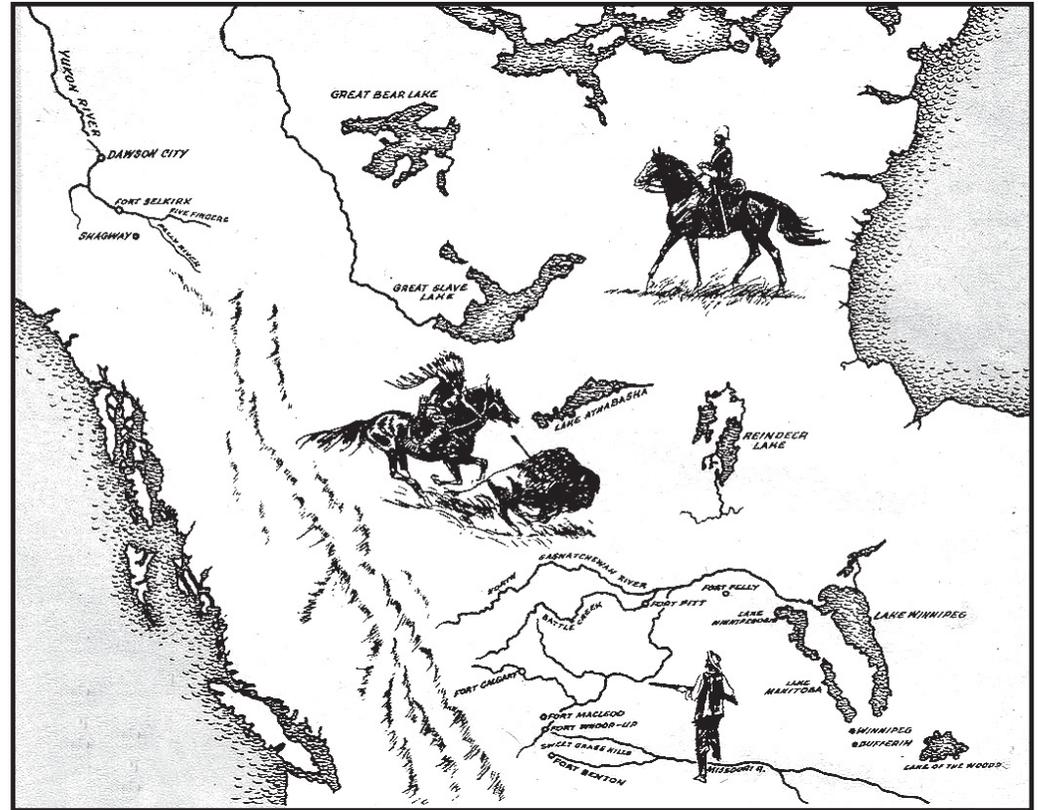


# “The Queen’s Cowboy”

James Alexander Farquharson Macleod N.W.M.P.



Linked dramatically with the development of the west, James Macleod's life holds an unforgettable place in Canada's story.

**The Queen's Cowboy -  
James Alexander Farquharson  
Macleod**

Story by Kerry Wood

Illustrations by Joseph Rosenthal

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for the

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# THE QUEEN'S COWBOY

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## Chapter One

Off the west coast of Scotland, scattered in the restless waters of a gray ocean, are the famous isles of the Hebrides. Here, on wind-swept Iona, Columba brought from Ireland the light of Christianity long before Augustine preached to the British in the south. Here to Skye, defenders of the royal house of Stuart carried for safety a lad born to be king – Bonny Prince Charlie himself.

The ancestors of many Canadians were nurtured to these islands, a hardy race of which an unknown poet has said that, "Still the blood is strong, the heart is highland."

James Alexander Farquharson Macleod was one of them. He was born in a pleasant stone house near Drynoch, on the island of Skye, on a September morning of 1836. His father, Martin Macleod, a retired army officer, already had two sons, Norman and Henry. But it was this third son, James, who was to take his place in history.

Skye was a good cradle for a child. It was a small and intimate world, where every man, woman, and youngster was either a relative, a neighbor, or a friend. First there was the toddling time within the confines of the garden; later, play on the heather slopes behind the house. The sea itself was always in sight and hearing, often calm and blue, sometimes wild with storm but still awesomely beautiful

As he gained stature, James could run with his brothers and visit the crofter farms. They watched the white ruffed collies, herding flocks of sheep down from the high pastures for safe keeping at night. Fishermen were good to them, too. On fine days the boys were allowed out in the sturdy boats and saw the hopeful setting of nets, the harvesting of silver herring and big haddock.

Clan history was vividly real to them, passed down by old folk who knew the traditions and feuds of their ancestors. They were stirring tales, and part of the fun of boyhood was the acting out of ancient battles.

Yet Skye was not to be their home for long.

Martin Macleod and his wife decided that their island was not the most promising place to rear a family of four sons after Donald John had joined his three brothers.



When MacLeod was introduced to the beautiful young woman who had carried Butler's letter, he was greatly attracted to her.

"if we stay on Skye, the boys can only become fishermen or shepherds," said the father. "I think they'd have more opportunities elsewhere. I'm hoping to find a bit of farmland, off in Upper Canada. Once we settle our affairs, we'll be off to the New World."

Before they left the island, Elizabeth Alexandrina Macleod was born.

There were sad farewells and a skirling of bagpipes as the boat pulled away from Skye to sail south, past Mrs. Macleod's family home on Mull. Docking at Glasgow, they transferred to a large ship that plowed the long rollers of the Atlantic for weeks before reaching Canada. Still more travelling, inland to Toronto and north to Aurora.

Martin Macleod bought a farm near that town and his four sons became his helpers. This period of farming proved of great benefit to young Jim, practical training invaluable to him in later years. His father bought a spirited mare called Tess that became the boy's favorite. On her back Jim toured district roads and trails, sometimes for the sheer pleasure of riding, or to search for good fishing pools or coverts where he might hunt partridges. He enjoyed the companionship between rider and horse. His father stressed the art of riding, teaching him a cavalryman's way of sitting the saddle and responsibility for his mount.

"You must rub her down after every long outing," said Captain Macleod. "It'll be your task to see that Tess has ample water, grain and fodder, and a clean bed at night. Remember this, Jim: before ye ever think of your own comfort after a ride, the welfare of your horse comes first."

The years on the farm were memorable in so many ways, with the boys helping to clear off the tough hardwoods, soft aspens, and spicy evergreens to enlarge their cropland.

More sisters were born at the Aurora farm. With four sons and four daughters they were a busy family. The older ones daily walked by roads and short cuts to a country school.

"Aye, but they'll need more learning than they can get in yon crowded place," said the father.

After investigation and discussion, the parents decided on Upper Canada College in Toronto, and when Jim was in his 12th year he was enrolled at the famous school.

Upper Canada College in those days was down town on a corner of Russell Square; a legislative building, St. Andrew's Church, and a popular saloon stood on each of the other corners. Boys soon gave nicknames to the four buildings: Education, Legislation, Salvation, and Damnation!

Macleod spent three years at Upper Canada College, happy terms full of intensive study, spiced with enough athletics to keep life interesting for a growing boy. He was fond of soccer and the speedy action of lacrosse, then a popular game.

