

In 1877 a major reform occurred when under the Constables Act (R.S.O. 1877, c. 72) the necessity for giving certain constables jurisdiction throughout the Province was recognized. County judges were authorized to allocate Provincial Constables to every county and district in Ontario.

Later, the opening up of the mining areas in the north of the Province and the accompanying lawlessness brought to the fore the realization that more adequate law-enforcement measures were a necessity. Consequently, an Order in Council dated Oct. 13, 1909 (confirmed by 10 Edw. VII, c. 39, 1910) was passed providing for the establishment of the "Ontario Provincial Police Force", to be composed of a Superintendent and such inspectors and constables as were deemed necessary. The officers were stationed throughout the northern portion of the Province and at all border points in southern Ontario. The Force was completely reorganized; in 1921, under the authority of the Ontario Provincial Police Act, the appointment of a Commissioner of Police for Ontario was made and the strength of the Force considerably increased:

The Constables Act was amended in 1929 with a view to establishing closer relationship and co-operation between the Provincial Police Force and County Constabularies. Twenty-eight counties took advantage of this legislation and a member of the Ontario Provincial Police was appointed as Acting High Constable in each of these counties. In 1929 also, an Ontario Provincial Police Training School was established at General Headquarters for the tuition and guidance of recruits.

In March, 1930, the control and administration of the officers who had been enforcing the Highway Traffic Act under the supervision of the Department of Public Highways was transferred to the Department of the Attorney-General under the Commissioner of the Ontario Provincial Police. A combined Provincial and Municipal Police Training School was inaugurated at Toronto in March, 1935. This school provides advanced training in medical, legal, scientific and technical activities for provincial and municipal police officers.

By the Police Act, 1946, proclaimed Feb. 1, 1947, all former legislation and amendments dealing with constables were repealed. Under this Act, the duties and responsibilities of police forces are, for the first time in the history of the Province, clearly defined. Up to Mar. 31, 1948, 52 municipalities have availed themselves of the provisions of the Police Act, for the policing of their municipalities by the Ontario Provincial Police.

At present the Force, with a strength of approximately 811, consists of a General Headquarters at Toronto and 16 Districts with headquarters at: Chatham, London, Dundas, Niagara Falls, Aurora, Mount Forest, Barrie, Peterborough, Belleville, Perth, Cornwall, Haileybury, Sudbury, Cochrane, Port Arthur, and Kenora. Each district has detachments adequate to meet law-enforcement requirements. A Criminal Investigation Branch of the Force, under the command of a Chief Inspector, is maintained at Toronto. This Branch investigates crimes of a major nature. A frequency modulation radio-communication system is being installed to assist the Force in coping with the ever-increasing demands of law enforcement.

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 that time police protection on Vancouver Island had been of a volunteer nature, the settlers themselves forming posses to apprehend flagrant law breakers.