

The North-West Mounted Police.

(By the Special Commissioner of the Toronto Empire.)

Next in importance to the Lieutenant-Governor of the Territories and the Minister of the Interior, in the influence exercised on the North-west, comes the North-West Mounted Police; and, indeed, in some respects the influence of this organization is even more direct than that of the higher functionaries. The force at present consists of a thousand effectives, officers and men, and about one hundred supernumeraries—teamsters, guides, etc.; and it would be no easy matter, anywhere or under any circumstances, to bring together a thousand finer or more soldierly-looking men than have been enlisted and assembled here for service on the prairies. Though their legal status is that of civil police, they partake far more of the character and appearance of soldiers than of civilians; their dress, equipment, drill, discipline, and, in short, everything about them is military. Moreover, they regard themselves and their officers as soldiers, and they are generally so regarded by the people.

In their headquarters, too, at Regina the same general military appearance may be seen in the buildings and in all the details of their arrangement. Though no attempt has been made to fortify the place or protect it by bastions, barricades and batteries, it being rightly considered that it would have a much greater moral effect on the natives to let them feel that the force was strong enough for all practical purposes without the aid of such defences, nevertheless the appearance of the whole collection of buildings is rather that of a military barracks than of the rendezvous of a civic force. Everything is kept in apple-pie order, rooms and accoutrements scrupulously clean, horses thoroughly groomed and carefully attended, and the stables and every article about them as neat and well arranged as could be desired by the most martinet colonel of a crack cavalry regiment. Commissioner Herchmer and all the other officers are very proud of the efficiency of the men, and well they may be; while the men fully reciprocate the feeling, so that the utmost good feeling prevails, and the *esprit de corps* is excellent. Major Cotton, the officer in command, kindly arranged matters to let me have an opportunity of seeing the men go through some evolutions on the parade ground, and though several of them were young recruits, the quickness and precision with which the various manoeuvres were executed would have done no discredit to a company of veterans. They have an excellent band, too, in which it would be hard to say whether the officers or men take the greater pride; they play wonderfully well, and often contribute to the entertainment of citizens at Government receptions and on other occasions. Besides the headquarters of the force at Regina there are nine or ten other chief posts, which serve as headquarters for the various districts into which the country is divided for police supervision; but the men are comparatively seldom lodged at these central points, being generally scattered all over the immense area embraced within the Territories. As a rule, they much prefer the free, wild life on the plains, in spite of its apparent hardships and discomfort; and, except when suffering from illness, they are seldom rejoiced to hear the summons which calls them back to their turn of routine duties in the barracks.

As to their general duties, their name is legion. It would, in fact, be impossible to enumerate them all in detail. In a general way they are expected to afford police protection to the settlers and to keep a vigilant watch on the native population; but in these general duties are included many that the outside world knows or thinks nothing about. For instance, they collect revenue, prevent smuggling of all kinds, guard against the stealing of horses, cattle, timber, coal, hay, etc.; recover lost, stolen or strayed animals; shoot diseased animals to prevent the spread of contagion; prevent or extinguish prairie fires; arrest and take temporary charge of lunatics or imbeciles; ferret out and arrest murderers and other criminals—and, in short, act at once as soldiers, police, detectives, revenue officers, veterinary surgeons and philanthropists for the whole community. No one will, I think, be willing to assert that these men are likely to have a very idle time of it if they discharge their duties even moderately well. But I have the strongest reasons for believing that they discharge them not only moderately well, but in the most thorough and effective manner; throughout the whole North-West Territories I never heard a man, whose opinion could be considered of any weight, who did not speak in the highest possible terms of the immense services rendered by those men to the community. "The country never could have done without them" was a common way of winding up an opinion on the question of their value, and perhaps it would be impossible to pronounce a stronger encomium on any body of men or a more conclusive reason for their organization. Sir John Macdonald has devised many wise, prudent and far-reaching measures for the good of the Dominion; but I do not think he ever conceived a happier idea than that of the organization of the North-West Mounted Police.

