

# Canada Weekly

Volume 1, No. 23

June 13, 1973



External Affairs  
Canada

Affaires extérieures  
Canada



Royal Canadian Mounted Police celebrates centenary

Canada's national police force, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), a modern organization that is a living tradition and a vivid reminder of the romance of Canada's past, was 100 years old on May 23. On that day in 1873, Lord Dufferin, the Governor General of Canada, gave royal assent to an act of the Government of Canada for the establishment of a "Police Force in the North-West Territories".

The growth of the RCMP into one of the world's best known and most versatile police organizations is reflected in the 1973 centennial program, which began May 23, when Governor-General Roland Michener opened a special exhibition in Ottawa entitled "The RCMP - its History and its National Role". Many events will commemorate such outstanding chapters in the force's early history as its famous March West in 1874, its establishment of posts throughout Western Canada and its outstanding police work in the Klondike gold-fields. Also recalled will be the discovery voyages through the Northwest Passage by the RCMP ship *St. Roch*, the first vessel to navigate this almost legendary route in both directions. Other centennial activities will generate more public awareness of the contemporary force and its operations in an area that extends across the whole of Canada and northward from the United States border to the high Arctic.

#### Early days

The plan for the establishment of the force called for the enlistment of 300 men between the ages of 18 and 40 who would be paid at 75 cents a day for sub constables, and \$1 a day for constable. The North West Mounted Police, as it was soon called, came into existence on August 30, 1873, when the provisions of the act of Parliament were enforced by Order in Council and recruiting began.

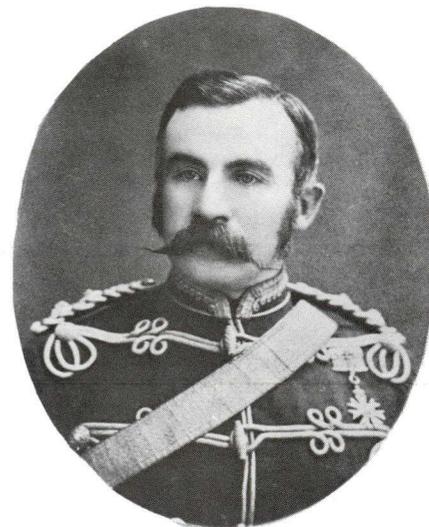
Credit for the peaceful settlement of Western Canada rightly falls to the NWMP, who were organized to administer justice in the regions ceded by the Hudson's Bay Company. In July 1874, 275 men rode westward from Fort Dufferin, Manitoba, their mission to pacify the warring tribes and protect the plains country from adventurers. By autumn of the same year, they had made their presence known as far west as the foothills of the

Rocky Mountains. Two years later, the force had become firmly established 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 West, the NWMP endeavoured to make law-abiding citizens of both white and red men.

As a semi-military body, modelled partly on the Royal Irish Constabulary, the North West Mounted Police followed the army style in administration and dress. The scarlet tunic, worn earlier by the highly respected and popular soldiers of Queen Victoria during their years in the West, was from the first an important part of the uniform, and was destined to become a badge of friendly authority.

#### Gold-rush days

By 1895, the northern regions of Canada came within the scope of the force, and in particular the Yukon, as thousands of prospectors flocked to the gold-fields. The NWMP moved quickly into the region and established posts at strategic points. By vigilant and determined law enforcement and a ban on firearms, fewer than 250 members kept murder and serious crime to a minimum. Among their many tasks,



*George Arthur French  
First Commissioner*

the NWMP carried mail to the scattered camps, adding 64,000 miles in one year alone to patrols branching out by boat and dog-sled over the North.

After the Boer War, in which many members of the force served conspicuously with Canadian regiments, settlement of the West accelerated as some 300,000 homesteaders made their homes on the plains. A total of 84 detachments stretched from the U.S.



