

Defying the Mounted Police

White Maniac Who Repeated the Exploits of the Last Bad Indian, Almighty Voice

By FRANCIS J. DICKIE

A SUPPOSEDLY insane homesteader named Fonberg for three days was the central figure in a drama which for sensational features is unequalled in the magnetic history of Western Canada. Before the man, badly wounded, was finally captured, he caused the death of Detective Bailey, a plain clothes mounted policeman connected with the Edmonton detachment, and the wounding of two other officers of the force.

Obsessed with the idea that their shack stands on the site of a valuable silver mine, the Fonberg brothers converted the building into a miniature fortress. Built into a hillside, and loopholed like a Hudson Bay post of old and filled with high-powered rifles and a large stock of ammunition, the building overlooked and commanded a sweeping view of the whole valley. And here these two men lived for almost two years allowing no one to approach them. For the past six months they have been the terror of Ross Creek country, a territory lying in central Alberta near to Grassy Lake and about 20 miles due north from the town of Tofield on the main line of the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway thirty miles east of Edmonton.

On Sunday, April 20th, a Ruthenian homesteader named Antonik was fired upon when he passed near to the home of the Fonbergs. He next day reported the matter to Officer Tetley, in charge of the post at Tofield.

On Tuesday, April 22nd, Tetley, armed with a warrant for the apprehension of the two Fonbergs on a charge of suspected insanity went out to the Ross Creek homestead, but on approaching the place was greeted with a volley of shots. Seeing the uselessness of single-handed attacking two adversaries so powerfully entrenched, he returned to Tofield and wired to Commissioner Cuthbert, at the district headquarters, Edmonton. Detective Max Bailey, an old member of the force, and Officers Stead and Whitley were despatched to the scene by the Commissioner.

Joining Tetley at Tofield the four men made their way back to the Fonbergs' stronghold, arriving late in the afternoon of April 23rd. Approaching the dugout from over the ridge to within parleying distance the police demanded the surrender of the inmates. From within the shack a voice ordered them away.

Crawling down the sidehill the Mounted Police attempted to fire the shack by rolling bales of burning hay upon the roof and then deploying to the left the four officers spread out and rushed the place.

Dashing across the open space Detective Bailey reached safely to within fifteen feet of the door when one of the hail of bullets which poured from the hut struck him in the mouth, killing him instantly. Whitley, seeing his companion fall, turned from his rush on the shack and picked his fallen brother officer in his arms, not then knowing whether life was extinct. A second later a bullet plowed through his thigh, bringing him to the ground. Wounded and still under fire in the open as he was, Whitley still attempted to lift the fallen man, but was unable to carry the body to the shelter of the nearby scrub. The two other officers, Stead and Tetley, gaining the protection of the scrub, carried Whitley to the rig in which they had come and the driver started off across twenty miles of rough prairie roads to the town of Tofield, while the other two men remained crouched in the scrub to guard against the escape of the inmates of the shack.

WHEN the wounded man arrived in Tofield wires were sent to Edmonton and the Mounted Police Barracks at Fort Saskatchewan for more men and four officers the same night left the Fort and were followed by a reinforcement of four officers from the district headquarters at Edmonton.

In the meantime back in the lonely ravine of Ross Creek the two Mounted Police, under cover of the gathering darkness crept up and recovered the body of Bailey and dragged it out of fire range. Not a sound had issued from the hut since the encounter of the late afternoon, and, gaining courage, the two men rushed the shack, reached the door and burst in only to find the place deserted and empty. In spite of the fact that neither of them had taken his eyes off the place the quarry had escaped into the night. A short time later, reinforced by nine more of the Mounted Police and a specially sworn-in posse of citizens from Tofield a thorough search

of the surrounding country was made but without avail.

