

Old-Timers' Column

An Interesting Career

Sixty-three years ago—in April 1888—Insp. G. E. Sanders¹ of the North-West Mounted Police arrived in Hamilton, Ont. seeking recruits for the Force. Among the applicants he interviewed was a young man named James Tinsley, who gave his age as 18. As he was a likely-looking prospect, Inspector Sanders told the youth he would be engaged providing his parents raised no

¹See RNWMP Veterans' Association item in the Old-timers' Column this issue for another reference to Colonel Sanders.



objections about his age. What the officer did not know was that the boy was just 16, but with the vocal support of a brother to assist him, young Tinsley overcame any parental opposition and enlisted in the NWMP on April 26 as Reg. No. 2124. On Aug. 1, 1934 Insp. James Tinsley retired from the Toronto City Police, thus bringing to a close a career enriched by 43 years of devotion to the cause of law enforcement.

Mr. Tinsley's career in the Mounted Police ended when his first term of service expired on May 8, 1893. Actually he served 13 days over the five years because of weather conditions in the West that year. He was on outpost duty at Melfort Creek and when ordered in by Inspector Norman to take his discharge, he was delayed by dangerous ice conditions at the South Branch of the Saskatchewan River from April 16 until May 4. In recalling this incident in a letter to the *Quarterly* Mr. Tinsley mentioned that "Joe McKay the famous scout who fired the first shot in the 1885 Rebellion, left his horse and buckboard with me and pushed an old scow over the ice and walked the 20 miles into Prince Albert". Of his service in the Force Mr. Tinsley has this to say: "While nothing startling happened me during my service, I gained a lot of confidence and have always felt through life that if I was given an even break, I was just a little better man than the other fellow."

In 1895 ex-Constable Tinsley joined the Brockville, Ont. Police force and when he resigned in 1897, held the rank of sergeant. It was while he was a peace officer in the quiet Ontario community on the St. Lawrence, that Mr. Tinsley had his closest brush with death. A man named Lapointe ran amok with a shotgun on Mar. 9, 1896, killed one man and wounded eight others before he was shot and disabled by James Tinsley.

At noon Tinsley and another constable had just been relieved from duty when they came upon the body of a man lying in a pool of blood at the corner of King and Perth Streets in Brockville. At the same time they also noticed a man, carrying a loaded shotgun, partly concealed by the corner of a nearby fence. The two police-

James Tinsley at 18 years of age as a constable in the NWMP.