

and of good character. The command was to be divided into Troops. The commanding officer was to be termed "Commissioner", and have the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel. The term of service was to be for at least three years. The Force was to be a semi-military body, the immediate objectives being to stop the liquor traffic among the Indians, to gain their respect and confidence, to break them of their old practices by tact and patience, to collect customs dues, and to perform all the duties of a police force. An Act passed in 1874 prohibited the importation or manufacture in the Northwest of intoxicating liquors, and a Board of Indian Commissioners was appointed to deal with treaty-making and general policy.

The authorized strength of the Force was 300 men, but it was decided, for the time being, to form only three Troops of 50 men each. These Troops were sent that autumn (1873) over the so-called Dawson Route from the head of Lake Superior. They reached Red River in late October and proceeded to the Lower Fort Garry, or "Stone Fort", 20 miles down the river from Winnipeg.

The newly appointed Commissioner was not slow to understand that, upon penetrating the plains, the Force would have to be well prepared and that, beyond the farthest point reached by the Boundary Commission, the country would be practically unknown. When it was realized that 150 men would be insufficient for the task in hand, further recruiting was authorized to bring the Force to the full 300. The three additional Troops left Toronto in the late spring of 1874. The westward journey was made by train through Chicago and St. Paul to a point in North Dakota a few miles south of the Manitoba section of the International Boundary. From there they proceeded across the 'line' and were joined by those who had wintered at the Stone Fort.

**The Great March.**—On July 8, 1874, the entire Force of six Troops struck westward from the little settlement of Dufferin on the Red River, the headquarters of the Boundary Commission. The Boundary was to be paralleled as nearly as possible at a reasonable distance, the chief objective being the forks of the Bow and Belly Rivers in the land of the Blackfeet. Reports had it that the whisky traders from the Missouri occupied a main establishment in that area, grimly termed "Fort Whoop-Up", and that the most diabolical orgies were rampant in the Indian camps.

Day after day, the travel-worn cavalcade, accompanied by ox-carts, wagons, cattle for slaughter, several field pieces and mortars, mowing machines and other equipment, faced new difficulties. The long grind from the Red River left its impress on the little army, but the first rough experiences disclosed a stamina and endurance that augured well. After more than two months of hard travel the junction of the Bow and Belly Rivers was reached, but Fort Whoop-Up could not be found and, with provisions all but exhausted and with horses, oxen and beef cattle reduced in numbers, the red-coated troopers turned southward through immense herds of buffalo to the Sweet Grass Hills near the Boundary.

Being now within easy access of the big supply centre of Fort Benton on the Upper Missouri, the Commissioner and Assistant-Commissioner left the Force encamped and proceeded southward to purchase supplies and horses. Meantime, arrangements had been made for the construction of a headquarters barracks on the Swan River, near the Hudson's Bay Company post of Fort Pelly, far to the northeast. After returning to Sweet Grass, the Commissioner set out with "D" and "E" Troops for Swan River. He found the barracks incomplete and, leaving an officer and a Troop in charge, returned for the winter to Dufferin (later Emerson),