

British Columbia Provincial Police.—The organization of a permanent police force in British Columbia followed the influx of gold seekers on the Fraser River in 1858. Prior to this time police protection on Vancouver Island had been of a volunteer nature, the settlers themselves forming posses to apprehend flagrant law breakers.

On July 7, 1858, a Commissioner of Police was appointed together with a chief constable, a sergeant and four or five constables and a staff to maintain a gaol for Vancouver Island. The Governor was alive to the necessity of a police force for the gold-field area of British Columbia and Gold Commissioners were appointed under "The Goldfields Act" to each of whom were assigned six police officers. Instructions, however, came from the Governor.

The Commissioner continued the supervision of the police on Vancouver Island, acting at the same time as Magistrate for the community at Victoria.

It will be seen from these regulations that control of the police was somewhat divided but in 1866 the Crown colonies of Vancouver Island and British Columbia were united and the police came under one head at Victoria. New territory was opened up and local justices of the peace were empowered to swear in special constables in cases of necessity.

In these early days the duties of a constable were interwoven with the tasks of other Government branches such as the collection of revenue and other offices unrelated to law enforcement. As time went on, however, the duties gravitated to full-time police service and police districts were established under the control of a Chief Constable who, in turn, was responsible to the Chief Inspector (later the Superintendent). With minor changes, this system continued until 1923 when, by the Police and Prisons Regulations Act, 1923, semi-military ranks were adopted and the Province was divided into Divisions, Districts and Detachments for administration purposes. There are now 5 Divisions, 2 Subdivisions, 27 Districts and 114 Detachments with a total strength of 431 all ranks.

A training school is operated at Headquarters, shortwave radio is used extensively connecting 23 key stations throughout the Province and 8 police boats patrolling the coast are also equipped with shortwave and voice transmission. A Criminal Investigation Branch is operative at Headquarters.

Provincial Police also assist Dominion as well as Provincial Departments seeking their aid and municipalities in 1925 were afforded the opportunity to contract Provincial Police Protection; 44 cities have signed these contracts since the amendment.

The Provincial Police has contributed invaluable help to youth activities. Talks are given on such subjects as, behaviour, good citizenship, traffic safety, firearms and explosives, camping and camp precautions, first aid, etc. Voluntary assistance is also rendered to promote sports and games, and youth organizations call upon individual members of the Provincial police for instruction.

Section 3.—Municipal Police Statistics

Police statistics were collected from 190 cities and towns of 4,000 or over population in 1945. The aggregate population of this group of cities and towns was 5,108,995 (1941) and the total number of policemen was 6,086 or one for every 839 of population.

A total of 501,294 offences were reported to the police. Arrests numbered 142,135 and 245,795 summonses were issued.