

APPENDIX U.

ANNUAL REPORT OF VETERINARY SURGEON J. BURNETT, 1896.

REGINA, 21st December, 1896.

The Commissioner,
North-west Mounted Police,
Regina.

SIR,—I have the honour to submit this my annual report for the year ended 30th November, 1896.

Apart from the minor accidents and diseases which horse flesh is heir to, and the severe work which many of them had to perform in the hunt for the Indians Almighty Voice and Charcoal, and in fire patrol work, the health of the horses has been exceptionally good.

Ninety-one remounts were purchased during the year, these being practically of the same class the force has been taking over for the past four or five years. As a number of ranchers have gone out of horse raising altogether in that time, and those remaining in the business have made little or no change in their breeding stock, little or no change is noticeable in the class offered the police; these horses are well suited for the work of the force, but unfortunately it is often found necessary to put young horses at work they are hardly capable of performing, on account of their age and undeveloped condition, nearly every case of injury to the tendons and ligaments of the extremities, occurs before the horses reach the age of six, or during the first two years of service in the force, and any sprain or rupture of the kind, invariably leaves a weak spot, this I may say is a very rare accident among the remounts kept at the headquarters of Depot division, these horses are never sent away from the post unless it is absolutely necessary, but get regular daily exercise.

In future I would like to see every remount purchased for the force, brought to Regina, or they might be divided between Regina and some point in the west, say Macleod or Calgary, and given not less than two years' preparation before being put to regular police work. By following this plan I believe we would get from four to six years more work out of our horses than we now do. As an example of what the treatment which I recommend will do for a horse, I will cite the case of horse Reg. No. 70 (Crowfoot). This horse was purchased in 1882, was taken by ex-Commissioner Irvine, for two years; this horse got nothing but exercise, is now eighteen years old, and is still practically sound, and during the past ten years, Crowfoot's life has been anything but idle.

Detachment and patrol work is the greatest drain upon the horse flesh of the force, there are detachments of course where the horses are always found in the pink of condition, and where a remount would have just as good a chance as at the headquarters of a division, provided there were one or two extra horses to take the brunt of the work, but as this is not always possible, the safer plan is to keep the remounts away from the detachments.

I am sorry I cannot speak so highly of all detachments, and am very much afraid that the speed of the horses is occasionally tested in running coyotes, and other animals found on the prairie.

With the exception of "C" and "D" divisions, the stabling accommodation is good, both of the above mentioned divisions require new infirmaries, the buildings now in use are old log structures, being both badly lighted, ventilated and cold, the saddle horse stable of "C" division is very narrow and is improperly lighted and ventilated, the team horse stable is a fairly good building, but is much too high off the ground, and I think might be lowered and repaired at a trifling expense.