

## Colonel A. G. Irvine

**T**HE THIRD in line of the Commissioners of the Force was Lieutenant-Colonel Acheson Gosford Irvine.

Canadian by birth, Commissioner Irvine was the son of Lieutenant-Colonel Irvine of Quebec, who was principal A.D.C. to the Governor General of Canada. He was born in Quebec on December 7, 1837. He was educated there and spent some years in commercial life. He took a First Class Cavalry School Certificate and a First Class M.S. Certificate. He was gazetted a Lieutenant in the Third or Eastern Administrative Battalion for service at Laprairie under the command of Colonel (later Field-Marshal) Lord Wolseley on December 30th, 1864. He raised, and was appointed Captain of what became afterwards No. 1 Company, Fifty-fifth Megantic Light Infantry—March, 1866. He was promoted Major in June, 1867, and served in this rank with the Second Battalion Quebec Rifles in the Red River Expeditionary Force, 1870. When the Force in Manitoba was reduced in 1871 he was placed in Command of the Provisional Battalion of Rifles which remained there. He retired with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel in June, 1875, and was awarded the General Service medal and three clasps.

Colonel Irvine joined the North West Mounted Police and was appointed a Superintendent on November 7th, 1875, and Assistant Commissioner on January 1st, 1876.

Colonel Irvine became Commissioner on the 1st November, 1880, in succession to Colonel J. F. Macleod, who had taken over Judicial duties in the Territories just previously.

Shortly before assuming command of the Force, Colonel Irvine visited Dublin Castle, the Headquarters of the Royal Irish Constabulary. Colonel Irvine was much interested in what he saw and heard. He returned to Canada quite convinced that extensive changes were required in the organization of the R. C. M. Police. At the first opportunity he made a number of recommendations to the Dominion Government.

He advocated increasing the strength of the Force from three hundred to five hundred. This suggestion was adopted but Parliament decided that the pay of recruits was to be reduced from fifty cents to forty cents per day during the period of probation. He was responsible for arming two Divisions with the Winchester Repeater Rifle in place of the Snider Carbine, a change that was welcomed generally. The minimum age at which recruits were accepted for engagement was raised to twenty-two years. Later the minimum age was dropped but it was found that boys of eighteen or nineteen are too young and inexperienced to discharge the not inconsiderable responsibilities of a Police Constable and the age for engagement is now fixed at twenty-one years.

The most important change, however, and unquestionably the one which caused Colonel Irvine most concern, was the establishment of a permanent Headquarters for the Force. Swan River was too far from the West: Macleod was too far away from the East: Fort Welsh was an unhealthy location. A site had to be selected which would be central and convenient for a long time to come. The place chosen was at Wascana Creek, which was known to the Indians as Pile of Bones Creek. The erection of a far more commodious