

North-west Mounted Police.

FORAGE.

I am glad to report that the price of hay has generally decreased at all posts. At Lethbridge alone it has increased considerably owing to prairie fires and a very dry season.

The price of oats has decreased all over to a very considerable extent, except at Battleford where it is slightly lower.

Bran keeps up to the usual rate from \$14 per ton at Regina to \$21 at Macleod. This is dearer than wheat. To keep down expense a good deal of boiled oats are fed to save bran.

SADDLERY AND HARNESS.

A good many of our saddles are commencing to show signs of wear, but owing to the reduction in the force we have plenty of spare ones, and will not require any this year. The majority are single cincha, and are hard on the horses in hilly districts, and should be replaced by double cinchas, but with the large number of old saddles on hand our appropriation does not warrant the expenditure, but I think it would be advisable from time to time, as opportunity offers, to sell our old ones, and gradually purchase new double cincha saddles.

Our harness is in very good repair, and we have on hand a very good supply of head collars, halters, pole straps, etc., for renewals, made by our men. We are now manufacturing harness at Regina for the whole force, and a considerable saving will ensue.

The few sets of harness we have bought during the year were made in the territories at as cheap a rate as we could get them in Eastern Canada, and quite equal to the best.

TRANSPORT.

A number of old wagons have been almost rebuilt, and we are now very fairly off in most divisions, particularly for light transport. A few heavy wagons will be required, which with your approval I propose to buy from time to time, in many cases I expect to trade off wagons worn out, and condemned, in part payment of new ones, as a wagon that is too far gone for fast police duty, will at a reduced rate suit a settler very well for slow work on a farm. The Canadian manufacturers are now sending up better wagons to the territories than formerly.

ARMS.

The receipt of 200 Lee-Metford carbines has enabled us to retire a large number of our worst Winchesters, "D" at Macleod, was issued with 150 of these new carbines, 20 went to the Yukon with the detachment that went there last June, and the balance are here, and in the hands of crack shots.

Some practice took place at Macleod, and we fired a match here between the best shots in each division up to 700 yards. Our men made better shooting with the Winchesters up to 500 yards, and while they did fairly well at longer distances, which the Winchester could not reach, it appears to me that on a windy day the very light bullet will always make the shooting irregular, and for any ranges over 1000 yards most uncertain. Before any more Lee-Metfords are purchased, I would recommend that they be thoroughly tested in the force. The best shots in each division were, as last year, brought to Regina, where they fired for the position of best shot of the force, opportunity, was taken of their presence to fire a match with the Lee-Metford. There is a great deal of interest taken in rifle shooting, and frequent practice with cheap ammunition should be encouraged. We used in most divisions in revolver practice, Canadian ammunition. Several divisions finding the Canadian not reliable, used English ammunition. At headquarters we all used Canadian, and personally I