

At the time of the Yukon gold-rush, ex-Constable Leader was specially re-engaged by the Force on Jan. 11, 1898, to catch fish for the police dogs in the Lake Tagish district, Yukon Territories. In 1900 he received his discharge and again took over the job of fishery guardian at Qu'Appelle where he remained for the next sixteen years.

He enlisted with the 128th Battalion, C.E.F., at Moose Jaw on Jan. 17, 1916, and served overseas until 1917. He was in the Forestry Corps, after having been recognized as being too old for the front line by one of his old N.C.O.'s, later the famous Col 'Bobby' Belcher. Upon his return to Canada he resumed fishery work until 1920.

The mere recital of these dates taken from official files cannot begin to tell the interesting and colourful story of 'Old Jack's' life in the pioneering west. In 1881 he was in the N.W.M.P. escort for the Marquis of Lorne and his party in their long trek across the prairie. During the Riel Rebellion he acted as a dispatch rider for General Middleton and was present at several meetings of the police and Indians. His wife was a member of the Mackay family, a name well known in the history of early western Canada.

The following letter written by Mr Leader several years ago gives an idea of his work with the police in the troubled 1885 era:

"At the outbreak of the Riel Rebellion, Cpl Frank Dobbs, in charge of Fort Qu'Appelle Detachment was instructed to get all the ex-policemen (N.W.M.P.) to join his command when Asst Commr L. W. Herchmer would come through the district on his way to the battlegrounds. Although Colonel Herchmer changed his route and went via Swift Current, Corporal Dobbs gave me instructions to stay on as scout. My first ride on my old trooper 'Frank' was through the File and Touchwood Hills. I called on the Indian agent at File Hills and on Mr Couture, farm instructor at the Day Star Indian Reserve, then reported back to Fort Qu'Appelle. During April, dispatches came to the fort for General Middleton, and as the telegraph line was out of order, Corporal Dobbs asked me to follow the trail of the general's army and deliver the messages. I overtook the troops over the Touchwood

Hills near the Salt Plains and handed the dispatches to General Middleton in person.

On another occasion I accompanied a police detachment headed by Commr L. W. Herchmer. Chief Piapot and his band had left their reserve and headed for Fort Qu'Appelle. Scenting trouble, the commissioner had come from Regina to Fort Qu'Appelle to deal with the Indian chief. We encountered the Indians near Pasqua Indian Reserve and the commissioner ordered Piapot and his band to return to their own district. Piapot, who didn't like the looks of our nine-pound field gun, complied with the order quietly.

Of course there was much unrest among the Indians and other natives at that time, and being married to a half-breed woman myself, I was able to detect their plans much more readily than I could have otherwise."

Known as one of the best duck shots in the west, the late ex-constable was a keen sportsman and lover of the outdoors. His duck-shooting pass at Leader's Point has been the rendezvous for hosts of sportsmen, including the Duke of Windsor when he was Prince of Wales.

Not for many years has the sound of a mounted police bugle echoed over the Qu'Appelle Valley; but it sounded on June 30, when Trumpeter Jack Storey blew the 'Last Post' for 'Old Jack Leader'. Attending the funeral were over one hundred people from the valley including two of his comrades of '79,— Bob MacKay of Fort Qu'Appelle and Norman Leslie of Lebret. Three generations of the Force were represented at the grave-side,—a serving officer whose father had hunted whiskey smugglers with old Jack in 1881; two presently serving members; Trumpeter Storey, a son of the Force. The Reverend Canon Parker, a younger brother of Captain W. Parker, Medicine Hat, conducted the service. He served as special constable during the Riel Rebellion and knew Mr Leader well.

Nature saw to it that Jack Leader had a fitting afternoon for his last long trip. The valley was at its best after the recent rains; rolling hills and rippling lakes were framed in blue skies and sparkling sunshine, as Jack—frontiersman, soldier, sportsman—was laid to rest.