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THE ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

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The Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the only federal police force in Canada, is a business-like organization and a living tradition.

A reminder of Canada's romantic past, an example of quiet devotion and dignity, and a symbol to the world at large of the courage and determination characteristic of their homeland, the scarlet and gold horsemen retain their appeal for youth and age alike.

Originally formed to keep order in the vast expanse which lay beyond the western boundaries of Ontario, the Force remains sovereign in the Northwest Territories and the Yukon.

Because of the division of responsibility between the ten provincial legislatures and the federal authority in Ottawa, the functions of the Force are many and varied. From its general headquarters in the capital, the operations of seventeen divisions mustering a uniform strength of 4164 officers and men, aided by 1459 special constables, civil servants, and civilian employees, are directed and co-ordinated.

The peaceful settlement of Western Canada at the turn of the century is an outstanding title to fame of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, then the North West Mounted Police, which was organized in 1873 by the Federal Government to administer justice in the regions ceded by the Hudson's Bay Company. Quebec and Ontario maintain their own police forces. The other provinces have entered into agreements with the Federal Government whereby the Royal Canadian Mounted Police is hired upon terms of annual payment to enforce the Criminal Code and provincial statutes.

Soon after the passing of the British North America Act in 1867, the newborn federal government had acquired an enormous and potentially rich area stretching from the Red River Valley to the Rockies and from the United States to the forests of northern Saskatchewan. Before these resources could be developed, however, order had to be established throughout this vast region. The Government at Ottawa needed an instrument for the assertion of its authority, the enforcement of law and eventually the safe construction of a transcontinental railroad, which was British Columbia's price for entering Confederation.

In 1873, 300 mounted riflemen marched from Manitoba to the Rockies. Their mission was to bridge the plains, pacify the warring tribes and protect the country from adventurers. Two years later, the Force had become firmly planted, and had won the confidence and respect of native chiefs and their people. Devoid of the arrogance and brutality so often displayed by newcomers to the prairies, the Mounted Police endeavoured to make law-abiding citizens of both white and red men.