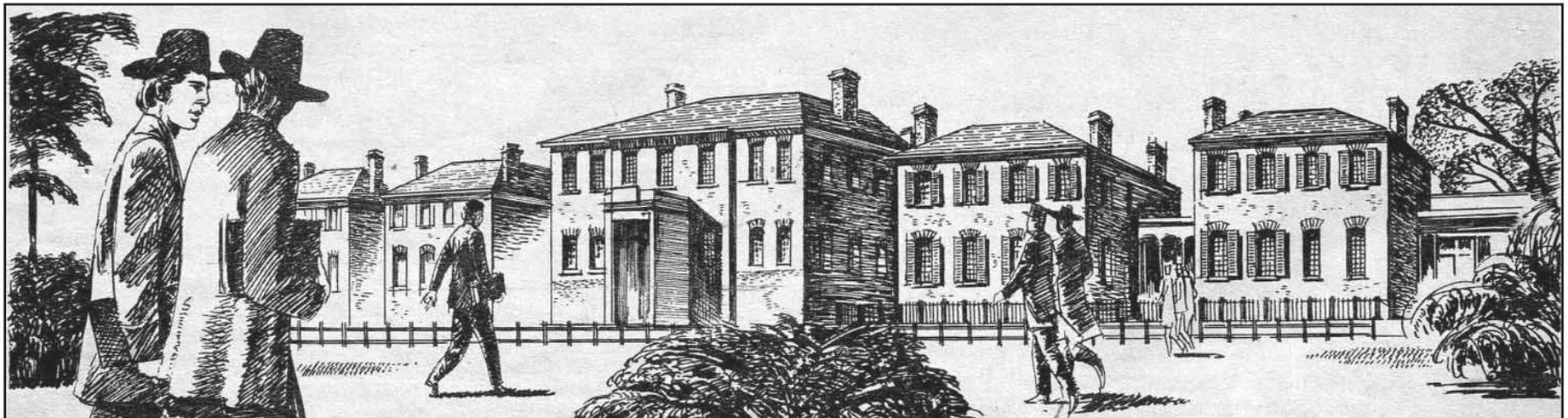
After the session in Upper Canada, young Macleod entered Queen's University at Kingston and obtained his B.A. degree at the early age of 18. By this time he had reached his full growth; six feet tall and well proportioned, solidly muscled and yet lithe of movement. His forehead was broad, the hazel eyes wide spaced and with his good features he was a handsome young man. His bearing was soldierly; he wore a cadet's uniform with distinction, proud to be following his father's example.

"He has won honors," the mother noted when he brought home his diploma. "We have a scholar in the family!"

Jim was eager to begin the study of law, for which his teachers thought he was well fitted.

"It's a good choice," said his father. "But before you return to university, you'll have to mind the farm for the summer while I go back to Scotland on business."

Finally, he was enrolled for the long training in law. All his spare time was spent with the militia, and diligence won him a lieutenant's com-



Young MacLeod entered Queen's University and obtained his B.A. degree at the age of 18. "We have a scholar in the family!" his mother said.

mission before he was 20. Eventually, James Farquharson Macleod was called to the bar at Osgoode Hall in the year 1860.

In that same year the Fenian Society plotted an invasion of Canada from the States. Lieutenant Macleod volunteered for active service and was attached to units mustered to turn back the raiders. The American army co-operated with British forces to quell the Fenians. The trouble was soon over. Macleod was released from active service and returned home for a visit.

“And now ye’re to be a lawyer,” the father said. “Have you decided where to start?”

“At Bowmanville. A barrister named Cupid has a busy practice there and I’m to article under him. The pay is modest, but he’s offered a partnership when I qualify.”

The young man moved to his position and settled down to his profession. He learned how to search titles, make out land transfers, draw up wills and business agreements. He received a first-hand course in democratic justice and gained a deep respect for the rights of the individual.

But Macleod went back into the army in 1861.

In the years that followed the American Civil War, Canada was preparing for self-government. When John A. Macdonald was named the first Prime Minister in 1867, the country was first called the “Kingdom” of Canada and then the name was altered by British officials to “Dominion.” In the same year Captain James F. Macleod was promoted major and shortly after became a brevet lieutenant-colonel in the militia. He followed the government’s progress with close attention.

An expansionist spirit was at that time stirring the Americans, who were opening up their own west and looking covetously northward across the boundary. The Dominion proposed to buy Rupert’s Land from the Hudson’s Bay Company in order to give it adequate protection.

Métis of the Red River region were fearful of any such change. The half-breeds were primarily hid-hunters, but the buffalo herds had been exterminated near Fort Garry. To reach areas where game was still abundant, the Métis travelled hundreds of miles into hostile Indian territory. Often blood was spilt when their parties clashed with tribesmen or American pelt hunters. Moreover, white settlers were crowding the Métis homeland along the Red River.

The Métis valued their hunting and trapping rights, and feared these would be taken from them when the Hudson’s Bay Company surrendered its authority to the new government.

A brilliant young man named Louis Riel became the Métis leader. He was eloquent about making Manitoba territory a refuge for his people. He and his supporters seized power at Fort Garry from Governor MacTavish, who was ill, but serving out the Hudson’s Bay Company’s time. Then came many offers to help Riel. Sioux Indians were willing to be his allies, while money was offered by both Irish Fenians under O’Donoghue, and anti-British business men across the border. Suddenly the young Dominion realized it was in danger of losing the vast northwest; they sent Donald Smith to negotiate with Riel, but it was too late.

The Drevers were one of the pioneer families of the settlement. Young Mary and her three sisters had been raised in the danger zone. On one occasion Sioux invaded the Drevers’ home, the braves flourishing tomahawks at the girls who backed against a wall and tried to pretend they were not frightened. They might have been killed, but at that moment their father, a fiery Scot from Aberdeen, came charging home and routed the Indians at gunpoint.

With Riel in power and the Sioux ready to help him, the Drevers were naturally anxious. Many white settlers had real sympathy for the half-breed cause, but no one could feel happy about the war talk that was heard daily. Riel was a man possessed of a worthy vision, and under slightly different circumstances he might have earned fame as a statesman. But on March 4, 1870, Louis Riel suffered what seemed to be a lapse of sanity.

A young Englishman named Thomas Scott had insulted the Métis leader and refused to acknowledge his authority. Already two deaths had occurred during the uprising, and Riel had been threatening wholesale execution for those who did not bow to his rule. He singled out Scott to make an example. A farce of a trial had been conducted in French – a language the prisoner did not understand. But Scott was opposed to Riel, and that was excuse enough to bring a verdict against him.

The Drever sisters watched from an upstairs window of their house; they had been through weeks of terror, now being capped with official murder. Mary Drever saw the young men kneel. Six Métis who seemed full of liquor lined up, joking as they prepared to act as executioners. A crowd of Riel’s supporters had gathered nearby. The sisters watched in horror as six rifles were aimed at Scott. The crowd tensed, smoke puffed from the muzzles and there was a loud burst of cheering.

“They’ve killed him!” cried Mary.

When Mr. Drever came home, he was furious about the atrocity.

“Riel’s gone too far!” Drever told the girls. “Law abiding folk will turn

against him now.”

When news of the murder filtered east, anger flared throughout the united provinces. Colonel Wolseley was authorized to mobilize Queen Victoria’s forces in Canada and put down the rebellion.

Again Macleod volunteered for service. He was appointed brigademajor of the expedition that embarked for the lakehead at Prince Arthur Landing. There were 1,200 soldiers in the contingent – their first task – to march 400 miles across the rocky, treed and swampy wilderness between Lake Superior and Fort Garry.

In the meantime, the Canadian government worked on legislation to establish the new province of Manitoba. Among other provisions, land was reserved for the Métis: 1,400,000 acres of it! Thus Riel’s dream of a Métis homeland became a reality. An Imperial proclamation issued in July of 1870, incorporated Manitoba as a province, and brought the North West Territories beyond under jurisdiction of the Dominion.

But Scott’s execution was not forgotten. With increasing uneasiness, Riel and his supporters awaited the coming of Wolseley’s forces.

Mary Drever became embroiled again in the frontier drama. She had been visiting a clergyman’s family next to St. Andrew’s Church in the lower settlement, a dozen miles from her home. A young officer, Captain Butler, acting as advance scout for Wolseley’s army, had reached this outpost. The Métis, suspecting that he was in the region, hunted for him on all trails leading to Fort Garry.

“I must get a dispatch through to the mail courier, but how can I evade the enemy?”

This was Butler’s story to the clergyman, after coming to the manse dripping wet from an enforced swim to escape capture.

Mary Drever was returning to Fort Garry, and quickly offered to carry the message for him.

“You’d be in great danger, especially if Riel’s men found it on you,” Butler warned her.

“I’ve been in danger before.”

She hid the letter in her blouse and set out, driving a horse and buggy. Before she had gone a mile, she was stopped by a squad of Métis.

“Did you meet any messenger, back along the road?”

“What kind of messenger?”

