

THE MOUNTED POLICE

HOW NINE HUNDRED MEN KEEP ORDER IN THE WILDS OF THE BRITISH NORTHWEST.

(Special Correspondence of the Desert News by Frank G. Carpenter.)

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REGINA, Saskatchewan.—For the past two months I have been traveling along the Canadian frontier. I have been living in the baby towns of the wild west, and have gone unarmored through some of the least settled parts of the country. The conditions here are far different from those which prevailed in our western states when they were first opened up to immigrants. There are no cowboys dashing through the streets shooting up the towns, there are no hold-ups on the railroads, and the "bad man" from Bitter Creek is conspicuous by his absence. There are plenty of bar rooms connected with the little hotels, but the old settlers do not make a tenderfoot dance by shooting at his toes with a revolver, and murders and lynchings are fewer still than in the settled states of our west and south.

CANADA'S MOUNTED POLICE.

The secret of this good order comes from Canada's mounted police and the fact that the man who commits a crime is bound to be caught and punished. The mounted police is one of the most remarkable military forces in existence. It comprises less than 900 men, but it keeps order throughout a country more than half as large as the United States. A vast part of its territory is wilderness. It runs from here to the Arctic ocean. It has its stations along Hudson's Bay, on the Peace river and in the mining camps of the Yukon. Its members patrol every part of the new wheat belt, where American and other immigrants are taking up homesteads, and they gallop up and down the boundary between the United States and Canada guarding against smuggling and cat-tlethieving and settling any minor troubles which arise between the two peoples.

One of the largest stations of this territory is here at Regina. The mounted police have barracks about two miles from the city, and most of the new men are broken in at this point before they are started out into the service. There are other large stations at Prince Albert, Calgary and Edmonton. They may be found near every Indian reservation and on every spot where trouble is likely to come.

A TALK WITH THE CHIEF.

During my stay at Ottawa I had an interview with Col. Frederick White, the head of this organization, and the man who, more than any other, has had to do with bringing it to its present efficient state. Col. White has been connected with the police for more than 35 years. He has seen it grow from 200 members to almost 1,000, and he has been associated with it in various capacities through all parts of this great British northwest.

I asked Col. White to tell me something as to the extent of the territory under his jurisdiction. Said he:

"Our police precincts run from the boundary of the United States to the Arctic ocean. We have altogether about a million and a half square miles under our jurisdiction. Take Edmonton. That town lies over three hundred miles north of the boundary of the United States. We have policemen on guard there and all along the line east and west to the Pacific ocean and to Hudson's Bay. We have men hundreds of miles to the northward, and we keep a large force in the mining regions of the Klondike. Indeed, we have practically the whole of the sparsely settled and unsettled portions of British North America."

EVERY FARMER A POLICE REPORTER.

"Give me some idea of how order is kept in such a country," said I. "Our arrangements are such that we come in contact with all the settlers. As it is now our policemen ride on horseback through every part of the lands which are being opened up. Every man has his route, and he gallops from farm to farm and town to town, asking every colonist whether anything wrong has taken place since his last visit. If the farmer has no complaints he is asked to sign a report to that effect, and if the contrary his troubles are at once investigated. We have a record of all the settlers, and we go over the route and make the policeman produce these signed statements, showing that each man has been visited. It may be that the farmer will claim his cattle have been stolen. If so, the policeman goes with him to trace the thieves, and if they are found he sees that they are brought to justice and punished. In many cases such complaints are false alarms, and the policeman and farmer find that the stock has merely strayed into some valley near by. Nevertheless, we make many arrests. There were more than 2,000 convictions for crime and other offenses in the Northwest Territories last year. Many of the offenses were petty ones, and this number, all told, covers a population of more than 400,000, scattered over the enormous region I have described. It seems to me small."

"Do you have many murders?"

"We have had 13 in four years," said

Col. White, "and of those 13 only two of the criminals were Canadians."

NO LYNCHINGS NOR HOLDUPS.

