

and influence the multiplying citizenry of the plains. Branch railways had begun to appear. The entire west was settling down to a more prosaic, if more varied, form of life. So successfully and completely had the Force assumed control that by 1894 its strength was gradually reduced to approximately 800 men.

About this time the North began to come within the orbit of the Force. An outpost was established at Cumberland House, 200 miles down the Saskatchewan River from Prince Albert, and patrols were made into the Peace River District and along the Mackenzie River, far north of Edmonton. In the spring of 1895 the taking of a census throughout the plains was entrusted to the Police; Assiniboia, Saskatchewan and Alberta combined had a population of 65,873 whites and 7,633 half-breeds. During that year and the one following there were ample indications that much remained to be done on the plains before the Indians could be permanently regarded as peaceful wards of the nation.

*The Yukon Gold Rush.*—In 1895 the vanguard of what was to be a feverish stampede of miners and prospectors to the Yukon goldfields appeared and it became obvious that some form of police control was necessary. Leaving Regina, a detachment of 20 selected officers and men struck for the north and after 4,800 miles of travel by steamer up the Pacific Coast and the Yukon River, Fort Cudahy, a trading post at Forty Mile Creek, which then became the most northerly military outpost in the British Empire, was reached. There followed one of the greatest gold rushes in the history of the world, chiefly headed for Bonanza Creek, a fabulously rich placer. Amid a conglomeration of all classes of people, infested with criminal gangs, the little force of red-coated riders struggled to maintain order. Stirring incidents followed one upon another but, owing to strict vigilance and activity, murders and other major offences were surprisingly few.

One of the outstanding chapters in the records of the Force had begun—an epic that called for the utmost in courage and determination.

By the end of 1897 Police detachments in the area consisted of eight officers and 88 men, including dog-drivers. Detachments were placed on the Chilcoot and White Horse Passes on the Alaskan Boundary, though the line was of doubtful location, and a patrol went overland from Edmonton taking a year to negotiate 1,600 miles of forest and mountain country to reach the goldfields. A Yukon Judicial District was established and the number of Police there was increased until, in 1898, there were 12 officers and 254 men doing duty in the District, despite the fact that the personnel of the Force as a whole had fallen to less than 700. In addition patrols were out in the wilderness of the Peace River and Athabaska Districts.

Headquarters for the Yukon District was Dawson City at the fork of the Klondyke and Yukon Rivers. Skagway, on the United States side of the Yukon-Alaskan Boundary, had earned the title of "the roughest place on earth". In the face of the most exacting conditions the Police prevailed, often carrying their operations across the Boundary with the tacit approval of the United States authorities. In 1898 Yukon was constituted a separate territory by Act of Parliament, under a Commissioner and Council of six members and, realizing that a tremendous task had fallen to the Police, the Government sent a special force of 200 men—drawn from the permanent soldiery of Canada—to assist until conditions improved. The population had reached approximately 20,000. The duty of carrying the mails to the scattered gold camps was undertaken by the Police, 64,000 miles being covered in a single year in the performance of this service. Meantime,