“A military man – a soldier from Wolseley.”

“I didn’t see anyone in a soldier’s uniform.”

“Well, were there any strangers around?”

“Why, I’m not acquainted with everybody at the settlement. For all I know, a dozen strangers could be there.”

They ordered her out of the buggy and searched it and her baggage with great care. Of course, no letter was found. Once again, they questioned her sharply.

“You’re wasting my time,” said the girl. “Let me pass, for I’m overdue at home.”

Reluctant, still suspicious, they allowed her to drive on. Thus the important message reached the authorities, and Mary Drever became a heroine of the rebellion.

When Wolseley’s expedition arrived, the Métis quietly hid their arms and offered no organized resistance. Louis Riel fled to the United States, where he found sanctuary in Montana territory. The task force stayed at Fort Garry over the winter, to forestall any further uprising.

Macleod was introduced to the beautiful young woman who had carried Butler’s letter. He saw a charm and strength of character unusual in a girl so young. He was greatly attracted to her, while Mary Drever confided to her sisters that she liked the handsome soldier.

Macleod had been mentioned in dispatches, praised by Wolseley for his hard work and efficient service during the campaign. He was decorated with the Order of St. Michael and St. George, and confirmed in the rank of lieutenant-colonel. But when it was all over, he was restless and unwilling to settle down to his law practice.

He knew that trouble was brewing in the west. At Winnipeg he had discussed the situation with missionaries and Hudson’s Bay Company traders who lived in the lonely land between Fort Garry and the Rockies. They told him that whiskey traders from the States were plaguing the country, unscrupulous men who debauched the Indians with alcohol so that they gave up their valuable furs, buffalo robes and horses for a pittance. The Indians might be goaded into war against their tormentors. If this happened, American soldiers would have an excuse to ride north of the boundary and protect their traders. So it was vital that Canada have troopers on the frontier. The problem stayed with Macleod on his holidays and afterward, when he was again busy with the law firm.

Meanwhile, the government sent agents westward to survey the situation. The first of these was Captain Butler, the scout whose dispatch Mary Drever had carried past Riel’s men, Butler advised that military forces

be sent to the west at once. Later Colonel Robertson-Ross made a tour of the troubled zone and reported that over 100 Blackfoot tribesmen had been murdered during a single year, the direct result of the vicious whiskey trade. He recommended enlisting a battalion of mounted riflemen, divided into 10 companies of 50 men each. These should be garrisoned at strategic points across the west, where they could maintain order among Indians and whites. Robertson-Ross emphasized that law enforcement was essential in the territory, before Canada could start building the transcontinental railway which Macdonald's government had promised.

"That makes good sense," Macleod thought, when he read the newspaper account of the colonel's report.

Then came the Cypress Hills Massacre.

American whiskey traders attacked a sleeping band of Canadian Indians, killing men, women, and children. Montana newspapers first published the story, whereupon it was reprinted in eastern Canadian papers under bold headlines. The facts were verified by witnesses, who saw the bodies and got details from survivors.

On a warm May day during 1873, Parliament discussed the organization of "Mounted Rifles." Prime Minister Macdonald did not like the military sound of it and rewrote the name as "Mounted Police." A force of 300 was to be recruited from men between the ages of 18 and 40, of sound physical condition, able to ride, and of good character. Each would take an oath: ". . . That I will faithfully, diligently, and impartially execute and perform the duties . . . without fear, favor, or affection of or towards any person or party . . . so help me God."

Because the British redcoats had earned the respect of the Indians, a red tunic was to be part of the new force's uniform. The men were to wear white pith helmets, for ceremonial dress, blue cloth pill boxes as forage hats, and were to be armed with revolvers and carbines.

The force was officially born on November 3, 1873, when enlisted oaths were administered. Lieutenant-Colonel George Arthur French was appointed its first commissioner.

James Macleod left his law office for the last time, volunteering once more for duty. He was appointed a superintendent of the new police, third in rank from the Commissioner, and authorized to recruit men in the Kingston region of Ontario.

Macleod spent the winter in the Fort Garry area with the original contingent of police. During December, there came rumors of whiskey trading going on somewhere west of Lake Winnipeg. As the only experienced snowshoe man in the entire force at that time, Macleod took

charge of training a group of stalwarts in the use of the big webs. When they were proficient, he led them on a search for the illicit traders. The weather was bitterly cold and the snow deep, but the party made good mileage during the short daylight hours and camped at night under shelters improvised from branches. The traders' headquarters proved to be a rough log shack, hardly worth the name of whiskey fort. Six men were arrested on the premises, their stock of 10 gallons of whiskey destroyed. Then the prisoners were escorted back to the Stone Fort, which they reached on Christmas Eve of 1873.

Thus, James Macleod carried out the very first law enforcement duty of the North-West Mounted Police.

## Chapter Two

**C**ommissioner French returned to Ontario to recruit more men, while Macleod was left in charge of A, B, and C troops at Winnipeg.

On June 1, Macleod was promoted to the rank of Assistant Commissioner, which made him second-in-command of the force.

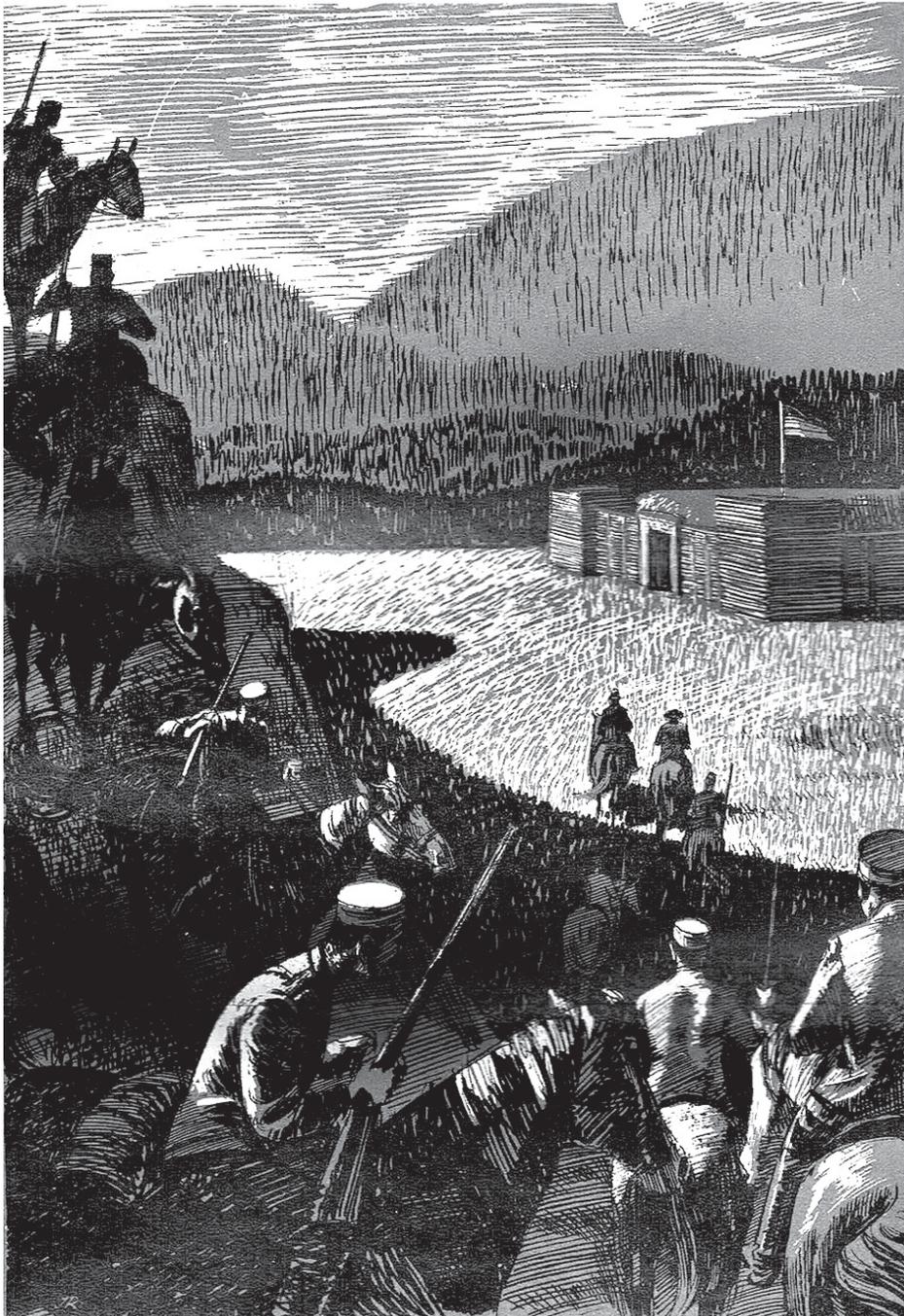
Macleod was well aware of the danger attached to his new work. The main objective of the police was the notorious Fort Whoop-Up, where 500 American desperadoes were reputedly entrenched and eager for a showdown with the redcoats. On June 7, Macleod led the 120 men in his command west to Dufferin, headquarters of the Boundary Commission.