"We have never had one man lynched in Canada, and, more than that, we have never had a hold-up on our railroads. I will not say that plans have not been made to rob our trains, but so far we have circumvented them. Indeed the records show that traveling is far

A Talk With the Chief at Ottawa—How the Settlers Are Protected—A Land Without Lynching or Hold-ups—How the Haywood Murderer Was Detected—Queer Features of Police Work on Hudson's Bay and the Yukon Along the American Boundary—The Horse That Chewed the Rope.



MOUNTED POLICE INTERVIEWING A FARMER.

safely in northern Canada than in the western part of your country. I remember two or three instances when occurred recently where men had evidently schemed to hold up the trains on the Canadian Pacific railroad. In one of these the would-be thieves had a team of fine horses and a carriage shipped to the point where they expected to rob the train. Our police knew something was wrong, and we had a force on the lookout. The men found that we were watching them, and as a result they gave up the attempt and drove off toward the south. We have not heard of them since."

THE STORY OF A CRIME.

"I should think there must be many crimes in the northern wilds which could never be discovered," said I. "I don't believe it," replied Col. White. "Our police get reports from every part of the territory. They are careful in collecting information, and anything out of the way is sent in to them. They are able detectives, and they discover crimes which would puzzle a Sherlock Holmes. Take the murder of Edward Hayward, a young Englishman, who was killed at the Lesser Slave lake away up in the wilds, hundreds of miles from nowhere, about a year ago. His murderer was discovered and convicted by the mounted police, and he was hanged only a short time ago."

The murderer's name was Charles King, an American, who came from Salt Lake City to Edmonton, where he met Edward Hayward, an English immigrant. Hayward had brought some money with him, expecting to settle and make his fortune in our northwest. He fell in with King at Edmonton, and King filled his head with the possibilities of fortune-making in the far north. He persuaded Hayward to buy horses, tools and arms, and go with him to look for gold mines, which he said existed about the Lesser Slave lake. Soon after this the two men started off with a full prospecting equipment. They had been gone some weeks when an Indian notified one of the sergeants of the mounted police, of the vicinity where he had been camping, that two strangers had come into the country, and that one of them had disappeared. The Indian said that he had noticed a big fire where the camp was, and that the ashes covered so much ground that he was sure something was wrong. The mounted policeman then went along with the Indian. He found the remains of the fire, and followed a track evidently made by one man, which led away from it. He kept on the trail and after many days came up with King on his way back to Edmonton. The policeman asked King what had become of his companion, and King replied that he had taken another trail and gone on to British Columbia. This seemed very strange to the policeman, and he arrested King on the charge of murder, and started back to get the evidence. The first thing he did was to gather up the ashes of the camp fire and sift them. The result was that he discovered pieces of flesh and bones, and also two or three buttons, a salmaker's needle and a watch chain used for carrying a gold coin. All these things were packed up and shipped east to be examined and analyzed by our specialists. Their report was that the bones were those of a human being.

"In addition to this the policeman traced King's tracks to a little lake nearby. With the assistance of another policeman he cut a ditch and drained the lake. Upon its bottom lay two pairs of boots and other articles which were afterward proved to have been sold to Hayward. When the case was tried, a brother of Hayward was brought out from England to identify some of these articles, and the result of the whole was that King was convicted and hanged."

A curious statement was made at this trial," concluded Col. White. "We had proven that the murder was committed on September 18, away out there on the banks of some Lesser Slave lake. At the trial it was stated under oath

that on the morning of Sept. 19, the day following the murder, Henry Hayward, the brother, who has been at North Mundham, England, told his sister of a hideous dream he had had that night, in which he had seen his brother Edward shot and flung upon a huge bonfire. This story was told months before the Canadian government had communicated the news of the death to the family."

A BAND OF EXPLORERS.

"The mounted police are doing a great deal in the way of explorations," continued Col. White. "They go ahead and make the trails, and prospectors and settlers follow them. They have opened up the Rocky mountains and have cut passageways through the wilds to Alaska and the Pacific coast. On such trips the policemen erect houses along the trail, and leave supplies of bacon and other provisions for travelers who come after, who might find themselves without food away off in the wilds. The trouble of many of our mining prospectors is that their food supplies run out at about the time they reach the place where they expect to work. They must then go back or starve. Such men can get fresh supplies at these rest houses. It is surprising that the men who have food will not touch the supplies, unless it is absolutely necessary for their sustenance. In such explorations our men go along and blaze a trail about eight feet wide. It is wonderful how soon others follow and how quickly little hotels grow up along the line. We are making such explorations all the time and are gradually opening up the great northwest."

