

practicable to have the location changed. From what the Surgeon says I think, that the fever which prevails there during the summer and fall might be prevented by moving the men under canvas on the high ground not far distant. This might be done to allow time to fix upon some permanent site, which must depend a good deal upon the position of the Indian reserves. The position of the post is objectionable for many other reasons, but as there was a commodious log barrack and stable built last fall, and a good large storehouse the year before, I do not feel inclined, in the present aspect of affairs, to urge a too speedy abandonment of the place.

I beg to recommend that Superintendent Jarvis be instructed to make the additions to Fort Saskatchewan which he asks for in his report, and that Superintendent Walker be instructed to complete the buildings at Battleford which were handed over to him in such an unfinished state, and which are gradually becoming dilapidated and uninhabitable.

During the year there were 90 recruits engaged for the force; 30 time-expired men were re-engaged; 46 were discharged; four were invalided; seven deserted, and one man was killed. Eighty-four horses were purchased, and 27 have died. The season was a very hard one on horses when on trips, as the prairies were burnt off early. There was consequently a great difficulty in obtaining grass, and on the plains what little water was obtainable was generally tainted with alkali. Twenty horses were cast and one stolen.

During the year 1880, there are 120 men entitled to their discharge. Forty-seven have given notice of their intention to re-engage; some of these will, no doubt, refuse to do so, while others will change their minds and re-engage. Taking this number, however, as correct, there will be 47 recruits required to keep the force up to its strength of 310 men.

The whole force has been drilled in simple cavalry movements, both on foot and mounted. Owing to the fact that the horses are herded at some distance from the posts during the spring and summer, it is somewhat difficult to carry out the riding drill and bring the men to that perfection which is desirable.

The divisions at Forts Walsh and MacLeod were put through a course of firing. I think it would be more conducive to efficiency if this practice were carried on during all the open months of the year than that it should all take place at one time, and that 20 rounds per man should be fired at the first practice, and 10 rounds each month afterwards. I trust, also, that a sufficient amount of ammunition will be supplied, so that those desirous of obtaining it on repayment, may do so.

The conduct of the men generally has been very good indeed, with the exception of a few men who are continually blotting sheets of the Defaulters' Book, it has been exemplary.

I have already reported the dreadful occurrence which took place near Fort Walsh on the 17th of November last, viz:—the murder of Constable M. Grayburn. There is no doubt but the foul deed was perpetrated by two Indians, but we have not been able to fix the guilt upon the murderers. I feel sure that they will be discovered, as when they are across the line and think themselves safe, they will be certain to say something about it which will lead to their detection, and the other Indians will be sure to let us know. I am confident there was nothing in the act itself to lead to the belief that the Indians have changed in their feelings towards us, and that when the facts come out they will show that the atrocious crime was committed in revenge for some real or fancied injury done to the murderer or one of his family, not necessarily by a Policeman, but by some white man. All his comrades mourned the sad fate of poor young Grayburn deeply, as he was a great favorite amongst us all.

The farming operations on the Police farm about thirty miles from Fort MacLeod have been carried on with great success for a first years' trial. I am satisfied that next year they will yield as good returns as Inspector Shurtliff expects. The farm is beautifully situated, the soil is excellent, and it only requires the earnest attention of those who have to do with it to make it a success in every way.