Meanwhile, Colonel French and 217 officers and men, cases of equipment and 244 horses left Toronto in two trains. They travelled by rail to Fargo in North Dakota. From there they rode the final 160 miles on horseback to reach Dufferin on June 19.

At once the camp bustled with preparations for the westward march. Stores were packed in wagons to be drawn by horses, the rest loaded into Red River carts to be pulled by oxen guided by Métis drivers. Drills and parades were held daily. Military procedure was the rule, and the six troops made a magnificent sight when they were drawn up in order. Scarlet tunics were vivid, helmets shone white in the sun, and leather and metal accoutrements had been polished. Dark bay horses were ridden by A troop, dark browns were lined up in B, while the artillery unit, C troop, were mounted on chestnuts. Grays and buckskins were allotted to D troop, black horses were in E formation, and F troopers were on light bays.

"A fine body of men!" Macleod remarked to the commanding officer, one evening after the flag-lowering ceremony.

"Yes, I agree," French replied. "Though we've still got a few misfits we



With Jerry Potts at his side, James MacLeod advanced and drew rein at the entrance to the fort. The men waited, dry-mouthed with tension.

could do without. That's why I've stressed that rough times are ahead, and those who wish to withdraw may do so now."

By chance, the fear of an Indian war helped to weed out unsuitable men. A number of white settlers were killed by Sioux tribesmen at St. Joe, barely 30 miles from Dufferin, across the border. American army authorities sent word to French that the guilty Indians might seek refuge in Canada, and asked that Mounted Police try to intercept them. This sudden threat of action against the dreaded Sioux caused 31 men to desert the force overnight.

"Good riddance!" declared French, after the fuss ended without incident north of the boundary. "Luckily, I enlisted a few extra men while in the east. Now we're almost exactly on the required strength of 300, and ready to march.

The trek got under way on July 8, a cavalcade that stretched two miles across the prairie. In addition to mounted men, wagons and carts hauling supplies, unlikely objects such as plows, mowing machines, rakes and harrows were also in the procession. These would be needed not only to create gardens and to harvest hay at whatever permanent depots the police established, but also for gathering fodder for the stock at each night's camp. Part of the parade was a herd of beef cattle destined to supply fresh meat along the route.

Colonel French had an ambulance wagon fitted up as his mobile headquarters, but Macleod was in the saddle throughout the journey. He shouldered the hard task of keeping heavy rolling stock on the move. Often the cannon, implements, and larger vehicles bogged to the wheel hubs in mud holes, whereupon Macleod would appear with a team and put his farm training to use.

There was nothing easy about the march, though the Boundary Commission had marked the 49th Parallel the previous year and left a trail skirting the border. The government had warned French to keep his police off American territory, as Ottawa did not wish to strain diplomatic relations with trespass incidents. Acting as guide was Pierre Leveille, a 300-pound Métis giant who guaranteed to keep the marchers on the proper route until they reached the Cypress Hills.

Bull-flies pestered the animals, while mosquitoes tormented the men. It was soon evident that pill-box hats gave no relief from sunburn, and scant protection when rain pelted down. The police envied the wide brimmed felts worn by Métis drivers.

Yet there were compensations. It was a beautiful land. Luminous colors glowed in the skies at dawn and sunset. Gophers whistled from sandy mounds; every night there was the eerie chorus of coyotes. Purple bergamot,

ox-eyed daisies, and blue hyssop bloomed by the trail. The men had ample time to note such attractions, because progress was slow.

“We’ve got to make better time,” French urged his officers.

This was difficult to accomplish. Regulation saddles were not of the best type and badly galled the backs of horses, till they were raw with running sores. Many a man walked for hours each day, leading his mount to spare it because of sores. On rare occasions the horse travelled 20 miles during a day, but more often covered a much shorter distance between dawn and dusk.

Commissioner French wrote in one early dispatch that J. F. Macleod was his most capable officer. The assistant seemed to have a knack for turning up where he was most needed, and his cheerful person was soon known to every member of the force.

The police reached the Souris River on July 24, 270 miles from their starting point. Colonel French decided to camp beside the stream for a few days, to make repairs and give animals and men a much-needed rest.

“We must do everything possible to speed up the march,” the Commissioner insisted. “Winter quarters have to be built at the journey’s end, and we still have 700 miles to go.”

Inspector W. D. Jarvis and his A troop were allotted 24 wagons, 55 carts and 60 oxen, also 50 of the poorer horses. They were ordered to Fort Edmonton on the North Saskatchewan River. Speed was not essential, because winter quarters were available at Edmonton. All the rest were to hurry along, with Fort Whoop-Up as their ultimate goal.

The flag-lowering ceremony at sundown on July 28, 1874, was an historic occasion: it was the last time that the total enlistment of the North-West Mounted Police was assembled at one place. Next morning five troops pulled out of camp after shaking hands with the men of A company.

On and on, with more difficulties each day. Horses died of exhaustion; oxen were lean from work and famine; half the marchers were footsore. Sometimes men got lost at the end of the day while hunting for ducks and prairie chicken.

Some sloughs contained water so alkaline that it was unfit for use, forcing men and stock to go thirsty during the hottest days of August. Dinners became meagre. For a few days they were entirely without meat till Macleod arrived back from a foraging expedition leading two wagons loaded with 4,000 pounds of pemmican. After the cooks had soaked and boiled the mixture of dried meat and berries the hungry policemen found it delicious.

Two and a half months of hard travelling brought them to the foot of the Cypress Hills. They had hoped to find abundant pasturage, but thousands of buffalo had grazed off all fodder and fouled every water hole. Once again ration of oats was doled out. Most horses were in pitiful condition, a few dying every day. Even the strongest oxen were now walking skeletons. As for the men, they were haggard and listless, weary of the long grind.

“If we don’t find a base soon, this affair could end in disaster,” French told his assistant. “Leveille tells me winter may set in any day, and we’ve found no site for a permanent camp.”

Scouting parties rode for miles along the banks of the South Saskatchewan and Bow Rivers, while the main force camped at the Hills. Scouts could not find good pasture for stock, or stands of trees to supply them with building logs.

French called a council of his officers.

“The Métis drivers urge us to go on to the Sweet Grass Hills, 80 miles away. They claim we’d find grass and food and good water there. Another attraction is that the American town of Fort Benton is only 100 miles to the south, and at Benton I expect to find messages from Ottawa.”

“Perhaps we can find a new guide there, too,” said Macleod.

“Yes, that’s another urgent problem. Pierre Leveille doesn’t know the country west of the Cypress Hills, and Palliser’s map is not entirely reliable. We need a qualified guide, preferably one who knows of a suitable area for a winter base.”

Five gruelling days brought them to a camping place, a mile north of the American boundary. Their livestock were soon cropping good pasture though snowflakes were falling and a cold wind was blowing.

From the highest hill, they had their first view of the Rockies. The mountain barrier was just a blue smudge on the horizon, but the men cheered at the sight. The mountains marked the western limit of their march. After 96 days of hard travel, they had almost reached their journey’s end.