Meanwhile, through the wide publicity given the case, it came to light through the manager of the Anderson brickyard, in Edmonton, that Swan Fonberg, one of the owners of the Ross Creek ranch, was working for him, and that the fight given the police in the shack had been the work of only one man, Oscar Fonberg. What gave rise to the belief that two men were in the dugout was the rapid and perfect hail of bullets which greeted the first rush of the Mounted Police. Swan Fonberg, an ignorant and evidently half-witted person, was kept under surveillance by the police and no word of the battle allowed to reach him.

At 3 o'clock on the morning of April 25th, Mike Rechic, a Russian homesteader, living three miles from the Fonbergs' shack, was awakened by a feeble knocking at his door. He rose and was startled as he saw the shadow of a man in the gloom of the half-opened doorway and the next minute heard the newcomer fall.

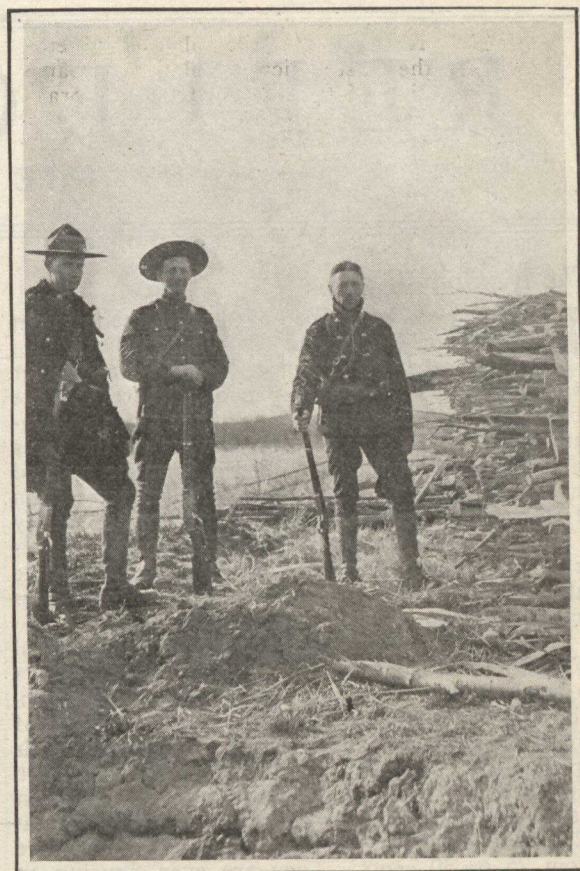
His clothes, tattered and torn, leaving one knee entirely bare from a long crawl through rough underbrush, Fonberg lay utterly exhausted at the door of the Russian homesteader's shack. One arm had been smashed with a bullet from the attacking party, and another had penetrated underneath his left armpit, passing clear through the outer wall of the chest. Yet badly wounded as he had been and with the blood flowing fast from two bullet wounds, the man had crept through a cordon of armed men, some of whom at one time or another must have been within a few yards of him, showing him to be a master hand in the art of wood craft. And even hurt as he was he dragged his rifle with him.

ALL unknowing of the great fight which had taken place so close to him the Russian, Rechic, took the man in and revived him with brandy and roughly dressed the wounds. Fonberg quickly recovered some of his almost spent strength and requested to be driven to Chipman, a small way-station on the Canadian Northern Railway about forty miles across country from Tofield and fifteen miles from the scene of the fight. Fonberg paid the man five dollars and in the early dawn they started out in a team-drawn buggy.

They were jogging along within three miles of Chipman when they were met by Constable McPhail, of the R. N. W. M. P., and a newspaper man from the staff of the Edmonton *Bulletin*, who were on their way to join the searching posse. The boy who was driving the Mounted Policeman and the newspaperman recognized Fonberg as the two rigs approached each other.

Slouched far down in the seat and almost unconscious the outlaw who a short few hours ago had given battle to a whole squad of police was no longer terrible. His rifle, which he had carried painfully across the miles of prairie before he reached the Russian's shack, had been left behind there and he was easily taken by McPhail and his companion, and the rigs returned to Chipman.

