

POLICING THE WILDERNESS

By W. G. Fitzgerald in The Outlook, New York

Take the public services of both America and Europe, from Hudson's Bay to Patagonia, and I doubt whether you will match the record of the famous Canadian Northwest Mounted Police. How a handful of three hundred law officers, adventurous, fearless, and luminously honest, keep entire order in an Arctic wilderness five times as large as Great Britain—here, surely, is a story worth telling.

And it makes reading quite as good as its promise. For here is a "precinct" covering 197,000 square miles of silent waste, icy yet golden, peopled mainly by Indians and Eskimos, with a few thousand whites, who are apt to think that no law goes so near as this to the North Pole. But the wisest of them knows different now. "Get the man"—the classic motto of the Northwest Mounted Police, is known and felt from the ocean to the innermost recesses of the wilderness.

A thousand miles on the ice, "marching" by dog team and komatik, through unexplored haunts of bear and wolf, is a common marching order for these splendid pioneers. It does one good to read the record of their work. And much digging is required to get at the facts, for the N.W.M.P. have a good, healthy scorn of boast and advertisement.

You will meet them first as you enter Canadian territory by the famous White Pass, where Old Glory floats side by side with the chattered crosses of the Dominion. Soon the four

check, by the officers in these feverish times.

Today the Northwest Mounted Police have two great centres, one at Dawson the other at White Horse. And, wonderful to say just a telephone or telegraph line runs beside the mighty road, and patrol systems on the various creeks and trails assist in preserving order. It is a fact that on the great road between Dawson and White Horse, more than three hundred and twenty miles, the traveller to-day is positively safer than if he were driving along a country road in Eastern Canada or any settled part of Alaska.

No man starts down the great Yukon in a small boat without numbering and registering his craft, as well as his own name and business. There are justice and redress for every one, no matter how remote his location. Let a humble miner's "cache" be stolen and forthwith a diligent search that may cover five hundred miles will be made for it, and after that summary vengeance will surely fall upon the thief. As I shall show, no expense is spared, and sometimes hundreds or even thousands of dollars will be spent in a case—only to find that the thieves were bears, after all.

Let serious accidents befall a man in some lonely camp, and no city hospital will be more urgent and self-sacrificing in hurrying relief than those Mounted Police. Many a striking tale might be told of how the sick and wounded, white and Indian alike, have been brought into hospital over painful and

unique police force. To them distance is literally no object. To secure one witness in the strange O'Brien murder trial, Sergeant Frank Smith and Trooper Sealey travelled four hundred miles by dog team and thirteen hundred by canoe. Altogether the case cost them "primaries" \$285,000.

The great point aimed at is to install into the lawless the fact that life and property shall be respected in this far-reaching wilderness just as in any great city on the American continent; and moreover, that the offender shall be secured and brought to justice at any cost whatever.

But Sergeant Smith's quest deserves more than mere passing mention. Two desperate bandits, O'Brien and Graves lay in wait and drew in gold blood the people of miners, Fred Clayton and L. Reiss; these had made their pile and were bound for the distant "outside." With them were Litsman Olsson of the Telegraph service, and he too was slaughtered in the silent waste, where the bandits never dreamed of a Nemesis. Yet O'Brien was caught and hanged. He had evidently suspected his accom-

panion, and cast his body under the eternal ice of one Yukon, that he might claim his share of the bloody loot.

Now a witness whose testimony was vital in the case had to be sought somewhere throughout the length and breadth of the Territory. And off went Smith and Sealey from Forty Mile one April day. The trail lay along river ice, which at that time of the year was soft and cut up.

The reached Circle City and from here Smith went on alone. Some twenty five miles beyond his dogs fell through one of the open places in the trail; and in the snarl-up the lonely man was thrown from the sled and his right leg severely injured. The limb swelled to twice its normal size, yet Smith, mindful of the motto of the force, "mashed" on to Fort Yukon, where an amateur doctor found his leg black and blue from knee to toe.

Nothing could stop the man, however. On he went for fifty miles to the mouth of the Chandler Creek, over a melting trail in warm weather, with the dogs breaking through the ice from time to time. Returning to Fort Yukon, Smith waited for the giant foes to break up, and soon he was joined once more by Sealey.

The two men started down the giant stream in a twenty-four foot canoe, carrying a tent, a little stove, a mast with a leg of mutton sail, and a slender outfit of provisions. All the way down they were pioneered by a gigantic mass of floating ice. Sailing when there was a fair wind, watching the grinding drifts day and night, pulling with the current when the wind was against them, the two men pushed doggedly on.

Remember, they soon entered a part of the Yukon where the vast river is ten miles wide. Strong head winds with heavy seas and roaring ice masses, made

of the Secret Service of the Force, took charge on the case, and said simply he would "get the man."

From Dawson he went to Seattle, armed with the necessary papers, making inquiries all along the way. How two Ewo Edmond La Belle turned up to confound the detective is a pretty long story. Welsh, however, was joined by P. A. Rook, of White Horse who had known the real La Belle; and the two now began an amazingly thorough search in every logging camp tributary to Puget Sound. La Belle, it should be explained, had worked on the Yukon as a wood-chopper.