“Here we’ll divide our forces,” Commissioner French told his officers. “D and E troops will return east to establish outposts in whatever quarters they can find, taking our best horses to make good time. I’ll join them, after picking up dispatches at Fort Benton. Macleod, I’ll want you with me at Benton. But after that you will proceed to the whiskey fort area with all other troopers. You’ll have to build wintering quarters before getting on with law enforcement.”

The two troops under Inspector Carvell set out on the eastern jour-

ney on September 21, with orders to march at a leisurely pace until French caught up with them.

Next morning Commissioner French and James Macleod accompanied by two junior officers, two constables, and Métis drivers, set out for the American fort on the Missouri.

So ended the first phase of the long march.

The leaders set a swift pace, travelling 40 miles during the first day and over 50 on the second. Macleod was amazed at the number of buffalo along the route; he estimated they passed through herds totalling over 75,000 head during the ride.

“Well, there’ll be no lack of meat for our men,” he said to the Commissioner, as they cantered into Fort Benton on the third morning.

It was a bustling town, its main street facing boat wharves on the Missouri where an assortment of paddle wheelers and barges were moored.

Macleod spotted a large building fronting on the river. “There’s the I. G. Baker store. Perhaps the manager could suggest a guide for us.”

A few minutes later they met Charles Conrad, a southerner who was a partner in the pioneer firm. He wanted to become supply agent for the new force, and quickly offered hospitality to the Canadians. Obviously, Conrad welcomed the coming of law enforcement in neighboring territory, and was eager to help the police to get established.

“We’ll need supplies, true enough,” said French. “But at the moment our chief concern is to find a reliable guide.”

Charles Conrad promptly recommended Jerry Potts, who happened to be in Benton that day.

“Potts is a half-breed, of Scottish and Piegan blood. Indians admire courage. Jerry has proved his bravery many a time and is welcome in every camp. He’d make a fine interpreter in any dealings with Blackfoot, Piegans, Bloods, and Sarcees. Speaks all their dialects, and knows a smattering of Cree and Stoney as well.

“Could we depend on his honesty?”

“Oh, yes; he’s thoroughly reliable. And he knows the country better than anyone else. He’s the best guide in the whole territory.”

The police officers were soon introduced to a wiry, stoop-shouldered bow-legged little man with a swarthy, wind-wrinkled face. There was an aura of competence about him, and Macleod like his firm handshake and his quick understanding of the situation. Potts said he could take them to a

place where wood, pasture, water and game were all available. Moreover, it was handy to the main trade route north of the border, where police could intercept the liquor traffic.

“What d’you think of him, Macleod?” French asked privately. “You’re the one who will be working with him, so it’s up to you.”

“I’m for appointing him at once.”

Thus the famous Jerry Potts began his long and distinguished career with the Mounted Police.

Commissioner French started back to Dufferin on September 26. The two officers did not realize it, but they were never to meet again. James Macleod then began the most important part of his life work. He was in full charge of the western command of the police and shouldered the heavy responsibility for the force’s success or failure.

At Fort Benton he bought 70 horses and extra wagons to help haul urgently needed clothing for his men. The bulky food supplies were to be delivered later by bull train.

Before leaving the American town, the Assistant Commissioner made discreet enquiries about the Cypress Hills massacre.

Most of the white men involved were then living at Benton and Helena, some well established in business and regarded as worthy citizens. One had been a United States Marshall before engaging in the more lucrative whiskey trade. This ex-law man had begun the massacre, claiming that Indians had stolen his horses.

“He’s a popular sort and will be a hard man to convict,” Charles Conrad warned his new friend. “I’d advise caution for the moment, because you’ll need a lot of evidence before you can lay any charges.”

Macleod was astonished at the callous indifference to Indian deaths which prevailed in Montana Territory. According to reports, murders of Indians had been common enough even north of the border, but now police had come to safeguard the lives of both tribesmen and white settlers on British soil.

When Macleod was ready to leave Benton, Conrad asked permission to join the party; he wanted to build an I. G. Baker store whenever the force settled.

“You’d be most welcome, but the first part of our plan may be dangerous.” Macleod turned to Jerry Potts. “Can you guide us to Fort Whoop-Up?”

On Jerry’s advice, Macleod sent a fast rider ahead, directing the main body of police to move 15 miles westward until they reached the main north

route from Benton. The Colonel's party rejoined the troops there on October 4. Cecil Denny was left in charge of a few sick men and weak horses, to wait for the police supplies. Potts had told the drivers his choice of a camp site, a semi-island on the Old Man River south of the Porcupine Hills.

Before going there, James Macleod wanted to call on the notorious whiskey trade stronghold. The police saddled new ponies and the strongest of their old mounts, then rode off. At last they reached the confluence of the St. Mary's and Belly Rivers and came in sight of Whoop-Up.

"Dat's her," said the laconic Jerry.

Macleod used field glasses to study the lie of the land. He ordered the men to keep silence as they advanced. Inspector Winder's troop mounted their cannon on a hill, with sights trained on corner bastions of the fort where an American flag waved above the portal.

"Load carbines!" Macleod ordered quietly, and the command was passed along. Down the valley rode the police, behind the erect figure of their leader. Many a young constable felt himself dry-mouthed with tension as the fortress loomed closer.

"Halt!"

Again the command was given in a quiet voice. The troopers sat their horses, all eyes on the half-opened gate. With Jerry Potts at his side, James Macleod advanced and drew rein at the entrance. He dismounted, strode through the gate to the first building, where his gloved fist pounded a summons upon the door. The men steadied their carbines, ready for the long-awaited clash with the desperadoes.

But the enemy had fled across the border, days before the police arrived. The powerful fort was deserted, except for a pleasant old man and a few squaws abandoned by their men. Instead of a pitched battle to the death, the police were given a cordial invitation to a hot meal of buffalo steaks! Macleod laughed and accepted. He welcomed a chance to study the fortress, urging his men to take note of the log work – it was of a pattern they would soon have to copy.

"There's just one thing that irks me now," Macleod said to his officers, before they were called to dinner. He crossed the square and spoke again to the garrulous man who was their host.

"Sure thing, Colonel," agreed the old trader. "As you say, this is Canada."

Minutes later the stars and stripes were hauled down from the high pole. The rule of the whiskey trade over that region was at an end.

On again, towards the valley of the Old Man River. The blue-white Rockies increased in beauty with every passing mile, while well treed banks of the stream promised ample timber for construction and fuel. The horses cropped eagerly at curly grass known as buffalo wool; game signs were plentiful enough to assure a good meat supply.

"There's de camp place I like," announced Jerry, pointing to a sheltered meadow within a broad bend of the river.

The date was October 13, 1874, and the main force of the North-West Mounted Police had reached their new home.

"We'll build in the form of a square, allowing 200 feet to each side," said Macleod. "A hospital for the sick and storerooms for gear should get first attention, the next priority given to shelter for horses, then we'll work on troopers' quarters. We'll build officers' quarters last. You wouldn't wish to deprive us of the healthy life of tenting?"

They laughed, but he won respect by this typical decision to put his men's welfare above his own comfort.

They wasted no time. Axes were unloaded from wagons and 50 policemen worked, felling large trees and chopping trunks into 12-foot lengths. Teamsters hauled these to the meadow. There the rest were busy digging a narrow trench one yard deep all round the marked outline. Logs were upended alongside each other in the trench, with earth tamped firmly round their butts. This left an exposed length of nine feet reared above ground level, the top ends sharpened in picket style. Gate openings had been marked in both north and south walls, wide enough to allow the passage of mounted men riding two abreast.

"Another urgent need is winter fodder for horses," Macleod told his inspectors. "Please see that troopers with haying experience are relieved from building duties, and get them out with mowers and rakes."

Late as it was, they managed to harvest 25 tons of hay from the nearby plains. This was not enough to feed their stock all winter, but Jerry Potts suggested the poorer horses be herded south to the mild Sun River valley in Montana and quartered there until spring.

