

Dan as a Pioneer

Written for The Western Home Monthly by Mrs. Robert C. Talbot.

In the summer of 1894 we arrived in a small village in Alberta. It was a queer little place. I say little place, as there were only two general stores, a depot, one hotel and a drug store.

The only side-walk we had, was a path, as you might call it, made of wood ashes. This was made by some Chinese, from their one-tub laundry to a general store, one block away.

Cattle ran freely through this little burg, and nearly all the people went bare-foot. In the summer time, we only got our mail once a week; and in the winter time, perhaps every two weeks.

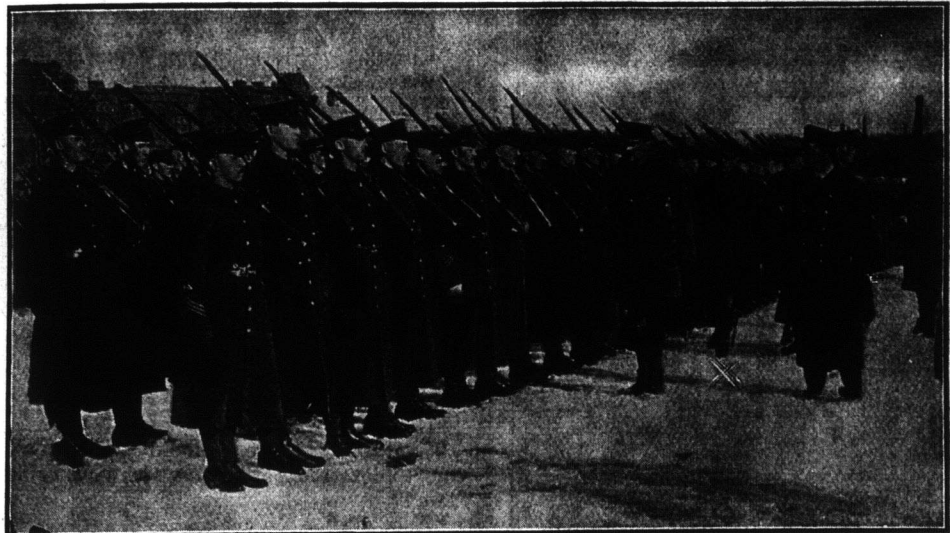
My father had only three hundred dollars when we landed there, with my mother, himself and three children to keep. Myself, the eldest, a boy of seven years. It was nearing fall and my father, anxious that we should be settled before winter came on, filed on a homestead. He paid one hundred dollars for the improvements that were on the place.

At this time we were staying with our grandmother, who lived six miles from the homestead father had purchased, but in two weeks we moved to our new

and you know how it hurts a Scotchman when he is deprived of his all day smoke. Well, father never smoked tobacco in these days. In the fall my sister Lucy and I gathered wild sage and mother dried it, and when father smoked this stuff we would open the doors and windows and even the flies flew out.

Our second year was a failure. Our only cow committed suicide by trying to sneak turnips out of a pit. This cow father bought from his step-father in the spring. It was muddy weather at the time of the purchase. A week later when the roads had dried up a little, father went over to claim the cow. This cow had been presented with a calf two days previous, but the old man would not give up the calf, he said, "It did not go with the cow, as he guessed the calf was his, as he had kept the cow on green grass for a week. So father did not get the calf.

In the fall of 1896, we had one hundred bushels of potatoes. These we sold to a local merchant for twenty cents a bushel. Father had to haul the potatoes to town while mother and I filled the sacks from a big pit at home. Our wheat was badly



Field Marshall H. R. H. the Duke of Connaught is seen here inspecting three thousand Canadian volunteers at Montreal on the eve of their departure for the European War. The spirit of unity shown among the Canadians and their devotion to the mother country has exceeded the highest British expectations and these volunteers furnish proof for the belief.—Photo Underwood.

abode. I tell you, it was funny. The log cabin was only sixteen feet by twenty-four feet. There was also a small stable, that would accommodate only two horses. We had a well, and the people who had lived there, had left some turnips in the garden—many thanks to them for that.

