

ence be made to his distinguished career in this Force. The work performed by General MacBrien in the Military world was of tremendous importance and far-reaching effect and added lustre to Canada's Defence Forces but we, of the Mounted Police, take special pride in thinking of him at this time as our Commissioner. The wholesome effects of his administration will be felt for years to come. As stated by Commissioner Wood the work which he performed in the Force will stand as an enduring monument to his memory. We also feel a pardonable thrill of pride that one who was to be such an influence for general good in other phases of our national life commenced as a recruit in the North West Mounted Police.

On the 7th day of April, 1900, Reg. No. 3588, Constable James Howden MacBrien, was engaged at Toronto by Supt. G. B. Moffatt for a period of five years' service. The small service file bearing the number 3588 contains no indication of the eventual Commissionership. The handwriting has remained unchanged with the passage of years. The signature of the recruit is identical with that of the Commissioner. Of further interest is the statement on the application form, "I have been used to horses all my life," a statement that could have been truly uttered in 1937. The love of horses never changed. A period in the saddle was the unvarying daily routine of the Commissioner. At his home, "Chateau Deschenes" near Ottawa, he maintained a stable of five horses, which he rode, frequently exercising as many as three or four a day, and even the exacting task of piloting aircraft on an extended journey was insufficient to damp his keenness for riding. It is recalled that on one occasion he returned from a solo aeroplane flight from the United States, having covered a distance of 1100 miles in one day. On landing his plane at about six in the evening, he remarked that if he hurried he would "still have time to ride before dark." To indicate further his keen horsemanship it should be mentioned that at the time of his death he held the position of M.F.H. of the local Hunt.

He was discharged from the ranks of the Force on the 27th February, 1901, on joining the South African Constabulary. A letter is on file from Durban, Natal, addressed to Inspector (later Assistant Commissioner) J. O. Wilson, in which the following appears: "I like South Africa and think I will get along better here than in the Mounted Police. I have been confirmed as Sergeant and am recommended for Staff Sergeant. I have been in Durban for a month and my work has been branding and breaking horses."

It was after a period of some six years in the South African Constabulary that he returned to his native land to join the Canadian Militia.

To bring the recital forward to the point where James Howden MacBrien having risen from the rank of Constable becomes the Commissioner of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, it is necessary to turn the pages of over thirty years. On the 1st August, 1931, he assumed the Commissionership of the Force, a position he held for six years and seven months. This period is somewhat below the average incumbency in office, but with the possible exception of the stirring years between 1873 and 1885 it is doubtful if so much activity occurred in our past history in so short a time, so completely did the organization change. Not only did the Force increase (in fact it has doubled in strength) by the absorption of the Provincial work in Alberta, Manitoba, and the Maritimes and the Preventive work throughout Canada, but numerous other changes were wrought. To detail these would be