Macleod thought it an excellent plan. "We'll keep all the stock bought at Benton – Mr. Conrad tells me western ponies are used to pawing through snow to find grass. However, you'll have to put off the Montana trip for a few days, Jerry, because my haymakers report Indians spying on us from the hills and I'm worried about it. Can you get in touch with nearby bands and arrange for a parley?"

"Already I call on nearest camp," said Jerry. "I tell 'em about police,

who bring de Queen's law. Chief say dey visit you soon, as friends."

"Well, I'm certainly glad to hear that!"

Macleod began sending out small groups under competent officers to check the surrounding area. During their patrols, police encountered a few trains of hide-laden carts heading back toward Fort Benton. Probably the robes and pelts had been won with liquor, though no brew was in evidence on the homeward trek. Acting on the Assistant Commissioner's orders, patrols made a practice of searching all vehicles on the trails, and these inspections accomplished an important purpose. Traders realized that law enforcement had come to the Canadian west.

"I have 150 men in my care," Macleod once murmured, feeling a momentary dread at their isolation from the rest of Canada. A tiny unit in an immense country where their nearest neighbors were 6,000 Blackfoot, Piegans, and Bloods – fiercest tribesmen of the prairie west. North of the Blackfoot Confederacy lived 8,000 Crees and Mountain Assiniboines, or Stoneys. The Indians held an overwhelming balance of power, and the police were a very small minority, bringing a new order which might not be wanted.

Perhaps they had the moral support of lonely Hudson's Bay Company traders and a few independents, of pioneer churchmen such as George and John MacDougall and their fellow Methodists, and the Roman Catholic Fathers near Fort Edmonton. Yet Macleod knew they were opposed by other whites, particularly those whose profitable whiskey trade was the prime target of the Mounted Police. Already there had been scoffing from renegades, who confidently prophesied the tenderfoot force would not survive their first western winter.

James Macleod smiled grimly. Despite his concern about housing his troops, he had staunch faith in his men. Yet suppose the savages attacked them? Would Indians be hostile, or did they really want protection from the evil traders? More important – would they accept the white man's justice?

The sombre mood stayed with him a little longer. Then he noticed men working in silence all around him. Colonel Macleod forced a smile as he walked to the nearest group.

"Lads, they say hard work seems easier if it's mixed with song. I'll start you off myself!"

Some mornings their tents sagged with snow and frost rimmed the valley trees. It made a sparkling beauty everywhere, but brought bad working conditions. The men had to heat water to mix with cold lumps of clay, kneading it into a pliable state before pressing it as chinking between the logs. Despite weather, illness, and inadequate equipment, construction

forged slowly ahead and hospital, storerooms, and guard quarters were finished. Next the men labored on stables and a smithy and sleeping quarters and officers' billets and orderly rooms were the last to be built.

Meanwhile, Charles Conrad sent company men to build a store outside the police stockade and freighted in more goods from Benton. Hearing of Conrad's enterprise, others hurried to erect stores at the busy bend of the river. It became the region's first settlement.

Under Pierre Leveille's leadership, hunters brought in ample supplies of meat and quarters were hung in sheds, kept frozen until needed by the cooks. Food was no longer a worry, especially after the bull trains had creaked down the slopes from the Benton trail. They delivered flour, beans, syrup, tea and tobacco, with warm socks and mittens to supplement the ragged remnants of enlistment clothing.

Before the weaker horses were herded to the Sun River, Jerry Potts acted as interpreter for the new fort's first important police action. It began when the swarthy guide led an Indian before the commanding officer. The tribesman spoke at length in his own language, with many dramatic gestures. When he had finished, Jerry reduced the oration to its basic essentials.

"He sub-chief named Three Bulls. He tell of whiskey fort at Pine Coulee, 50 mile north'. Three Bulls trade two good ponies for two jugs o' whiskey. Now he figger he got cheated an' wants police to punish de whiskey men."

A patrol commanded by Inspector Crozier rode out and arrested five traders; they had two wagon loads of liquor which the police promptly spilled. During their brief period in business the traders had acquired 116 buffalo robes. They were confiscated to the Crown, whereupon the police tailor set to work to convert them into much needed jackets, trousers, mittens and caps.

Hailed before Macleod for judgment on their crimes, the two leading traders were fined \$200 each, with lesser fines of \$50 each for their helpers. One of the leaders was Kamoose Taylor, Kamoose being the Blackfoot word for thief. And by a pleasant quirk of fate, this genial man soon became one of the most prominent and respected business men of the police community!

His interpreter duty completed, Jerry Potts got ready to guide 70 horses to the Sun River under supervision of Inspector Walsh. Before their departure, as the full complement was lined up inside the picket walls, officers and men cheered lustily when the Union Jack was unfurled from a tall flagpole. They chose a name for their post.

"We want to name it in your honor, sir," said Inspector Winder.

"Please agree to this unanimous wish."

The commander smiled as he took the salute that morning: Fort Macleod had been born!"

More Indians visited the barracks that still rang with hammer and axe blows. They came in small bands, family groups of Blackfoot and others, sometimes a lone brave stopping for an hour on the way to or from a hunt. All were intrigued by flag ceremonies and inspections, and admired the distinguished looking officer who set his police such a tactful example in dealing with tribesmen.

There were other attractions, outside the fort walls. The I. G. Baker store was open for business; T. C. Power and Brother were completing a competitive house. One primitive shack sheltered a shoemaker, busy mending worn out police boots. Next door was the first barber shop in the Territories. The most popular spot was a pool hall, patronized by white men and natives alike as the novelty of the settlement.

James Macleod frequently presented token gifts to Indian visitors having Jerry Potts explain why the queen's policemen had come west. Sometimes an Indian councillor or sub-chief would reply by haranguing the officer in staccato dialect, emphasizing each point of oratory with a dramatic gesture. After one lecture which lasted a tedious hour, Macleod turned to the impassive Jerry and asked for a translation. Mr. Potts removed a reeking pipe from his mouth and reduced the Indian's long speech to these few words: "He say he dam' glad you here!"

As work on quarters ended, Macleod sent patrols to visit Indian camps scattered around the district. He realized how important it was to enlist native support for the force, and decided to call their leaders to a conference. To this end he instructed Jerry Potts to find the various chiefs and invite them to Fort Macleod.

The guide's dark eyes gleamed with amusement.

"I hear dey want to meet you too. Three Bulls is one o' Chief Crowfoot's councillors. Crowfoot sent Three Bulls to de Pine Coulee traders, den here to tell how he got cheated. Crowfoot wanted to see if white police would punish other white men."

"Well, those chaps were brought to trial in short order."

Jerry grinned.

"Yeah! It please Crowfoot. Now he wants to meet you."

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"Macleod find the leaders \$200 each, with lesser fines for their helpers."

## Chapter Three

**M**acleod had heard much about the great Isapwo Muk-sika – fully translated, the name meant "Crow Big Foot." Noted for his daring and courage on war raids during younger years, this outstanding Indian soon gained fame as an orator. He was a respected councillor before being elected head chief of all Blackfoot, Piegan, Blood, and Sarcee bands of the region. Other leaders deferred to this wise elder statesman in all that concerned their united tribes.

"Will he understand what we're trying to do?" Macleod asked Jerry Potts.

"Yeah, he'll come as friend!"

On the first day of December, when a cold wind was whining over the settlement, the famous chief came through the southern gate and found the police formed up in military order to greet him. Crowfoot carried an eagle's wing, symbol of his supreme authority in the Blackfoot Confederacy. He wore a splendidly decorated suit of beaded and fringed buckskin, and was accompanied by chiefs of his own Blackfoot tribe as well as Piegans, Bloods, and Sarcees in all their finery. With silent dignity the Indians advanced onto the parade square all fully armed and well aware of their power as red lords of the west.

The police wore their best uniforms, no longer new and with many substitutions for trousers and footwear. Yet they, too, made an impressive array that chilly morning. Macleod led his officers from their position near the flagpole to meet their visitors. Jerry Potts slouched beside the com-

manding officer to act as interpreter, but the salutes and smiles of welcome needed no translation. Crowfoot's brown fingers were clasped by Macleod, then they frankly appraised each other.

"Tell him I bring greetings from Queen Victoria, and her sincere thanks for keeping the peace between Indians and white men in this beautiful land."

