

"Silver" Rewarded

RCMP Police Service Dogs are not always so richly rewarded for their efforts on a case as was the "heroine" of this story.

LAST fall the city of Vancouver experienced the worst crime wave in its history and similar outbreaks occurred in the neighboring municipalities of New Westminster and West Vancouver. Among the crimes of violence, armed robbery predominated. In Vancouver, within a four-week period, there were five bank hold-ups, while two in New Westminster and another in West Vancouver brought the total of this type of crime to eight—with more than \$67,000 being taken by the thieves who made successful getaways.

This lawlessness was met by accelerated police vigilance. The resources of municipal police forces were augmented by assistance from the federal force and these counter-measures began to show results by mid-December. The bank robberies had ceased and other major crime had been reduced proportionately. In Burnaby, a municipality of 80,000 people policed by the RCMP, there had been no bank robberies nor had there been any for several years. However, the local detachment had been reinforced by personnel from other points and extra vigilance was maintained into the month of January, when urgent Police requirements elsewhere necessitated the withdrawal of some of the extra strength.

On January 13, however, the Royal Bank of Canada in Burnaby was held up by three armed and masked bandits who cowed the staff of 25 and three customers, scooped up approximately \$27,000 and made their escape. Their entrance into the bank had been witnessed by a municipal employee who had dashed into the nearby post-office and told a clerk to phone the police. In addition, the bank

manager and an accountant also sounded the alarm which was immediately flashed from the B.C. Telegraph Company in Vancouver to the radio centre of the Vancouver City Police. The Burnaby RCMP had a receiver tuned to the Vancouver Police frequency and the Mounted Police operator picked up the Vancouver dispatcher advising of the bank hold-up. The information was then relayed to the RCMP patrol cars then in service in Burnaby. The first car to respond picked up the message while eight blocks away from the bank and it was followed immediately by a second car which had pulled in behind it. Seconds later they were at the bank where eager citizens gave the constables the licence number and description of the bandits' car. Other eye-witnesses indicated the direction taken by the desperadoes and the Police followed.

About two miles to the north a third Police car had heard the call and with siren wailing was already on his way south over the route taken by the bandits' car. Passed by an automobile travelling at high speed, the constable braked sharply to make a U-turn and was joined at that moment by the other Police cars. Less than a mile from the bank the road curves west and then north again in the familiar "S" pattern. The Police saw the speeding car ahead take the first part of the turn but as they followed they found the driver's skill had been unequal to the task of completing the turn. The car was in the ditch and two of its occupants—the bandits—were standing beside it pulling hoods off their heads. The third had disappeared into the bush.