test my skill he suggested I write letters of application to join the Force in each of these languages and, of course, one in English. I did.

A few months later I was invited back to write a test and, having passed, to be interviewed by the commanding officer, Superintendent Stuart Wood. The C.O., a tall, gray-haired man with drooping moustache and austere mien, was an imposing figure. After asking a few questions about my occupation and background, he said, "These are troubled times for our country. Your knowledge of languages may prove of value to the Force." Perhaps that's what tipped the scale in my favor, for within a couple of weeks I was advised that I had been accepted and should report for training at Vancouver's Fairmont Barracks.

On my arrival at the barracks I was taken in hand by the elderly but dapper Sergeant Major Watson who took me to a large dormitory on the second floor. I looked down the length of a deserted room with two rows of identically made beds a few feet apart. At the head of each bed stood a wardrobe on which hung the occupant's sidearms. Neatly folded on top of the wardrobe with a riding boot on each side was his scarlet tunic. A card attached to each wardrobe bore the member's name, regimental number and rank.

"This," said Watson, tapping a vacant bed with his riding crop, "will be your