

the Sioux refugees in Canada were also becoming restive.

An extract of a letter from Lieutenant-Governor Morris to the Premier, the Honourable Alexander MacKenzie, sums up the situation. It is dated Fort Garry, 26th December, 1873: "The Indian question, the American trading and the contending of the Metis of the North-West with the *new régime*, are the problems we have to solve, and I believe that all these can be successfully dealt with. The trading question is a very serious one. There are some eight trading posts in our territories, commencing 100 miles from the Missouri frontier, in the region watered by the Belly and Bow Rivers, and running on to the Cypress Hills, where the murder of the Assiniboines took place last summer. The country is perhaps the most fertile in the North-West, where horses and cattle of all kinds feed themselves, and excellent coal abounds. I am credibly informed that these Americans imported last summer 50,000 buffalo robes, worth, say, \$8 each, or \$400,000, and to which may be added \$100,000 for other furs, or a total of \$500,000. They sell whisky, breech-loaders, etc., to the Indians, and, of course, pay no duty. A very serious view of the matter apart from the demoralisation of the Indians is the precipitation of the great difficulties we will have to encounter with the Crees and the Blackfoot, when the buffalo are extinct, an event which, at the present rate of extermination, may be looked for in five or six years."

The second contingent of the mounted police, which had been quartered in the Old Fort, Toronto, was sent on, and these were joined by the others stationed at Old Fort Garry, at Dufferin, the rendezvous.

Lieutenant-Governor Morris and Colonel French had conferred with James McKay and Pierre Levallier,

two half-breeds, who knew the West thoroughly, regarding the route to be followed by the police, and the Governor had arranged with Levallier and a band of half-breeds to accompany the force as guides.

The Northern Pacific Railway survey parties had been escorted by 2,000 troops through the American Sioux territory, several skirmishes and some loss of life took place, and when the international boundary survey passed through the country the Sioux crossed the Missouri in large numbers, to be ready, if their chiefs thought it wise, to fight, as they believed the Americans had induced the English with them to form a rampart against the Sioux, and, in consequence, the surveyors had difficulty with their guides. To avoid all this it was decided the police should travel across the plains more to the north.*

The little force, to the number of 300 men, filed out across the prairie and plains. In close order the cavalcade covered a mile and a half, but on the line of march it usually extended from front to rear guard from four to five miles. Through the heat of July, August and September they journeyed on, and after covering 940 miles, reached their destination, the junction of the Bow and Belly Rivers. The whisky traders had heard of their approach and fled, leaving their posts standing.

En route, at Roche Percée, a troop under command of Lieutenant-Colonel Jarvis branched off, going north via Fort Ellice, Fort Pitt, and Fort Carlton to Edmonton, where they were to be stationed in the old Hudson's Bay Fort. When the main force reached the Sweet Grass Hills the Commissioner, Colonel French, and Colonel Macleod proceeded to Fort Benton, in the United States, and on their return French, with two troops, returned East, instructing Colonel Macleod to proceed north-west and build a fort, naming it af-

*Despatches from Lieutenant-Governor Morris.