A fine rifle was given to Crowfoot, with suitable gifts for others of his party. Much more important than the new weapon, colored cloth, tobacco, pipes, and trinkets was the bond sealed between the two strong men that morning. The leader of the Blackfoot and the commander of the Mounted Police liked each other from the first, with a mutual respect and trust. It was a friendship that was to mean much to Canada, a friendship that prevented war in the lands north of the border.

James Macleod explained why the police had marched west. They were sent by the Queen Mother to bring her words to all her children. As everyone knew, there were in the land many evil traders who peddled liquor. The Mounted Police would seek out and punish those wrongdoers. There had been murders and massacres during the past, but a new order had come. The police were here to protect those who obeyed the Queen's laws, Macleod stressed that the redcoats would always strive to be fair and just; their motto was "Maintain the Right."

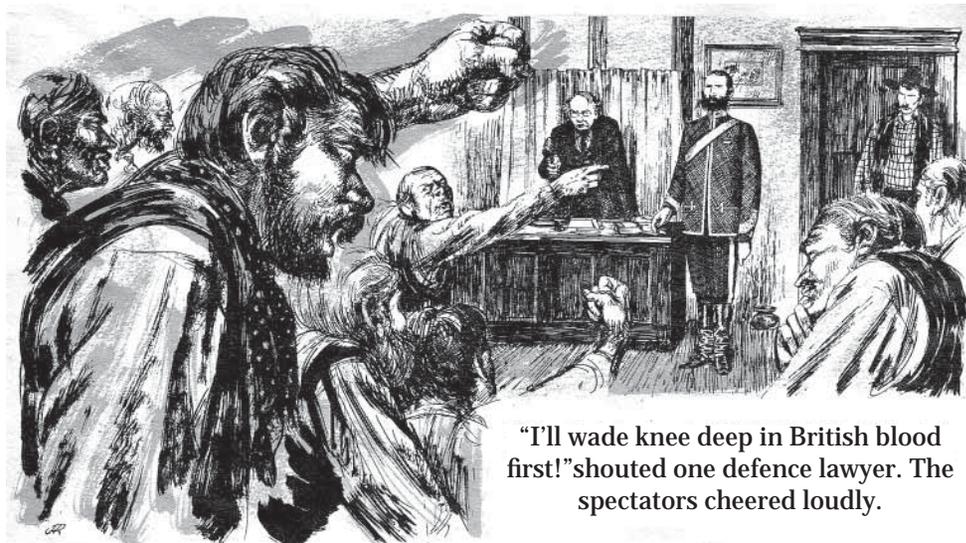
Chief Crowfoot said: "Your words make a good sound in my ears!"

He hated whiskey traders, knowing from bitter experience how badly his people were cheated and abused when firewater poisoned their minds and bodies. His scouts had already reported how the police spilled the traders' liquor on the ground, how they brought the offenders back to the fort to be punished. He strongly approved and was eager to call the redcoats his friends. Indians might soon need friends among the whites, for he could see that the buffalo were on the decline. This caused him deep anxiety, because his people relied upon the herds to supply their food, clothing, and teepees. If buffalo should vanish from the plains, Indians would sorely need the white man's food to save them from starvation.

"Now we are strong," added Crowfoot. "You can see that our warriors are many, and we know you are a brave man to come among us with so few to stand beside you. The law of the Great White Mother must be good, when she has a son like you to uphold it. I and my people will obey that law!"

The promise was not lightly spoken; Crowfoot intended to keep his word.

At that moment a Piegan chief asked permission to speak. This old



"I'll wade knee deep in British blood first!" shouted one defence lawyer. The spectators cheered loudly.

warrior had listened with close attention to all that transpired. He had realized that James Macleod was a white man who spoke with no forking of the tongue.

"I am old, and soon must go beyond the sunset to another home. Before a man dies, he should give away his belongings. My name is my greatest possession: I am called the Bull's Head. It is a good totem, because many valuable things come from the buffalo, I earned my name and for many years have borne it proudly, but the time has come to give it away. From now on I will call myself Tow-i-pee, which means Walking Forward – soon I must walk forward into the sunset. My other name I now give to this strong man who is chief of the redcoats. Henceforth, all Indians will know you as Stamix Otokan, the Bull's Head!"

Jerry Potts translated this quickly, explaining that it was the highest tribute an Indian could offer another man.

Macleod shook hands with the fine old Piegan, thanking him for the great honor. Then he told the assembled policemen what had happened and led them in a cheer for their visitors.

Tow-i-pee smiled. So did Chief Crowfoot, who added:

"We are now brothers, Stamix Otokan!"

Though it was necessary to punish his men for violating rules, the Assistant Commissioner knew that life at their outpost was not always easy for them. Bad weather and sickness plagued them, while no word came from Ottawa about their overdue pay. Already most of the men were badly in debt to storekeepers of the settlement, and interest rates were high. To-

bacco and candy became expensive luxuries – indeed, some police copied the Indians and smoked leaves of bearberry, or kinnikinnik. Manufactured clothing was beyond their means; troopers had to patch their worn garments time and again. Once, as a man tried to put a gloss on his badly scuffed boots, he invented a new meaning for the force's initials: N.W.M.P.

“Not Worth Much Polish!” he muttered.

“Now that severe weather is upon us, men suffer from exposure,” the Commanding Officer wrote in his reports. “I have ordered sentries to wrap themselves in blankets while on duty, as protection against the bitter cold.”

Work parties sought dry fuel along the treed river banks. When the logs had been hauled to the fort, the men took turns at sawing and chopping firewood. All welcomed stable chores, because the mud-chinked sheds were warm with the horses' body heat. A favorite duty was hunting, and

Macleod made sure that every constable had his turn at it. Buffalo were never far away. The men varied the fare by shooting mule deer, antelope, and elk. Shotguns were used to knock down prairie chicken, ruffed grouse, and rabbits.

On milder days they went on patrol. Once Cecil Denny took a unit into an Indian camp and discovered a drinking orgy in progress. He spilled the only gallon left, then coaxed a friendly Blackfoot to guide them to the source of supply – a trader's cabin a few miles distant. The shack was deserted, but Denny found 10 more gallons and decided to track down the missing trader. The trail led them 20 miles to a larger post, where three men were arrested. The chief culprit was a man called Weatherwax. Macleod fined him \$250.

“I've got friends in Washington who'll hear of this outrage!” Weatherwax shouted.

“Your offence was committed on British territory,” said Macleod. “Here you are subject to the Queen's laws, and must either pay the fine or go to jail.”

The man became abusive and was escorted to the guardhouse. After a week of hard labor such as chopping wood, he offered to pay the fine to regain his liberty. Soon he was on his way back to Benton, and from then on, he stayed south of the border.

“I am happy to report the complete stoppage of whiskey trade in this section of the country,” Macleod wrote to Commissioner French at Dufferin.

“Thus drunken riots that were almost a daily occurrence in former years are now at an end. A large number of Indians are camped along the river near our settlement, and a more peaceable community could not be found anywhere.”

The police made a gala holiday of their first Christmas in the new fort. Extra rations were given the cooks, raisins had been imported from Fort Benton to make a monster plum pudding. Hunters sought the choicest young buffalo for tender meat, and plump grouse to take the place of turkeys.

“A Merry Christmas to all, and God bless you!” said James Macleod at the morning flag ceremony.

“We'll put on a show for our Indian friends,” Macleod decided. He told Inspector Winter to load the cannon with blank charges and fire a 21-gun salute.

The tribesmen thoroughly enjoyed the racket, whooping with delight after each smoky explosion. Then everybody hustled indoors to enjoy feasting, a concert, and dance. The prettiest Indian women were in demand as partners, giggling while gay young constables taught them to waltz. Music was provided by mouth organs, combs and tissue paper, and one drum.

But the New Year had a dismal start. Two popular men named Baxter and Wilson froze to death when a blizzard caught them out on patrol. The disaster saddened the garrison, while the collapse of several dirt roofs in living quarters did not help. Morale had never been lower. By March of 1875, the men had been nine months without pay. James Macleod sent a sharply worded message by dispatch rider to Benton, and thence to Ottawa by fastest mail route. Jolted by the letter, which told of 18 desertions, the government replied that money for pay and supplies had been made available at a bank in Helena.

