

With Mounted Police to Pelican Lake

By H. Christie Thompson.

The mounted police have, by the trend of circumstances in the farthest extremity of their Alaskan border, become an object of considerable interest.

Eternal vigilance is the price of the control which these silent patrols up to the eternal snows have gained over the natives, and neither the service which individuals will be called upon to perform, nor its extent can be foretold from hour to hour. The bureau of information moves its atoms, and "Theirs not to make reply; theirs but to do and (if need be) die."

I recall an instance in the late '90's that will serve, perhaps, as a timely example of this.

I was crossing the barrack square at Battleford, late in the fall, when an order was put into my hand which read as follows: "Inspector M— and Sergeant L—, with horses, regimental numbers 1242 and 1673 will leave tomorrow morning at 9 a.m. for Pelican

carefully oiled that and saw that oil, wrench, spare bolts, straps, etc., were stowed away in the jockey box, that the tires and wheels were tight and everything in good running order.

Then the bugler sounded "Stables," after which I harnessed my horses and went to the mess-room for breakfast. After that meal, my off-man appeared on the scene, and together we hitched up the team, and carefully overhauled the harness. Then we started around the barracks to collect our load, first visiting the quarter-master's store, where we loaded the large bell tent with its complement of poles and pins, and obtained cooking kit, pots, pans and kettles, axes, spades, etc., together with the rations and oats. The former consisted of soft bread and hard-tack, pork, potatoes, butter, tea, sugar, salt, matches and candles. The bread and potatoes were packed in gunny-sacks, the remaining rations in the mess box with our tableware.



INDIAN WOMAN ON CHEMAWAWAN RESERVE.

Lake, on special duty. They will be accompanied by Constable T—, with horses, regimental numbers 1485 and 1640, and light patrol wagon number 2. Guide and interpreter S— will go as teamster's off-man. They will take ten days' rations for four men, and ten day's forage for four horses.

The object of our trip was to discover the truthfulness of certain reports concerning the restlessness of the Indians at Pelican Lake, under a chief called Yellow Sky. They were said to be in an extremely restless and dissatisfied state of mind.

The morning was a busy one for me. Rising from my cot at the first strain of reveille, I was soon dressed, and at once began making up my roll of bedding. I had been long enough in the country to realize the necessity of sleeping warmly, so three pairs of heavy blankets, a rabbit skin robe and an oil sheet, with a big, fat, soft feather pillow, a pair of socks, moccasins, towel, soap and toothbrush were placed in the blankets, which were rolled tightly in the oil sheet and securely strapped.

My next care was for my wagon. I

We next drove to the sergeant-majors where we obtained horse-blankets, nose bags, picket ropes, hobbles and other articles needed for prairie travelling, not forgetting fur robes and coats for ourselves. Then to the veterinary store for the horse medicines that we never travel without; and putting our bedding on the top of all, our load was complete. Securely lashing it on with a picket-rope, we drove on to the square at five minutes to nine to await the customary inspection before starting. We were here joined by Mr. M— and the sergeant (mounted of course), and in a few moments the commanding officer examined the outfit critically, looked the horses over and felt a doubtful felloek, and finally gave the command: "Transport-right take ground-march!" and we were off. Each of us, as a matter of course, carried his revolver and ammunition; in addition to which I had my Winchester, while the inspector and sergeant each had a shotgun.

A few minutes' drive brought us to the town of Battleford, and we pulled up for a moment at the Hudson's Bay Co.'s store to purchase a little medicine

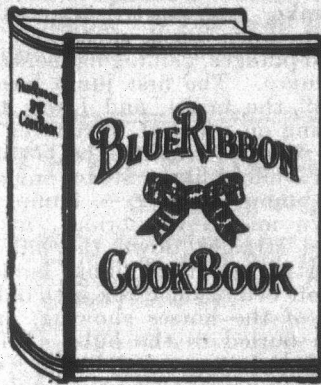
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