*During the March West, Assistant Commissioner James F. Macleod was invariably riding in the vanguard of the cavalcade. He is seen here, with*

*his hand on his horse's saddle, flanked by two of his officers in a picture taken at Fort Walsh in 1878.*

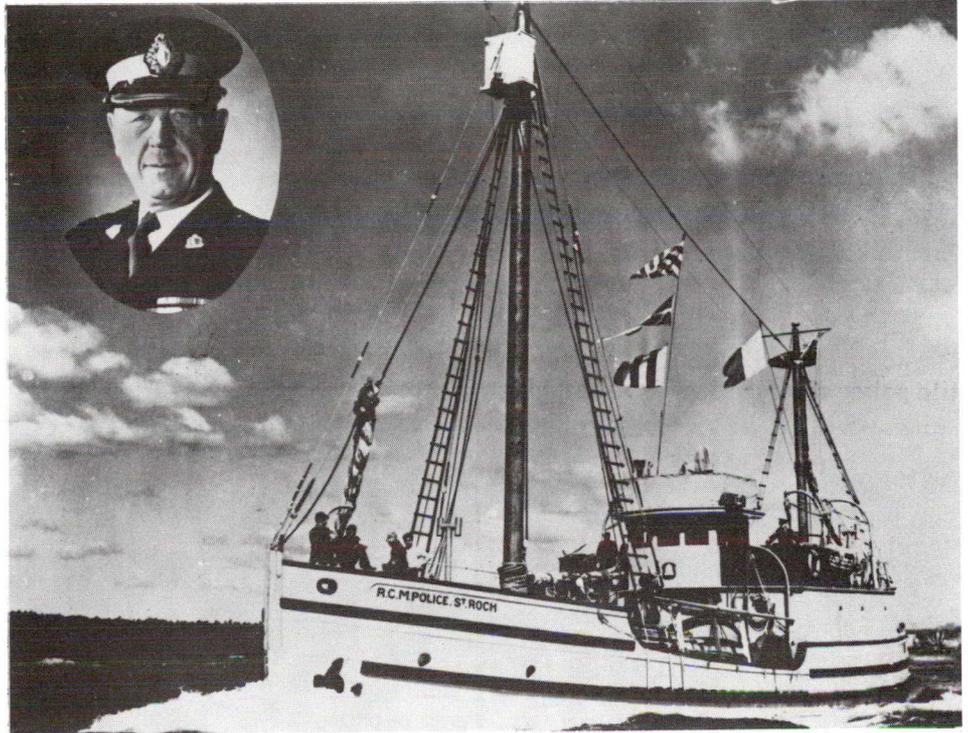
border to the Arctic and from Hudson Bay to Alaska.

World recognition came when a mounted contingent rode through London on the occasion of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. In 1904, King Edward VII bestowed on the force the prefix "Royal" in recognition of its service. A year later, the provinces of Saskatchewan and Alberta were formed and, with Manitoba, divided the Western plains into the three Prairie Provinces. For the next ten years, the Mounted Police carried out their many varied and often hazardous duties of law enforcement and mercy, covering thousands of miles on horseback, by dog-team, canoes and boats. The First World War reduced the strength of the force owing to enlistments in the Canadian and British armed forces, as it was not until 1918 that the Canadian Government authorized the dispatch of two squadrons of RNWMP for service in France and Siberia. After the war, the total strength rose to 1,200.

#### Present name adopted

Canada-wide jurisdiction was extended to the force in 1920, and with this came the present name of Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the modern era involving operations by land, sea and air over an area as large as Europe. Famous patrols in 1924 pushed deep into the Arctic regions, and in 1928 the police schooner *St. Roch* undertook supply and patrol duties in northern waters. In 1931-32, the RCMP took over provincial police duties in Saskatchewan, Alberta, Manitoba and the three Maritime Provinces (New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island), and absorbed the Preventive Service of the Department of National Revenue.

