

upon. And then later, at Dufferin, when the six troops of the N.W.M.P. united for the first time, that assumption gains weight in that the Commissioner said, "uniform . . ." was "served out".

What is believed to be the first requisition for supplies, or as it was designated "clothing and other stores supplied from the Militia Stores for the service of the North West Police Force, recently enrolled and dispatched to Manitoba", is dated Oct. 17, 1873. Rendered by the Department of Militia and Defence against the Department of Justice, it included 200 cloth tunics and 200 serge tunics and is documented in the Dominion Archives as order "Manitoba, No. 8770".

Scarlet cloth for tunics was imported from England in October, 1874, and was used for the tunics and jackets (Norfolk) worn in 1875-76, which along with several other items of uniform were made in Kingston Penitentiary.

Records show, too, that the original coat of the N.W.M.P. N.C.O.s and men was scarlet and similar to the Norfolk jacket popular in the Imperial Army after the Crimean war. Without facings, it had an open roll collar, two breast pockets, two skirt pockets lined with heavy moleskin, and belt loops.

Surgeon J. Kittson, M.D., in a report submitted after his return with the other members of "D" and "E" Troops following their 1,959-mile trek to the Rockies and back, had this to say:

"The scarlet Norfolk jackets altho' made of superior quality of cloth are faulty in shape. It is my humble opinion that a tunic would be more comfortable, a better fit, more seemly in appearance and warmer in cold weather. The jacket when once it gets wet draws in every direction; the belt, which is a fixture, is drawn towards the arm-pits and thus allows cool air, dust, etc. a free entrance between it and the breeches or trousers. The buttons being placed far apart have a draw game with their fellow buttonholes and give a scoloped appearance to the front. Altogether I believe the Norfolk jacket to be a failure and would humbly suggest that it be substituted by the tunic".

In these days the men received a uniform and put it on their back without alteration whether it fit or not. Master tailors were unheard of in the Force, and it is only fair to say here that the faults complained of lay in the tailoring rather than in the jacket itself. This is implied in a report of the N.W.M.P. quartermaster dated at Swan River, Sept. 24, 1875:

"In reference to the dress tunics (or Norfolk jackets) I would respectfully suggest that a change be made in the pattern, and that a scarlet cavalry tunic with blue cloth collar and cuffs be substituted therefor. The tunic at present in use, is a very uncomfortable one to wear, and unless made to measure it is rarely that a proper fit can be attained, and owing to the peculiar construction of the breast and the position of the pockets on the hips it is impossible to alter it without spoiling the tunic and making the wearer look ridiculous".

There does not appear to have been any distinctive regulation dress for officers in 1874. Their uniforms, conforming to the Prime Minister's wishes for conservatism, differed from those of the rank and file only in the addition of light edgings of gold lace to the frocks (long skirted coat not cut away in front), and it has been said the officers presented a rather nondescript appearance on parade.

Major Gen. E. Selby Smyth, commanding officer of the Canadian Militia, looking things over for the government in 1875, also expressed distaste for the Norfolk pattern, and very soon a reform favoured a tunic shape for all ranks.

"I like the dress of the Mounted Police", he reported, but "prefer the tunic shape to the frock; it is more 'dressy' and the men take some pride in looking smart. At present there is a want of uniformity in the dress. . . . I hardly concur in the system of allowing officers to wear the same as the men with the addition of gold lace. It may do for service but I think a neat full-dress uniform should be adopted—not costly but such as they could feel becoming their position in society."

Subsequently a more elaborate uniform was sanctioned for commissioned ranks, one resplendent with a scarlet cloth tunic according to regulation "13th Hussars" pattern.