

The Dominion Police continued their secret service work in the wake of the growing Fenian threat. They employed a long-term, highly-placed spy in the Fenian executive who reported directly to Gilbert McMicken, the first Commissioner of the Dominion Police. Described by Macdonald as shrewd, cool and determined, McMicken has the distinction of being Canada's first spymaster. But the work of the Dominion Police was not limited to the secret service.

### Responsibilities Expanded

Over its half-century of service to Canada, the responsibilities of the Dominion Police were continually expanded. It was given jurisdiction over counterfeiting. In one particular case, the Commissioner personally travelled to New Brunswick during the course of an investigation. As well, contact and cooperation with law enforcement agencies in the United States was periodically required in following up on counterfeiting investigations. The *Ticket of Leave Act* of 1899, and its related work became another one of the many responsibilities assumed by the Dominion Police. White slave traffic, crimes against the postal service, control of enemy aliens during World War I, and enforcement of the *War Measures Act* were further examples of the responsibilities of Canada's first federal police force. Special missions sometimes required its members to travel overseas. In 1915, the Commissioner was sent to England to confer with British law enforcement officials on matters relating to enemy alien and espionage matters in Canada.

The force was involved in the investigation into the daring attempt to blow up the Welland Canal locks

near Thorold, Ontario, on April 22, 1900. Here again, members of the Dominion Police worked hand-in-glove with the provincial police and local authorities to resolve the case.

In 1893, the Dominion government turned to its federal police force to obtain certain evidence regarding the Bering Sea Arbitration case, which involved a territorial dispute with the United States. The excellent performance turned in by the Dominion Police in this regard was instrumental in the handing down of a decision favourable to Canada by an International Tribunal at Paris, France.

A major contribution by the Dominion Police force to the advancement of law enforcement in Canada occurred in 1911. Edward Foster, born near Ottawa in 1863, and who joined the Dominion Police in 1890, became convinced of the merits of the fingerprint identification method over the *Bertillon* system, based on body measurements. He persuaded Commissioner A.P. Sherwood to take up the cause. In 1905, Commissioner Sherwood recommended the creation of a National Criminal Identification Bureau to be maintained and operated by the Dominion Police. It would cooperate with law enforcement authorities across Canada and similar bureaus in other countries.

Through the Commissioner's efforts with the Minister of Justice, an Order in Council was passed in July, 1908, sanctioning the use of the fingerprint system and making the provisions of the *Identification of Criminals Act* of 1898 applicable to it. The so-called Fingerprint Bureau opened in 1911, and became the central repository of fingerprints, criminal records and photographs. It was a modest start to what would someday become the RCMP's National Police Service.