A marine section was formed in 1932,



*The RCMP schooner, St. Roch, which was built in 1928, became the first ship to navigate the hazardous Northwest Passage from West to East and, on completion of the return journey, the first to sail through the Passage in both directions. The famous journey began when the 300-ton ship, under*

which played an important role until the Second World War in cutting revenue losses through smuggling, which had been costing the federal treasury millions of dollars. During the war, 209 officers and men, with 33 ships and boats, were transferred to the Royal Canadian Navy for coastal and seagoing patrols. They filled key positions, as reflected in their casualty rate of 41 per cent. In 1942 the RCMP ship *St. Roch* became the first to navigate the Northwest Passage

*the command of Staff Sergeant H.A. Larsen and with a crew of eight, left Esquimaux, British Columbia on June 9, 1940 and reached Halifax, Nova Scotia on October 11, 1942. The return voyage started on July 22, 1944 from Dartmouth, N.S. and was completed on October 16, 1944.*

from West to East. She completed the return voyage in 1944, becoming the first vessel to sail the Passage in both directions.

Long, tedious overland journeys through difficult terrain became less frequent with the advent of air travel and the formation of an Air Division in 1937. When the Second World War began, the Royal Canadian Air Force took over most Air Division personnel and equipment. Despite this depletion, the RCMP continued to make many

#### Hundredth birthday message from Royal Canadian Mounted Police Commissioner W.L. Higgitt

In 1973 the Royal Canadian Mounted Police will be celebrating its centenary and its 100 years of service to Canada and Canadians. It will be an occasion for reflection upon its history, its traditions, and the contribution it has made to the growth and development of Canada. While its reputation in the minds of many is based upon the outstanding past achievements of its members,

it is a modern and forward-looking police force.

It is my hope that during the course of our hundredth birthday celebrations opportunities will be afforded to all Canadians to come to know us better and to share some of the pride we feel in our acceptance as true representatives of Canada. We look forward to having you join with us in our celebrations.

We in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police have always enjoyed and greatly valued the confidence of the Canadian people. I hope during our centennial year occasion will be found to reaffirm and strengthen this bond of friendship which is vital if we are to continue to give the high quality of service that the Canadian people have come to expect from us.

flights into the North on police and defence missions until the Division was re-formed in 1946.

**Service in Second World War**

The force also contributed a provost company to the Armed Forces as part of the First Canadian Division, which provided the bulk of provost officer personnel to all staff formations. Besides discipline enforcement, traffic duty, collecting information on convoy movements and unit locations, they were employed at detention barracks, training depots and special investigation units. In co-operation with the Allied Military Government in occupied countries, they helped reorganize and direct civilian police systems, fire departments and civil defence.

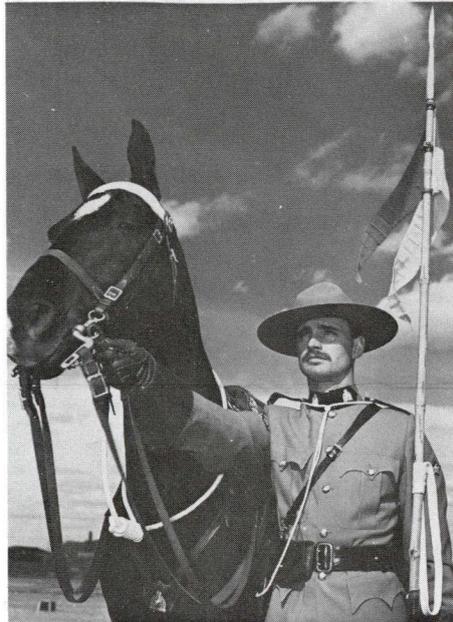
**Today's force**

Originally formed to keep order in the vast expanse lying beyond the western boundaries of Manitoba, the RCMP now enforces federal laws in all ten Canadian provinces and polices the Northwest Territories and the Yukon. Under contract, it also acts as the provincial police force in eight provinces and does local policing for about 150 municipalities. Directed and administered from headquarters in Ottawa, 11,500 uniformed members, civilian members and special constables are complemented by 2,500 public servants and civilian employees.

