

## Colonel James Farquharson Macleod, C.M.G.

*Commissioner of the North West Mounted Police*

1876-1880

JAMES FARQUHARSON MACLEOD was born on the Isle of Skye in 1836, the third son of Captain Martin Donald Macleod of the 25th Regiment. When he retired from the Service Captain Macleod settled in Canada and sent his son to Upper Canada College. On leaving school young Macleod went to Queen's College, Kingston, where he took his B.A. degree. There he commenced the study of law and was called to the Ontario Bar in the Easter term 1860. He practised his profession at Bowmanville, Ont.

Macleod had evidently inherited the military spirit as he entered the Militia as a Lieutenant in the Volunteer Militia Field Battery, Kingston, in 1856, and by 1867 he had advanced to the rank of Major and Brevet Lieutenant-Colonel.

When the first Red River expedition was organized in 1870 young Macleod was appointed Brigade Major under Colonel Wolseley. He gave such an excellent account of himself during the long and arduous march which terminated at Fort Garry that he was mentioned in dispatches and decorated with the Order of St. Michael and St. George.

In 1873 when it became necessary to organize the North West Mounted Police, Brevet Lieutenant-Colonel Macleod was appointed Superintendent, and was placed third on the Seniority Roll of the Force. During the following year he was promoted to the rank of Assistant Commissioner and became second in command of the North West Mounted Police.

Throughout the famous march of 1874 Assistant Commissioner Macleod was ever to the front, invariably resourceful, helpful under difficulties and defiant of danger.

The march terminated in the Sweet Grass Hills, the Force having failed to locate "Whoop-up", its objective.

Later Colonel French decided to return with half the Force to Fort Pelly, on the Swan River, while Colonel Macleod was left with three troops, or 150 men, to establish a Post at some point from which he could commence to wage war on the whisky smugglers who were demoralizing the Indians. Colonel Macleod selected a site on the Belly River which he reached on 13th October, 1874. This place was named Macleod in his honour.

Assistant Commissioner Macleod found conditions among the Indians thoroughly bad. He at once set to work to put matters right. The Indians are shrewd judges of character and they soon discovered that "Stamixotokan", (Bull's Head) as he was christened, was a man in whose word they could place implicit trust. Accordingly the Indians respected him. He held many a "pow-wow" with the Crowfoot and other chiefs who quickly realized that the old days of unrestricted whisky smuggling were over.

The following spring Colonel Macleod was able to report that the period of danger was past and the illicit whisky trade had been stamped out. For this notable achievement he received the well merited thanks of Parliament.

When the Government of the North West Territories was organized he was relieved of his duties as Assistant Commissioner of the N. W. M.