THE POLICE OF HUDSON'S BAY.

"Are all your police mounted, Col. White?" I asked. "No. There are many regions which are not accessible to horsemen. This is so about Hudson's bay, on the Mackenzie river, and in other parts of the far north. We have a station on Hudson's bay to which we have shipped houses in pieces, and put them together again when they reached their destination. As it is now we go round by ship to Hudson's bay once a year to visit that station. Our policemen there report on the conditions prevailing about the bay, as to the whaling and fur industries and as to how the natives are treated. They have little steamers to patrol the bay and they go up the rivers in canoes and across country with sledges and dogs."

THE POLICE OF THE YUKON.

"What are you doing in the Yukon?" "We have a comparatively large force there engaged in keeping order and to a large extent in governing the country. We are doing what we can to put down gambling, robbery and all sorts of crime, and at the same time are making some explorations. At Dawson we have adopted the finger-print system for the identification of criminals, which promises to become universal over the world. It is now used in England and the United States, and there will some day be a classification bureau of this kind in Canada so that copies of the finger prints of all criminals will be on record for the various police departments of the country. This system was inaugurated by Scotland Yard in 1885, and that department now has in its classification bureau the finger prints of more than 100,000 individuals, from which, they say, they can infallibly identify any criminal whose records in one minute and a half."

HOW THE FORCE IS PAID.

"Tell me something about the pay and qualifications for the police service." "The members of the mounted police receive fairly good wages," replied Col. White. "You must remember they are supplied with free rations and that they live to a large extent in barracks. The constables receive upon starting in 40 cents per day. At the end of the first year their wages are raised to 65 cents,

and they go upward at the rate of 5 cents per day per year until the ninth year, when they get \$1 per day. Four of the staff sergeants are paid \$2 per day, and lower staff sergeants get from \$1.50 to \$1.75 per day, while other non-commissioned officers have from \$1.10 to \$1.25. Among the qualifications are: The men must be unmarried; they must be between 22 and 40 years of age; they must be able to read and write either French or English; must understand horses and be able to ride well. The minimum height is five feet and eight

inches, the minimum chest measurement 35 inches, and the maximum weight 175 pounds. The term of engagement is for five years."

During my travels in Canada I have heard some good stories of the detective ability of these mounted policemen. One of the latest is about a horse belonging to a Canadian rancher which was run across the border into the United States. The horse was a fine gray which could gallop a mile in less than two minutes. The mounted policeman of the district in which it was owned started after the thief one day after it was stolen and tracked him down to Fort Assiniboine, where Col. Otis, afterward Gen. Otis, the governor of the Philippines, was in charge. He found the horse in the hands of a stockman, who claimed that he had owned it for five years and that it had never been out of his hands.

The mounted policeman called upon Col. Otis and told him that he knew the man was lying, and asked him if he would arbitrate the case if it were brought before him. Col. Otis replied that this was outside his duties, but that he would pass judgment if the parties were brought before him. Thereupon the Canadian officer caused the man's arrest by the local police, and man and horse came before Col. Otis. The man swore as to his ownership, saying that he had kept the horse for years.

In the meantime the Indian guide who had assisted the mounted policeman whispered that the horse had a curious trick of chewing up any piece of rope with which he was tied, and that he could free himself from any rope in ten minutes. The policeman communicated this fact to Col. Otis and asked that the horse be put to the test, saying that if he did not chew himself loose he would give up his claim. To this Col. Otis consented. The animal was thereupon tied with a rope to a post close by and all the party walked off to a short distance. They had hardly stepped back before the horse began to chew at the rope. Col. Otis took out his watch and timed him as he bit at his halter again and again with his strong white teeth. It was just seven minutes and a half before he was loose. Thereupon the policeman was told that he could take the horse back to Canada, which he did.

FRANK G. CARPENTER.



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