Today's "Mountie" is likely to be seen at the wheel of a radio-equipped patrol car, manning the intricate communication system in one of the force's 38 communications centres, or attending a lecture on ballistics, forensic science or other law-enforcement disciplines. He uses a horse only on ceremonial duties and travels in the Arctic by aircraft or snowmobile.

The RCMP combines routine investigative procedures with the most advanced scientific techniques using such aids as the electron-microscope, computers and infrared spectrophotometers. Work in its five crime detection laboratories – in Vancouver, Edmonton, Regina, Ottawa and Sackville – has solved some of Canada's most puzzling cases of murder, arson, forgery and embezzlement.

RCMP operations are divided among 12 divisions and 41 sub-divisions. In an average year, the force will deal with more than 250,000 criminal code



offences, and about twice as many traffic violations. Their investigations will involve hundreds of thousands of checks of fingerprint files and other records and 10,000 exchanges with Interpol, the international police organization. In addition, thousands of hours will be devoted to such miscellaneous duties as safeguarding visiting statesmen, extending public health care to Eskimo settlements and protecting migratory wildfowl. Police-community relations, activities with youth and with adult service clubs will take up additional time, resulting in thousands of off-duty hours.

The RCMP headquarters is not merely an administrative centre, but includes a communication centre, the central

criminal and fingerprint files, photographic and scientific laboratories and related services.

Since 1873, the force has had 15 commissioners. The fifteenth is 54-year old William Leonard Higgitt, who was appointed to the post in 1969.

**Recruiting and training**

To qualify to serve with the RCMP, an applicant must be a British subject or Canadian citizen resident in Canada, between the ages of 18 and 29, single, at least 5'8" in height, physically fit and able to speak, read and write English or French. Members of the RCMP cannot marry until they have served two years and are 21 years of age. The initial enlistment period is for five years and a member is eligible for a life pension after 20 years service under the provisions of the RCMP Act. Careful selection at recruit level is followed by periodic interviews throughout the entire career of the member. The recruit's six months of training includes drill, firearms instruction, criminal law, investigation, public relations, swimming, physical training and a large variety of academic and social subjects.

The training and development program is of very wide scope and of a continuing nature. Advanced training in investigation, management and specialized instruction is provided. In 1938, the RCMP instituted the Canadian Police College, which provides courses in Ottawa to members and selected personnel of other police forces in Canada and around the world.

**Birthday present pay boost**

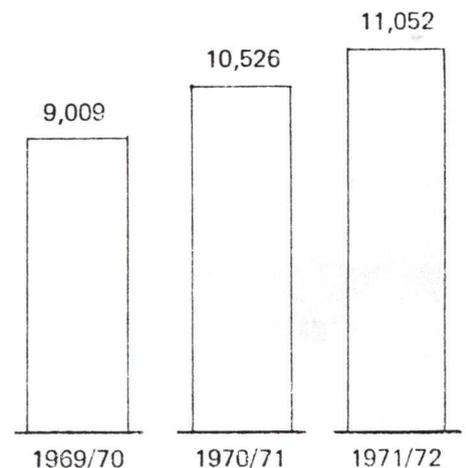
The Royal Canadian Mounted Police celebrated its hundredth birthday on May 23 with a retroactive pay increase from April 1.

The increases will raise the annual salary of a first class constable to \$12,300 from \$11,550; a corporal will earn \$13,376, up from \$12,700 and a sergeant will get \$14,575, up from \$13,860.

Staff sergeants will make \$15,575, up from \$15,015, and inspectors will get \$19,412 instead of \$18,400.

