

North-west Mounted Police.

I think that, taken in connection with the "Charcoal" murders at Macleod in 1896, it clearly shows that the time has not yet arrived when the peace and safety of the country can be preserved by ordinary provincial police, and that it is necessary, in the interests of the many large and flourishing but comparatively isolated settlements, to keep a sufficient force of Mounted Police in the country to promptly suppress any disturbance among the Indians.

Complaints have been frequently made of late years of the lawlessness of certain half-breeds in the vicinity of the Jasper House, and there being every prospect of a large number of prospectors and others visiting that country this summer, a patrol under Inspector Snyder went through that district, later on proceeding north via Sturgeon Lake, and Grand Prairie to Dunvegan, returning via Lesser Slave Lake and Fort Assiniboine to Edmonton. The report attached of this patrol will be found most interesting and instructive.

Later in the season orders were received to dispatch a party overland via the Peace River to find out if a wagon road and cattle trail could be opened up to Pelly River. Inspector Moodie with a party of six, including two Military College graduates, left Edmonton on 4th September. He appears to have had bad luck in obtaining guides, one being lost altogether. His latest report is dated St. John, 27th November, I trust he is now well over the mountains.

The North-west Government having decided to send ex-Inspector Chalmers, N.W. M. Police, C.E., in their employ, to locate, if possible, a wagon road to connect short portions of road already existing between Edmonton and Peace River, the police furnished part of the outfit and men as being the most satisfactory and speedy way of meeting your instructions respecting that portion of the wagon road to Pelly River. The party started out and reported in two months that a feasible route had been found, and the North-west Government immediately dispatched a party under Mr. Chalmers to cut out the road, prepare estimates for bridges, ferries, &c., and it is expected it will be open by January. Even if a good wagon road cannot be got all the way to Pelly Banks, this road, as far as it goes, will open up a large tract of good farming land, and many very good gold prospects en route, particularly the Peace River country where experience has shown that wheat and other cereals, and cattle, can be raised to the best advantage, but which the extreme difficulty in reaching has hitherto stopped any settlers, except missionaries and traders, from attempting to occupy, but there is no doubt cattle can be driven overland to Pelly Banks, although the route may be circuitous. The country between the Peace River and Edmonton is now dotted with small parties of prospectors numbering in all several hundred souls, who are camped waiting for spring.

Two patrols will start this week from Edmonton to visit these parties and carry their mail. One under Sergeant-Major McDonell going via St. Anne and the Macleod River, the other under Inspector Snyder going via Lesser Slave Lake to St. John on Peace River, where he will take stock of our supplies and get the latest information re Inspector Moodie's party. Both these parties on returning will pick up mail, and give any advice and assistance in their power to the travellers en route. Still another patrol under Inspector Routledge will leave Edmonton at an early date visiting all the parties en route to the Yukon on the Athabasca, Slave Lake and Mackenzie Rivers, as far North as Fort Simpson, carrying a letter mail and trying all delinquents that come under their notice. As many cases likely to arise require two J.P.'s to try them, one member of each party has been sworn in as a Justice of the Peace to sit with Inspector, Snyder or Routledge.

It is reported that Captain Segars and party, and one Pilon and party, who have previously travelled the route, have arrived at Peel River safely with all their supplies, although they only left Edmonton in August. If this is the case they will easily get their supplies over to the head waters of the Porcupine, 60 miles, by dog train, and will arrive at Fort Yukon early in the spring. This will greatly encourage many others to adopt this route, as although Fort Yukon is 300 miles below the present gold fields, the Yukon will be alive with steamers next year, and parties can easily get taken up, or towed up to where they wish to locate. This route and that via Peace River will certainly cause a great influx of people to pass through the Edmonton District, where every preparation is being made to outfit them. This will bring still greater prosperity