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L'T-COL. IRVINE AND THE NORTH-WEST MOUNTED POLICE

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THE visit of Lieutenant-Colonel Irvine to Eastern Canada, after a severe illness last winter, recalls to mind the early days of Manitoba and the North-West Territories, when he played a conspicuous part as Commissioner of the North-West Mounted Police. Though of recent years he has been Warden of the Penitentiary of Manitoba, his thoughts hark back to his life amongst the warlike plainsmen of the far West. He and the writer have talked many times of the early history of that country and together have gone over his valuable records.

For those who are interested in the country and who are unfamiliar with the organisation of the police and the reasons which called for such a force, I shall in my sketch refer to existing conditions in the West prior to the coming of the police.

The policy adopted by the Canadian Government towards the aboriginals differed entirely from that pursued by the United States authorities. In the States pioneers and miners pushed their way into the Indian territory, and, through injustice to the natives, wars ensued which

cost the American Government hundreds of millions of dollars.* Treaties were made only to be broken by the whites, and, as a result, horrible massacres were perpetrated and hundreds of pioneers killed. In Canada a small armed force was sent into the Indian country to establish law and order, and treaties were then made on fair and just terms and without bloodshed on either side. Since then the Indians have been regarded as wards of the Crown.

But, before going further, let us consider the two soldiers who were to command the mounted police and establish military rule in the Black-foot country.

James Farquharson Macleod and Acheson Gosfort Irvine, who in later life were to become so closely linked together, first met at La Prairie, opposite Montreal, where the post cadets of the Schools of Infantry of Quebec, Montreal, and Toronto were encamped. Again they came together at the School of Cavalry of the 10th Hussars, then stationed at Toronto.

Macleod, a scion of the ancient clan, was born at Drynoch, Isle of Skye, and

*Bishop Whipple's "The Red Man and the White Man."