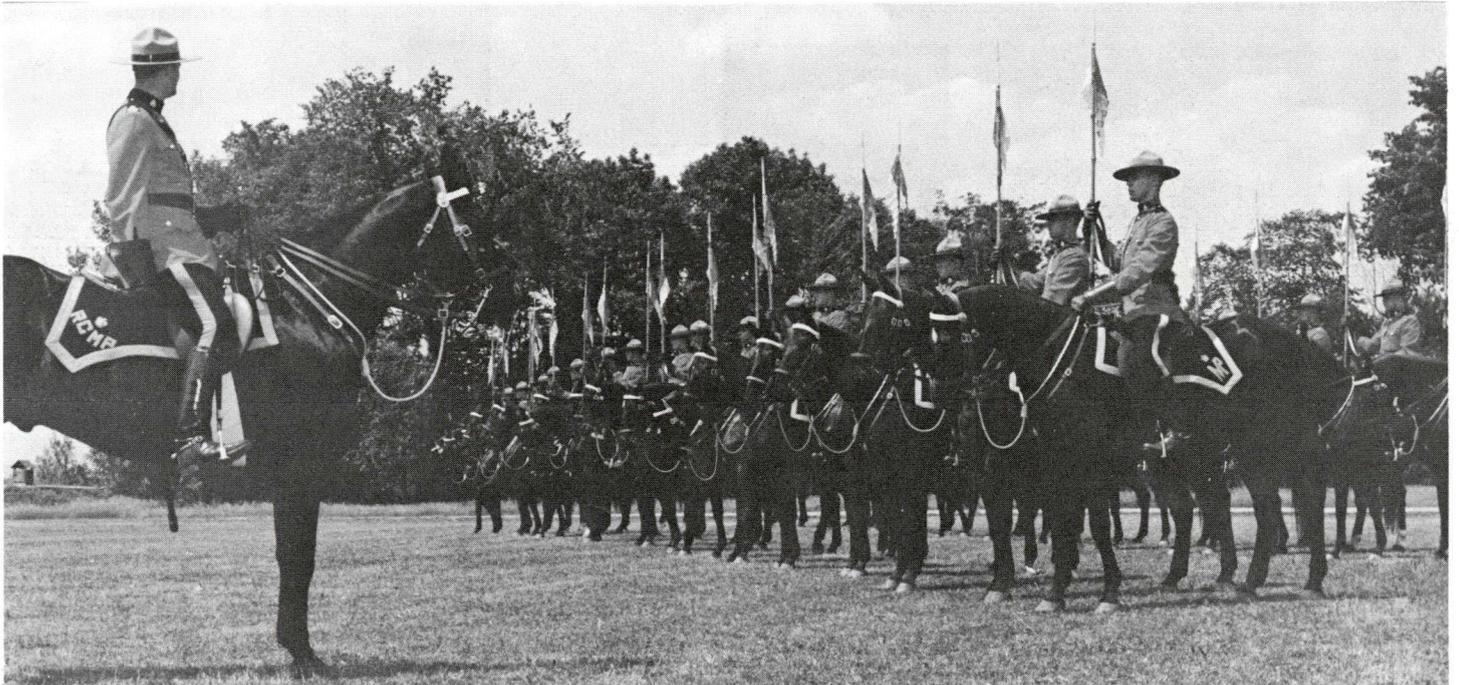
Superintendents' pay will rise to \$22,365 from \$21,300.

Civilian members and special constables also will receive pay increases.



*The increasing number of exchanges between Canada and other Interpol countries during the past three years.*





Royal Canadian Mounted Police Musical Ride

The RCMP Musical Ride is performed by a mounted troop of 32 members of the force drawn from detachments across Canada for a two-year tour of duty. The horses, which are three-quarter thoroughbred, are raised on the force's ranch at Pakenham, Ontario, and both men and horses train together for four months before any engagements are undertaken.

The Ride is composed of a variety of intricate movements executed at the trot and canter to an appropriate musical accompaniment. The figures performed are derived from cavalry drill and demand the utmost in control, timing and co-ordination.

