

the government set general policy for the work of the police and let the Force work out the details. Morrison writes appreciatively about the Force, concluding that "the police were essentially group heroes, a team in the Canadian tradition of collective heroism."

This is a good book with a basic problem which can be detected with a glance before you crack the cover; it is too slender a volume. Morrison covers the activities of the Mounted Police in the Arctic for over three decades in 180 pages of text. Inevitably, he was forced to limit treatment of important parts of the story to an inadequate summary. For instance, how the Force met the challenge of combatting crime in the Yukon in the gold rush period is a dramatic and complex tale. Literally tens of thousands of greedy, virile men determined to get rich descended on the Yukon, to be met by, at the height of its strength, a Force of just over 300 policemen. Order was maintained because the NWMP organized detachments in a flexible manner, refused to allow anyone to hurt their neighbour or deprive him of property, and allowed for human nature in regulating dancehalls and brothels. Professor Morrison devotes about seven pages to this story, enough to show he understands the question but not enough to inform the reader adequately. Similar light treatment is given the Alaska Boundary Dispute and its impact on sovereignty in the Yukon. The whole story of the NWMP's extension into the sub-Arctic regions of the North-West Territories, which directly prepared the

Force for its role further north, is left out. There is also little room for colourful stories which enliven a scholarly book, and the two maps are inadequate.

I have only one quarrel with Professor Morrison's analysis, and that concerns his criticism of the Mounted Police's treatment of Indians. He accuses the police in both the Yukon and the N.W.T. of being callous, contemptuous and paternalistic in dealing with Indians. Because some Indians appeared improvident and reluctant to support themselves, the Mounted Police resented issuing them with emergency rations and clothing. Although Professor Morrison does not clearly state his conclusion, it seems that he thinks that a more enlightened humanitarian approach by the police to Arctic Indians would have spared the latter much trauma. I believe that the Mounted Police went as far as government policy and common sense would allow, to assist the Indians to respond to the crisis of the retreating frontier. As on the Prairies, some Indians responded very well and others did not, and the reasons for this are up for speculation.

This book belongs in the collection of anyone interested in RCMP history. From it one learns, in skeleton form, how the Force came to be in the Arctic and what it accomplished over three decades. If much of the detail needs yet to be filled in, this just gives us further studies to anticipate patiently.

*by Dr. William Beahen  
RCMP Staff Historian*

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## **Class "A" Practical Joke**

*(Continued from page 35)*

This Corporal had no idea that we were behind the "practical joke" because it looked so authentic. About a month had elapsed between the

phone call and the memo. He had forgotten about the phone call!!!

*submitted by Robyne Pullen and  
Kristine Nadeau, "E" Division*