The winter was a very hard one. My father's small amount of money did not go very far, and soon our cupboard began to get bare. The only meat we had was rabbits three times a day, but mother cooked them several different ways. Our flour had four X's on the sack. This was the cheapest flour you could buy.

When our neighbors came to visit us they would bring us some rabbits, and when we went away from home on Sundays, as we usually did, there would be rabbits hung on the door knob and some live ones sitting on the door-step to greet us when we got home.

The next spring father got a team of oxen from a friend, intending to pay for them in the fall with what he realized from his crops. The oxen had never been driven before and father had an awful time breaking them to drive. This had to be done before the ground could be plowed. Father made a harness of rope and a yoke of tamarac.

One day when it was time for plowing and father thought that the oxen were well enough broken to plow, he took them to the field and hitched them to the plow. Away they ran to the brush, plow and all. This was too much for father and he traded the team of oxen and his gold watch for a bronco. Well he could not till the soil with the one horse, so he traded some potatoes to a Cree Indian for a cayuse. Just imagine what they looked like when they were hitched to the plow together. The bronco was a foot and a half taller than the cayuse, and I think the bronco pulled the plow himself and when they came to the end of the furrow, the cayuse would lie down to take a rest.

Father was a good natured Scotchman,

frozen that year, but father hauled it to Edmonton to be made into flour as we could not afford to buy more. It took him a week to make the trip, but he did it.

When mother first saw the flour, she said, "Why, Jim, it is black. I don't think the miller has taken all the smut out of it." But father only laughed and said, "It will turn white when it is cooked, dear." Mother never could tell when the bread was baked, as it was sad and heavy. When it was cold, it was as hard as iron. Our teeth were as sharp as a beaver's, we could have eaten the bark off the toughest tree that grew.

Our Amusements

Some of our neighbors were Russians. They lived in dugouts, as we called them. The people were very good neighbors, as they were very kind and sociable. They had a dance very often, and we would always get an invitation. They danced to accordion music. My father played the violin and he was always a welcome guest. They danced on the dirt floors or ground, I guess we will call it. The dust would rise so thick sometimes that it was impossible to tell which one was your partner. When it got too bad they would all take their seats and someone would sprinkle water on the floor. When this would settle they would all waltz again to the accordion music.

Every year, Treaty was held for the Cree Indians. We would all go too, and join in with the amusements arranged by the business men of the little village. There were foot races by the English speaking people, and pony races by the Indians, and the most amusing feature was the foot races of the Indian's Squaws with their papooses on their backs.

Early in the morning, the day before the Treaty one could see hundreds of Indians, some on horse back and others with their two-wheeled carts drawn by one cayuse, trudging their way along the

COWAN'S Perfection Cocoa

Little
Miss
"MAIDEN"
CANADA

Registered

Don't miss half the
usefulness of this Cocoa.
Try it for icing—
good results!



357

HORROCKSES' FLANNELETTES

(made by the manufacturers of the celebrated
Longcloths, Twills and Sheetings)

ARE MADE FROM
CAREFULLY SELECTED COTTON

The nap is short and close.
No injurious chemicals are used.
Quality, designs and colorings are unequalled.

If purchasers of this useful material for Underwear all the year round would
buy THE BEST ENGLISH MAKE they would appreciate the comfort
and durability which inferior qualities of Flannelette do not possess.

See the name "HORROCKSES" | ANNUAL Sale upwards of
on the selvedge every two yards. | TEN MILLION yards

Awarded the Certificate of the Incorporated Institute of Hygiene.

For information as to the nearest Store where procurable apply to Agent

JOHN E. RITCHIE

417 King's Hall Chambers
St. Catherine Street West MONTREAL