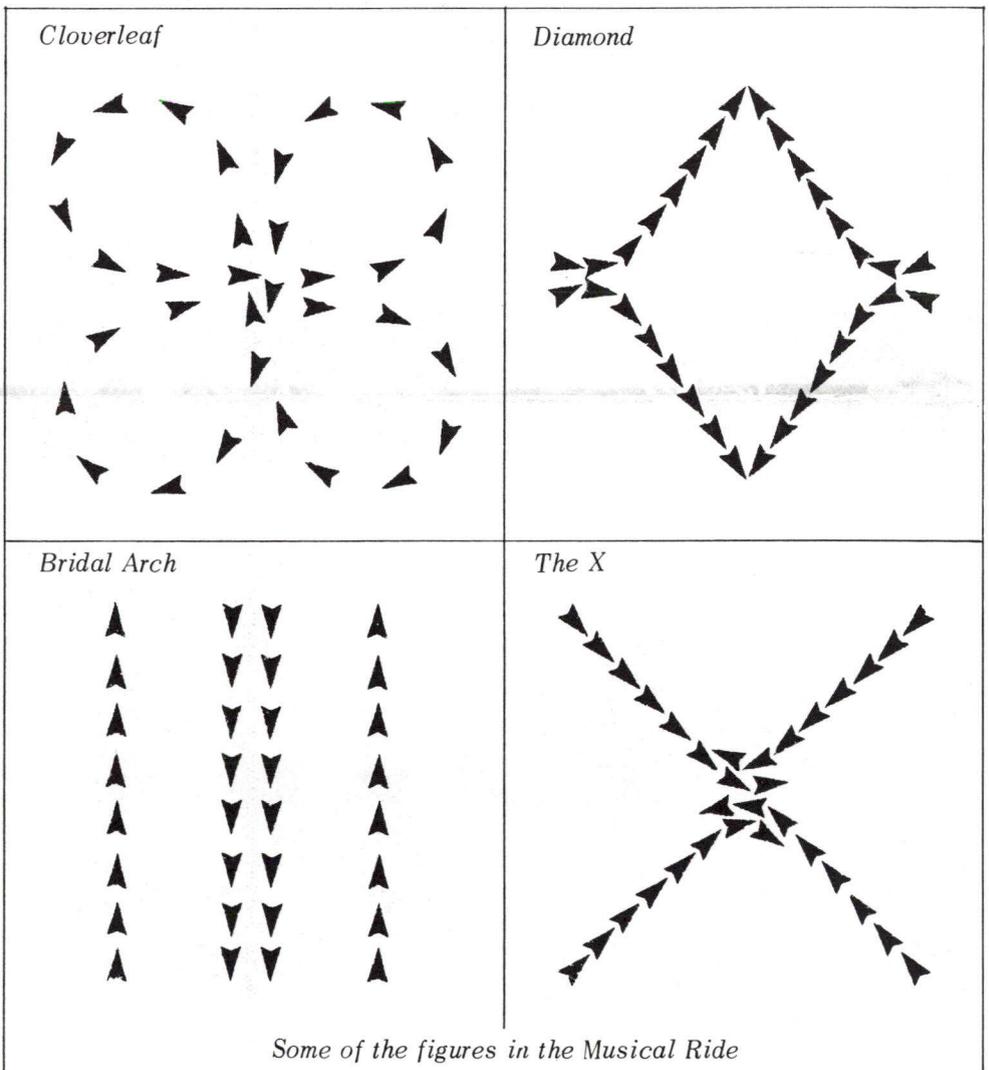
Although it is recorded that a North West Mounted Police musical ride was performed in 1876, it was not until 1904 that the Ride was put on public display.

In the ensuing years, mounted troops of the force journeyed abroad to participate in various functions and in recent years the RCMP Musical Ride has become a familiar sight in the United States and Britain.

*Canada Weekly* is published by the Information Division, Department of External Affairs, Ottawa, K1A 0G2. An index appears quarterly.

Material may be freely reprinted, for the use of which credit would be appreciated; photo sources, if not shown, will be provided on request to Miki Sheldon, Editor.

*Cette publication existe également en français sous le titre Hebdo Canada.*



Some of the figures in the Musical Ride