

that last year there was a great deal of correspondence on the subject in the newspapers, and I can assure him that the feeling is still just as strong as it was last year. We feel that a great many of our rivers have not received proper attention.

164. North-West Mounted Police. \$290,000 00 .

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. The amount asked for is the same as last year. We find that, although there are three months yet before the first of July, that sum will not be exceeded. That sum will cover the expenditure for 1881, and it is a very large reduction from the previous year. For the last five years it was, in round numbers, \$347,000. \$290,000 will cover the expenditure of 1880-81, and we ask for a similar sum for 1881-82, although we hope that the result of the economies being introduced will reduce that sum considerably. As it is, the year 1880-81 shows a reduction of \$16,000 in the expense of the force as compared with the previous year. There is a reduction in the pay of the force of \$8,000. The men now receive 40 cents per day during the first year, and 50 cents per day during the other four years of service. The old rates were 50 cents per day during the first year, and 75 cents per day during the remaining four years of the term. We found that we could, with an improvement to the quality of the force, reduce the pay. The pay was originally very large, fixed at a time when it was new, and when the difficulties of going through an unknown country were perhaps exaggerated. But the pay was so good that there was a rush of men to the force; we found great pressure brought to send up gentlemen's sons—educated men, of broken habits—and the force was to some extent made to serve the purpose of an inebriate asylum. Under the present system we find that we can get good men, equal to the members of any constabulary force. We propose, also, to adopt a scale for a small additional allowance for long and faithful service, which we hope will be an inducement for good men to remain in the force when they get there.

Mr. MILLS. I observe that last year, although the vote was \$290,000, the expenditure was \$332,855, \$43,000 over the estimate, so that the hon. gentleman will have to economize to that extent to reduce the expenditure.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. The responsible officer is confident that the expenditure for 1880-81 will not exceed \$290,000.

Mr. BLAKE. I have been informed, on what I believe to be good authority, that, notwithstanding the very stringent regulations maintained in the force, there has been a considerable amount of drinking at some of the posts. I have also been informed that there is a considerable amount of desertion. I should like to know if the hon. gentleman has any information on these points.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. As regards the habits of the men, I think, on the whole, they are in a very fair state, but there is still a good deal of drinking. As the hon. gentleman knows, some of the force is stationed on the frontier, and there has been, I am afraid, a laxity in granting permits. Besides, there has been no care taken to number the permits, and I have reason to believe also that there has been a great use of that most noxious alcoholic drink, Perry Davis' Pain Killer. It contains a great quantity of alcohol, and has not only affected the physical health of the men, but the mental health of some of them. That has been used largely under the pretence of being medicinal, but, really, I am afraid, as a stimulant. We propose to have the permits numbered and limited. There has been, and there will be hereafter, a more rigid discipline preserved among the men. Colonel Macleod, who formerly commanded them, was a very good officer, but he was too kindly towards the force. He is now a Stipendiary Magistrate, and Colonel Irvine, who is now in command, is, I believe, considerably

more of a martinet, and is paying particular attention to the restoration of discipline and the correction of the dissolute habits of some of the men. When the force was first established, they were scattered in small detachments all over the country. It has been found, however, that it would be infinitely better for the efficiency of the force, to have headquarters somewhere near the line of the Pacific Railway, more in the centre of the country. The Indians are beginning to settle down peaceably on their reserves, and more economy can be effected and more rigid discipline maintained, by having a larger amount of the force at the headquarters. Another rule that was destructive of discipline, was that when men were sent to an outpost, they were kept there during the whole period of their enlistment without any opportunity of drill. The military system has now been introduced, and the men will be changed from headquarters every two years; it will be a moveable instead of a stationary force. Among other objections to its being a stationary force was that some of the officers began to have herds of cattle, and thought more of speculating and attending to their personal interests than to those of the force. All this is destroyed by the system of moving every two years. The men first come to headquarters, and every second year, as the older men became perfectly drilled, they are sent to the out-stations. I am informed there have been nine desertions of men who were desirous of going to the alleged gold mines, and of those eight were recaptured.

Mr. BLAKE. I think the statement of the hon. gentleman as to the proposed systematic transference of the men who occupy the outposts is very satisfactory. There are many reasons, besides those to which he has referred, which will naturally occur, why men should not be permanently kept in small bodies at a small outpost. The House would like to know a little more as to the extent of the change of principle in locating the force, to which the hon. gentleman has alluded; whether it is intended to have only one important body at headquarters, and how many outposts was it intended to have. I am sorry to hear the statement as to the abuse of liquor permits. When I had charge of the force I abandoned the practice of granting permits. I found a very painful case of a private, who was said to be a most excellent member of the force, but who was tried by court-martial and found guilty of gross insubordination, he having struck his officer while drunk, the officer having received a permit. It appeared impossible to maintain discipline if officers were allowed permits. I issued an order that total prohibition should be enforced throughout the whole force, officers as well as men. A request was made that the liquors on the way out should be turned into the medical stores, and should be accounted for in that way, which I acceded to; but so long as I had the regulating of the force, no officer was allowed to ask or accept a permit.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. I think the officers are under the same restrictions as the men, but permits are granted to other parties.

Mr. SCHULTZ. The present system of permits is faulty in itself. It acted very well so long as the only ingress into the North-West was past the Mounted Police station at Shoal Lake; but it does not work effectively now there are different means of entering the country. The abuse of the system occurred from a party who, once procuring a permit, being able to use it over and over again.

Mr. BLAKE. Would the hon. gentleman inform the House as to what progress has been made in the cultivation of farms at the outposts.

Sir JOHN A. MACDONALD. Considerable progress was made last year, but the summer frosts greatly injured both the quantity and quality of the crop. It had not turned out so well as had been expected; but that was an