

# Old-timers' Column

## Old-timer Visits Historic Site

In October last, Battleford, Sask., was the scene of a happy gathering when a group of pioneers and friends attending the regular meeting of the Mounted Police Memorial welcomed 74-year-old Reg. No. 2386, ex-S/Sgt. Frederick Walter Light, of Victoria, B.C., and enrolled him as a Distinguished Visitor of the Police Memorial.

Added interest was lent the program when the veteran's grandson reviewed his grandfather's police career. Holder of the R.C.M.P. Long Service Medal, ex-Staff Sergeant Light joined the N.W.M.P. on Nov. 21, 1889, and served continuously in the Force until Sept. 15, 1913, on which date he was discharged to pension with exemplary conduct. He was one of the 24 members who went to England with the diamond jubilee contingent in 1897, and in 1901 was included in the escort that accompanied the Duke of York on his Canadian tour through to the coast. He was stationed at Regina, Sask., and Battleford, and upon retiring took over the duties of postmaster at the latter place, rendering cheerful and willing service from behind the post-office wicket for 13 years. After that he moved to the coast, and his present address is 2124 Pentland Road, Victoria.

## Charcoal's Widow Dies

An old case was brought to mind by the death on Nov. 9, 1946, of Pretty Wolverine Woman at the age of 91 on the Blood Reserve near Lethbridge, Alta. She was the widow of Charcoal, also known by the picturesque names of Bad Young Man and Johnny Dried Meat, a notorious Indian who on Oct. 13, 1896, murdered Medicine Pipe Stem, a fellow-Indian. According to all accounts, the motive behind the crime arose out of the murdered man's amorous attentions to the squaw. For days Charcoal eluded the Police and eventually he shot and killed Reg. No. 857, Sgt. W. B. Wilde who attempted to capture him. (A tablet in Christ Church at Macleod, Alta., commemorates Sergeant Wilde's memory.) Finally Charcoal was convicted of murder and on Feb. 10, 1897, went to his death on the scaffold in the Mounted Police yard which is just west of the present town site of Macleod. (For the story of Charcoal's escapades see 9 R.C.M.P.Q. p. 30.)

## The Dwindling Past

The death of ex-Insp. C. C. Raven (see obituary column this issue) recalls the Almighty Voice episode, for it was Raven, then a sergeant in the Force, who with Insp. J. B. Allan in May 1897 advanced on the wanted Indian's hiding-place in a thickly underbrushed wood. Both Allan and Raven were wounded, the former in the shoulder, the latter in the thigh. They were taken to Prince Albert, Sask., for treatment, while the siege continued until finally Almighty Voice and his two companions were killed, thus ending the case against the murderer of Reg. No. 605, Sgt. C. C. Colebrook, after a ceaseless quest for him of almost two years.

## Rossin House Memories

A short time ago *The Globe and Mail* carried an account of the prospective sale of the Prince George Hotel, nee Rossin House. Later, there appeared an announcement that the Royal Canadian Mounted Police was enlisting 1,000 recruits. Each item was interesting, but taken together they might well stir memories in the minds of some of your older readers.

In April, 1900, there appeared in the columns of *The Globe* a brief statement which I recall ran something like this: "Superintendent Moffatt will be at the Rossin House on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday of next week for the purpose of enlisting recruits for the North West Mounted Police". It will be noted that there was no "Royal" or "Canadian" in the name and the horrible word "Mountie" had not yet appeared. It remained for Hollywood to produce that.

Canada had been pretty well combed through for recruits for the South African war and the Mounted Police in particular had been stripped bare in producing Strathcona's Horse. However, quite a number of candidates presented themselves to Superintendent Moffatt and about 20 of them were accepted. At that time there were less than 700 men in the whole outfit.

Among those accepted from Toronto were Jim MacBrien, Tom Shoebotham, Fred Fowell, Jimmy Moore, Bill (Reckless Bill) Hughes and about ten others, including the writer. After physical examination, we were sworn in in a travellers' sample