Lying on a cot in the rotunda of the Chipman Hotel, Oscar Fonberg, the murderer of Detective



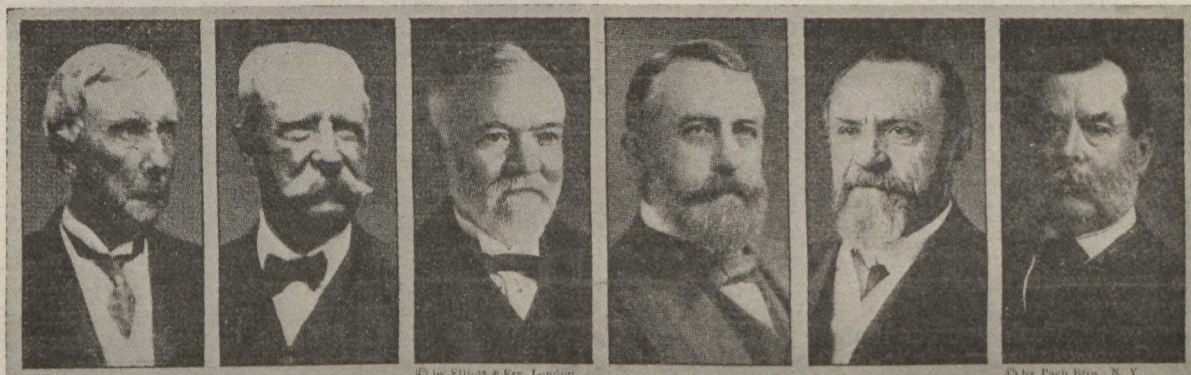
Left to Right: Bates, Stead, Parker. Stead is Standing Where Fonberg Stood When He Shot Bailey and Whitley.

Bailey and the terror of the district for many months, gave little the appearance of a man who has created probably the most exciting scene that has marked the history of the Mounted Police in western Alberta in the many years since the passing of the oldtime whiskey runners and cattle thieves. Lying there, his long, unkempt, light-brown hair falling over a full forehead, he was the cynosure of all eyes and all the villagers kept crowding in to look at the man who had made such a desperate fight. Except for his small, stubby nose, which is altogether out of proportion with the rest of his massive features, the man had not an unpleasing appearance and looked anything the part of a figure which in a small way stood out for a few short days almost as commandingly as the famous Harry Tracy in his record-breaking long distance run from the posses of a score of counties.

Fonberg was later removed to the Barracks at Fort Saskatchewan and will within the next few weeks come up for trial on the charge of the murder of Detective Bailey.

Not since Almighty Voice made his sensational stand in a poplar bluff near Prince Albert against a whole posse of Mounted Police, has there been such a melodrama as this of the man in the shack near Tofield, Alberta. Almighty Voice was dead when they found him after shelling the bluff with a machine gun. Fonberg the maniac escaped with his life. And among all the weird outlaw characters that have made Fort Saskatchewan one of the most interesting of all police posts, Fonberg is surely one of the strongest. He is the victim of a single fixed idea, such as helped to make a "lonely" of many a man that lost his reason in the solitude and had to be taken in tow by the police.

HOW A FEDERAL INCOME TAX AFFECTS THE U. S. PLUTOCRATS



John D. Rockefeller. \$1,998,260. William Rockefeller. \$798,260. Andrew Carnegie. \$598,260. Henry C. Frick. \$198,260. Henry Phipps. \$198,260. George F. Baker. \$198,260.

THESE SIX MEN WILL PAY AN ESTIMATED TAX OF \$4,000,000 ANNUALLY.

The New York Tribune, from Which These Estimates Are Taken, Places W. W. Astor's Tax at \$138,260, Mrs. Hetty Green's at \$118,260, and W. K. Vanderbilt's at \$98,260. The J. P. Morgan and Marshall Field Estates, it is Estimated, Will Pay Taxes of Over a Quarter of a Million Each.