I have dwelt at considerable length on this topic partly because of its vast importance to the North-West, and partly because I have heard

people object to the cost of maintaining the corps, without having taken into consideration the value of the services performed and the absolute necessity of either keeping up the present organization or establishing an equally efficient one in its stead. In my next letter we shall take leave of the North-West capital and get further west into the Territories.

The Massachusetts Rifle Team for England.

(Volunteer Service Gazette.)

It would seem that there is a strong feeling in Massachusetts that another international rifle match should be inaugurated next year, and that the American riflemen might get back that championship at military team shooting Great Britain now holds, and the following letter, appearing in a recent issue of *Forest & Stream* may be the first chapter in the story of the international rifle match of 1889. Major J. P. Frost writes as follows to Major-Gen. Dalton: "The gratifying success of the Massachusetts riflemen at Creedmoor and Chicago during the past three years is a matter of record in the army and National Guard from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and the honest, faithful and uniformly successful results of these competitions seem worthy of a fitting recognition at the hands of the citizens of this Commonwealth. I therefore have the honour to request permission to open official correspondence with the National Rifle Association of Great Britain and kindred organizations of the English Volunteers, with the view of arranging a series of competitions between the volunteer riflemen of England and the marksmen of the Massachusetts volunteer militia. Should such correspondence indicate that a Massachusetts militia team would meet with welcome, and that competitions with the service rifle of each nation be endorsed by the proper authorities, I further ask that permission be given me to form a rifle team, to be composed, so far as practicable, of the members of the State teams of 1887 and 1888, with the view of visiting England the coming July, to participate in the annual meeting of the National Rifle Association of Great Britain; the expense of such a trip to be borne by private subscription, and I earnestly ask your co-operation and that of the Inspector-General of rifle practice in the undertaking."

To the above the following reply was received from the Brigadier-General: "I heartily approve the request of Major Frost, and believe that the idea is one which cannot fail to receive the hearty endorsement and support of every friend of the Massachusetts volunteer militia. The record of our militia riflemen is most brilliant, and I believe that the benefits of such a trip would prove of inestimable advantage to our expert shots. In Major Frost I have the utmost confidence. His well-known reputation as an experienced rifleman, his enthusiasm and love of the reputation of the militia, especially fit him for this important undertaking, and I feel confident that every endeavour which human ingenuity can devise will be brought forth by him to sustain the reputation of the State." Subsequently the Inspector-General of Rifle Practice writes as follows on this matter: "I should disapprove of any such project as outlined, unless the party making the excursion is composed of representative men, capable of maintaining the record made by Massachusetts in late years. But if a party can be made up, and can go abroad with the expectation of meeting the volunteers of England on equal terms, I should approve of authorizing the necessary preliminaries. I think the request of Major Frost for permission to open correspondence should be granted. This will develop any obstacle in the way, and determine whether the suggested plan can be carried out, with a fair promise of maintaining abroad the prestige which our State troops have established at home."

In reference to the above correspondence, the *New York Army & Navy Journal* says: "In response to a request addressed to the A. G. of Massachusetts, Major J. P. Frost, A.I.G.R.P., 2nd Brig. M. V. M., has been authorized to open official correspondence with the N.R.A. of Great Britain and kindred organizations of the English volunteers, with a view of arranging a series of competitions between the volunteer riflemen of England and the marksmen of the Massachusetts volunteer militia. Should such correspondence indicate that a Massachusetts militia team would meet with welcome, he is authorised to form a rifle team, to be composed, so far as practicable, of the members of the State teams of 1887 and 1888, with the view of visiting England the coming July to participate in the annual meeting of the N.R.A. of Great Britain, the expense of such trip to be borne by private subscription—the Adjutant-General writing, 'Major J. P. Frost, assistant inspector-general of rifle practice, 2nd Brigade, is authorised to open correspondence on the subject matter contained within, it being understood that the team will not be formed or any expense incurred without the approval of the Adjutant-General's office.' We admire the pluck of the Massachusetts riflemen, and there is certainly no team that can better uphold the honour of the United States than this team. They have been victors over the best teams in the United States, both in the Army and the State troops, and have a most enviable record."