

patrols using boats and dog teams branched out to Peace River, Lesser Slave Lake, Fort Resolution and Fort Simpson. At the end of the year there were 830 of all ranks in the Force.

In 1899 the South African War broke out and 245 members of the Force who were granted leave of absence enlisted in the 2nd Canadian Mounted Rifles and the Strathcona Horse. Many honours, including the Victoria Cross, were won by them. After the War, not a few seasoned westerners retired.

During the post-war period thousands of settlers were streaming westward and, within a short time, 300,000 people, most of whom were inexperienced, took up prairie homesteads. The annals attest to the adventure, hardship and dogged perseverance of the "Riders of the Plains". The modern period had begun.

The Modern Period.—Events followed upon events in the building up of the Dominion and the field of usefulness of the Force was continually broadened. In 1901 a Yukon census was taken, showing over 16,000 whites; the strength of the Yukon Detachment was increased to about 300. In remote portions of the north, the sphere of contact was extended into the wilderness. By 1903 several posts were opened in the sub-Arctic, including Cape Fullerton, McPherson and Herschel Island, the distribution of Police personnel now extending from the International Boundary to the Polar Sea and from Hudson Bay to the Alaskan Border. The records of this period display a splendid, if at times tragic, devotion to duty, as in the case of the following brief scrawl found in the scarlet tunic of a young constable who had perished in carrying despatches over difficult country through a murderous winter storm: "Lost, horse dead. Am trying to push ahead. Have done my best" The profound respect for the Force that had grown up with the years received official recognition in 1904, when the prefix "Royal" was bestowed by King Edward VII to mark the brilliant and steadfast services rendered; the Earl of Minto became the first Honorary Commissioner.

By 1904 there were eight Divisions, each with a headquarters post, embracing 84 detachments. The work was widely scattered, for there were now 350,000 people in the entire field of operations. British rights to the Arctic Archipelago had been transferred to Canada in 1880 and, early in the twentieth century, whalers and Eskimos in Hudson Bay and the Arctic had made the acquaintance of the Mounted Police. In 1905 the Provinces of Saskatchewan and Alberta were created to form with Manitoba a triple division of the plains, but the Force continued its duties with the Provincial Governments sharing in the cost. The Mounted Police had virtually raised the new Provinces to maturity. As evidence of the distances patrols often had to travel at this time in order to establish Canadian jurisdiction and become familiar with conditions of life, the following is related from the records: An Inspector, with a Corporal and three Constables, leaving Fort Saskatchewan on a morning in early June, 1908, headed northward to Fort Resolution on Great Slave Lake, crossed the vast, unfriendly wilderness to Hudson Bay, employed Eskimo dogs to Churchill, and eventually reached Lake Winnipeg in the following spring, a distance travelled of 3,347 miles.

The perpetrators of 44 murders were brought to justice within a period of 12 months, and the Commissioner pleaded for more men. The call was promptly met and, with the total strength, all ranks, at 763, two new detachments were established in Yukon, two in the Mackenzie River District, one on Hudson Bay and 20 at various other locations.