

POLICE PATROL, ATHABASCA DISTRICT, WINTER OF 1896-97.

NORTH WEST MOUNTED POLICE.

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER,

REGINA, 21st December, 1896.

To Inspector A. M. JARVIS,

North-west Mounted Police.

The department has decided to send a small party to Athabasca and Slave Lake at an early date, and you have been selected for the duty.

The object in view is to obtain an exhaustive report on the condition of affairs there generally, and particularly to collect information likely to be useful to the government in their future dealings with that territory. Among other subjects for inquiry will be the use, or abuse, of liquor. A considerable quantity goes in under permit, and some is admittedly smuggled. It is also stated that some is used for trading purposes with the Indians, and that, in addition, a considerable quantity of all sorts of extracts, which are well known to be intoxicating, are given to the Indians contrary to law, if not actually traded for furs, &c.

The setting out of poisons and letting fires run will also be subjects requiring your close attention.

You will report on the state of the fisheries, the quantity of lumber in various districts and its condition, whether burned or green, and the districts suitable for settlement, and the supply of hay.

You will also inquire into the increase or decrease of fur and game, particularly getting all possible information *re* the probable number of wood buffalo in the country, their location, and whether the Act *re* their preservation is being strictly carried out. With this object in view you will have to visit as many trading posts as possible in the vicinity of the buffalo grounds. You will direct the attention of all traders and hunters you come across to the necessity of strictly obeying the Game Act and ordinances *re* the preservation of game and fish, and you will explain to them the law on all the above subjects.

It is reported that beaver is decreasing rapidly, in a great measure owing to the indiscriminate killing of young and old, caused by the traders paying the same price for a kit beaver as for a full grown one. You will inquire fully into this, and explain to all concerned the folly of killing immature animals. The number of skins of unborn musk ox calves is rapidly increasing, and you will make inquiries with a view to its prevention.

As on the information obtained by you will, in a great measure, depend the establishing of police posts at an early date, you will report on the best points in your opinion for the police to work from.

From time to time rumours have reached us of murders having been committed in the unorganized territories; these you will investigate and report on, getting all information obtainable from Superintendent Griesbach before proceeding north, and, if necessary, take immediate action.

I have no authority to instruct you *re* your duties as justice of the peace, but you must remember that many of the Indians and small traders may be ignorant of the law, and therefore may have offended unwittingly. It will be impossible at present to imprison in that territory, and in the event of fines not being forthcoming at once, you can give time for their collection, as is usually done here, when, later on, if not paid, the usual imprisonment can be better enforced.

A great deal of tact and judgment will be required in dealing with these matters, and I need not impress upon you the necessity of losing no time unnecessarily on the road, as the season is short. With this object in view, your party must ease the dogs