

When inter-divisional transfers of men and troops began, this duplication caused confusion despite the distinguishing letter. Therefore, as soon as periodical patrols were inaugurated, making it possible to establish a central authority, the old series was abolished. New numbers starting at "one" were assigned to all personnel; in some cases alphabetical groups were given blocks of numbers, in others the numbers were allotted at random. All ex-members up to that time were excluded from the new series and it is clear that the present numbers do not show the exact total of men ever enrolled in the Force.

The service files show that occasionally in the early days, members were allowed to take their discharge from the Force if they procured a suitable substitute. There are instances where even a substitute has left the Force after getting a representative to take his place. Replacements were given the regimental numbers of their predecessors, so that there are cases where two, and even three files bear the same number but refer to different persons.

Just before the historic trek in the summer of 1874, Commissioner French weeded out a number of shirkers and unsatisfactory men. Their regimental numbers, as well as those of a few deserters, were given to the men taken on to replace them.

As can be imagined, this haphazard procedure, which apparently was done merely to maintain the authorized strength of the Force, eventually led to numerous discrepancies. The unhappy paymasters must have experienced many harassing moments trying to iron out the complications involved in "settling up" with the men when funds were wired from the government "in Canada", particularly when in addition to other arduous duties, they had to regulate such unpredictable things as forage—for horses, perhaps dead many weeks.

With the introduction of the new number series, most men found themselves with different regimental numbers. Members who left and then re-engaged were not given their former number, as is the custom today.

The change from the old series worked both ways: some men received lower numbers than they had before; others got higher ones. Thus Sub-Cst. George Borradaile whose original number was 508, was given 46; Insp. Robert Belcher, while in the ranks, first held number 13 and later received number 3; Sub-Cst. Fred L. W. Tetu's original 48 was exchanged for 261.

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On page 144 will be found an appreciation of the splendid portrayal by Franz Johnson, A.R.C.A., O.S.A., "Beyond the Law." The scene depicted was inspired by an actual case in R.C.M.P. annals, in which
Frontispiece a fugitive murderer at Fort MacMurray shot himself to avoid arrest. Reg. No. 4290, Sgt H. Thorne, who acted as model for the painting, came upon the body sixty miles from the scene of the crime, after working on the case for seven days. The incident occurred in 1915.