

Unlike America which could afford to send entire armies westward, Canada was poor. The issue then was how could peace and good government prevail thousands of miles from the central government, which was located in the far east. The administration of a new country as vast as Canada, created enormous needs while the resources were extremely limited. All the country really had was a few men. It would not be through force that the political will of Canada would be carried out. The decision was made, at least in part, out of necessity rather than political philosophy. In any event, it gave birth to the "Mounties," and they in turn, set the standard for policing in this country which continues, albeit somewhat modified, to this day. For well over 100 years, the Mounties have remained loyal to that vision. And that vision has carried the Nation to where we are today, **NOT** as an instrument of force for repression, but as peacekeepers valuing freedom, serving not their paymasters, but their own communities and their own principles.

We Canadians are a self-effacing lot and that includes the Mounties. We don't honour good works and high standards, and yet we expect them. If we remembered our citizens of honour, men like John Walsh would be known and respected by our Canadian children. Do you really think they have been told who he was and what honour he brought to Canada? Unfortunately not, and we definitely are the poorer for it.

In 1876, when America was celebrating its centennial in Philadelphia, an Indian Shaman, known as Chief Sitting Bull, confronted an American General at the Battle of Bighorn, in Montana, on June 25. For the American Indians, their old world was dying, as was the buffalo. Theirs was a last desperate bid to resist the Government order to be committed to a controlled reservation. They no longer would remain masters of their own lives. Was this a threatening situation to them? You bet! The defeat

of General Custer and his entire command electrified America when the word got out. Instantly, Sitting Bull became the most feared and most wanted man in America. Hunted by an army determined to destroy him, he rode north, crossing the border into the Canadian Prairie, north of the 49th parallel.

The Canadian Government now had 5,000 "hostile" Indians fresh from battle — where they had obliterated an entire American army group — setting up camp at Wood Mountain, in Southern Saskatchewan. This was a major crisis for a fledgling Canadian Government, as the American Army piled up against the Canadian border; for the time being, they were respecting an existing treaty with Canada which would only continue if Canada dealt with the Indians.

The task of dealing with the Indians fell to John Walsh and two other Mounties who, wearing the bright scarlet tunic and with little more than bravado, rode into the Indian camp to confront Sitting Bull and his 5,000 men. (...) Unknown to Walsh at that time, the red jacket of the Northwest Mounted, which had been taken from the dress uniform of the British Army, was the colour of honour of the Dakotas; for them, the blue of the American Army was the colour of deceit and dishonesty.

The story goes that Walsh and his two men rode straight into the midst of the Indian camp, dismounted, set up and went to sleep. Through his actions, Walsh showed that he had respect for the Indians; Sitting Bull and his people showed equal respect to Walsh (...) As it turns out, instead of attempting to persuade Sitting Bull to return to America, Walsh took the Indians' side and for three years lobbied the Canadian Government to grant them permanent sanctuary in Canada.

Unfortunately, Walsh was unsuccessful, but it is nonetheless a remarkable story that has yet to be told in full. The story doesn't have