The man was trailed unerringly from Seattle to Butte, Montana. The trail led them next to Spokane, Washington and thence to Rosland, British Columbia; back again thence southward among the construction gangs working on the Southern Pacific Railroad. We next find Welsh and Rook at Ogden, Utah, and on the Nevada-California line. At each camp visited Rook played the role of time-keeper, newly employed in that section. In this capacity he took the names of all the men; and one memorable day he came out of a tent some three miles from Washworth, Nevada, and gave Detective Welsh the long-sought signal that his man was within. Sure enough, there was the murderer, sitting on the edge of his bunk, having just turned out to work on the night-shift.

Welsh walked up, held out his hand as if to shake, and as La Belle reached out, the handcuffs were snapped upon his wrist. Both he and Fournier confessed but were hanged all the same. The long and patient quest cost \$25,000. But then the Northwest Mounted Police "got the man," and it is the restoration of that myth, with the Samaritan role already detailed, that has made their

name respected throughout the wilderness.

important Questions Before Japanese Diet.

Tokio, Dec. 2.—The Japanese diet will assemble to-morrow for its twenty-fourth session, and the number of extremely grave questions which will confront it promise to make the session one of unusual importance. The opposition is prepared to vigorously oppose the budget formally decided upon by the imperial council a few days ago, and which contemplates large retrenchment in the public expenditures.

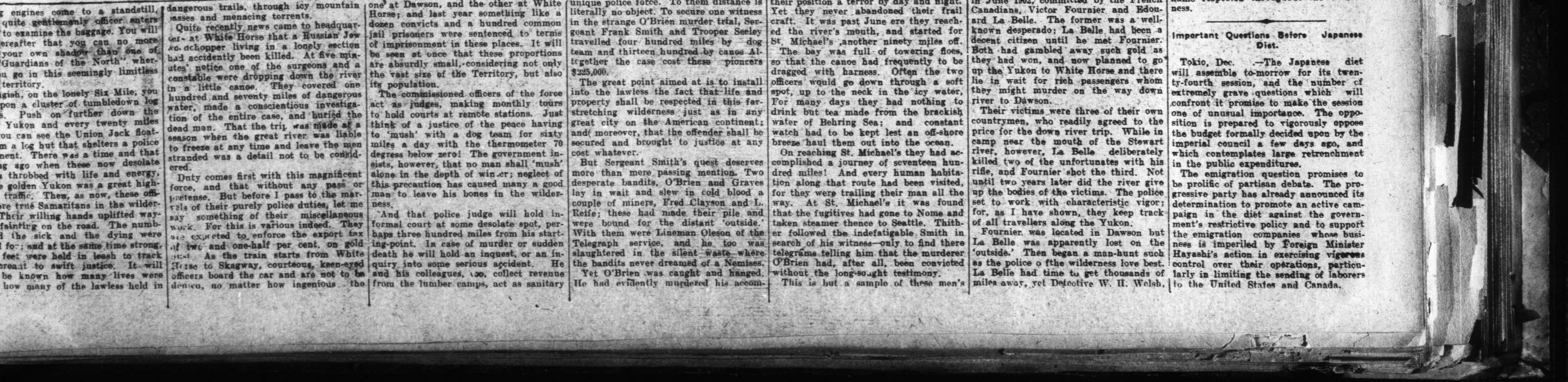
The emigration question promises to be prolific of partisan debate. The progressive party has already announced its determination to promote an active campaign in the diet against the government's restrictive policy and to support the emigration companies whose business is imperilled by Foreign Minister Hayashi's action in exercising vigorous control over their operations, particularly in limiting the sending of laborers to the United States and Canada.

in June 1902, committed by the French Canadian, Victor Fournier and Edmond La Belle. The former was a well-known desperado; La Belle had been a decent citizen until he met Fournier. Both had gambled away such gold as they had won, and now planned to go up the Yukon to White Horse and there he in wait for fish passengers whom they might murder on the way down river to Dawson.

Their victims were three of their own countrymen, who readily agreed to the price for the down river trip. While in camp near the mouth of the Stewart river, however, La Belle deliberately killed two of the unfortunates with his rifle, and Fournier shot the third. Not until two years later did the river give up the bodies of the victims. The police set to work with characteristic vigor; for, as I have shown, they keep track of all travellers along the Yukon.

Fournier was located in Dawson but La Belle was apparently lost on the "outside." Then began a man-hunt such as the police of the wilderness love best. La Belle had time to get thousands of miles away, yet Detective W. H. Welsh,

GROUND FLOOR PLAN NEW LEGISLATIVE BUILDING OF ALBERTA.



snorting engines come to a standstill, and a quite unobtrusively officer enters the car to examine the baggage. You will find thereafter that you can no more escape your own shadow than you can those "Guardians of the North," wherever you go in this seemingly limitless Yukon territory.

At English, on the lonely Six Mile, you come upon a cluster of tumble-down log shanties. Push on further down the mighty Yukon and every twenty miles or so you can see the Union Jack floating from a log hut that shelters a police detachment. There was a time and that not long ago when these now desolate stations thrived with life and energy, and the golden Yukon was a great highway of traffic. There, as now, these officers were true Samaritans in the wilderness. Their willing hands uplifted weary travelers on the road. The mangled and the sick and the dying were catered for; and at the same time strong, active feet were held in leash to track a microfilm to swift justice. It will never be known how many lives were saved, how many of the lawless held in