“That's 300 miles away!” said Macleod. Then he read the rest of the message: Ottawa wished to bring to trial the perpetrators of the Cypress Hills Massacre. A special investigator, Superintendent Irvine, was being sent west to help with the case.

March brought blue skies and balmy air. The fields shed their winter white and water flowed down the draws to form a brown trickle on the river. Willows shone with silver catkins. Overhead, an eagle screamed as it soared westward to its mountain home.

James Macleod was glad to leave his office and swing into the saddle again. He was accompanied on the Helena trip by Jerry Potts, Sub-Inspector Denny, and two constables named Cochrane and Ryan.

Their horses trotted briskly along the trail, the men spending the first night at the almost deserted Fort Whoop-Up, now an ordinary trading post. The man in charge urged them to stay longer, because glowing sun dogs in the sky forecast a storm. Macleod was eager to reach the American town, so he declined the invitation and they pressed on.

They paused for a meal and Macleod told his companions that he had asked Commissioner French and the government to authorize the buffalo head as a symbol for the police force; it would make an appropriate crest on badges and buttons.

Suddenly Potts raised his head, looking at the pall of clouds hiding the distant Rockies. The wind rose sharply. The air became chilly.

“Bad storm coming. We better hurry.”

Just at twilight, as they reached the barren shores of the Milk River, the fury of the blizzard struck. No trees were near to provide a windbreak; worse, there was not even a stick of firewood. The men crouched under an embankment, using knives to dig a cave for shelter. Snow stopped falling during the night, but the wind increased in violence and their thermometer registered 60 degrees below zero.

Shall we go on?” the leader asked Jerry at dawn.

“Better we stay. Maybe she blow out.”

They huddled together in the cave, their mounts tethered nearby. Great vigilance was needed when a herd of buffalo loomed out of the swirling snow, the animals pressing fearlessly close to horses and men. The party did not shoot any, as there was no fuel for cooking. The only food they ate that day was raw bacon.

The guide changed his plans next morning, though the blizzard still raged.

“Rocky Springs is 25 miles away. No firewood there, but a hut for shelter.”

Jerry Potts’ prowess as a pathfinder was wonderfully demonstrated during that terrible journey. Wind driven snow formed a sleety curtain close round them. It was prairie country, with no landmarks to guide him. Yet Jerry did not hesitate nor falter.

They had trouble reviving Constable Ryan during one stage of the bone chilling ride.

“How far now?” asked Macleod.

Jerry did not answer. Macleod realized he wanted to be left strictly alone. Conversation or interference of any kind might disrupt his concen-

tration. The others kept close behind Potts, leading their two pack horses, hunching low in their saddles to avoid the stinging wind. Jerry was in the grip of some age-old Indian instinct, for in their snow bound world he had no chance of recognizing any feature of that trackless waste. Night came on early. With darkness, their spirits slumped as they plodded after the silent figure. Halting suddenly, Jerry pointed a mittened hand at the dim outline of a hut.

“Rocky Springs!”

After a more comfortable night, sunshine revived their hopes. Soon they were cantering towards the Marias River. It was still intensely cold, about 40 degrees below zero. Every member of the party was frost bitten, and Denny and Potts became snow blind. Eventually Macleod sighted a curl of smoke. American soldiers had a cozy fort at Marias and gave them a cordial reception. Next morning their hosts lent them fresh horses and directed them to another cavalry outpost along their route. They had no further trouble reaching Helena.

James Macleod was soon busy. He presented his credentials at the bank and collected Ottawa’s money, then arranged for more supplies, clothing, and horses – three of their mounts had died during the blizzard trip! He consulted officials about the extradition trial of those involved in the Cypress Hills Massacre, but this developed into a major undertaking which could not be settled in a short time.

There was another problem. Many of the 18 deserters from Fort Macleod were staying in Helena. Troublemakers avoided the Assistant Commissioner, but several ex-constables sought him out and begged to be taken back into the Force. A shrewd judge of men, Macleod decided to be lenient.

You’ll be subjected to punishment for this breach of discipline,” he warned them.

“Whatever you decide is fair, sir.”

Already his reputation for impartial judgment was firmly established; the guilty men had no fear that he would punish them more than they deserved.

Soon their little group was on the way back to Canada, with over \$30,000 in a strong box. What a haul it would have made for frontier gunmen! No doubt they encountered a few shady characters along the trail, but not a finger was lifted against the police. It was a pleasant journey home. Spring was in full glory, a happy time of returning birds and fresh green grass, purple crocuses and golden buffalo beans in flower. Through the clear air Macleod could see miles of the rolling prairie landscape, foot-

hills rising into the far-off Rockies.

At the fort, he found Indian prisoners in the guardhouse and was instantly curious about Chief Crowfoot's reaction to punishment for his tribesmen.

"Well, at first we were worried," Crozier admitted. "The chief seemed angry when we made the arrests. He brought armed warriors with him when we held the trial. As you know, Father Scollen has moved into the settlement and speaks the Blackfoot dialect, so we asked him to interpret every step of court procedure to Crowfoot and his group. A few prisoners were released for lack of evidence, and the guilty ones had a fair trial. When it was all over Crowfoot said he knew they'd done wrong and deserved punishment. He was well satisfied with our kind of justice. We all heaved a mighty sigh of relief!"

The men were delighted to get their backpay, though not much remained after debts had been settled. Life was good again, and morale high. They had survived a very severe winter in hastily built quarters, now being improved to make them more comfortable. While clothing was still ragged, new issues were on the way and a better pay system promised. Assistant Commissioner Macleod remarked on their health and fitness; most troopers could ride 50 miles during a day's patrol, which testified to their hardy condition. They had earned the friendship and respect of Indians living nearby, and lawbreakers kept away from them.

"But they're still busy, further away," Crozier told Macleod.

Whiskey posts had reappeared among the Cypress Hills, 160 miles from their base and too far for easy patrolling. Ottawa sanctioned the establishment of a new fort, and during May, Superintendent Walsh and 50 men, with Jerry Potts as guide, rode out from the Old Man fort to spend the summer building a police station in the Hills. Fort Walsh was destined to have a very dramatic role in maintaining the peace between Indians and whites.

On several occasions the well-known Methodist missionary, John McDougall, had come from his Morley mission on the upper Bow River to tell the Police about whiskey trading in his region. The peddlers were bypassing Fort Macleod to work beyond easy police range, and Mr. McDougall was worried about the demoralization of his Stoneys. Crees from the north and members of the Blackfoot Union were also affected by the Bow River liquor trade. The Assistant Commissioner realized the need for another large outpost somewhere between Fort Macleod and Fort Saskatchewan. Again, he asked Ottawa to approve a further expansion.

During July he returned to Helena and met Superintendent Irvine.

The special investigator had gathered much evidence, so the two officers arranged with American authorities for the trial, and 14 alleged instigators of the Cypress Hills Massacre were summonsed.

No doubt some of them were guilty, but what did the lives of a few Indians matter? That seemed to be the attitude at Helena.

The Canadians' best witness was a man named Farwell, who had been a trader at the Hills and tried his best to prevent the massacre. The defence lost no time slandering Farwell's character, even suggesting that he might have fired the first shot at the Indians. The Montana press, courtroom crowds, townspeople and visiting trappers were solidly against Canada's case.

"I'll wade knee deep in British blood, before I'll allow any one of these wronged men to be handed over to the Mounted Police for trial!" shouted one defence lawyer, a statement loudly cheered by spectators.

The ex-marshal reputed to be the leader of the killer gang gave a highly colored account of the affair, accusing Indians of having stolen his horses. Unbiased witnesses were positive that the slaughtered Assiniboines were not in any way connected with the theft. Another plea of the Americans was self defence; they claimed to have fired on the Indians to save their own lives.

"Why, then, did you shoot down women and children?" countered the prosecution.

The senior lawyer retained by Canada revealed himself as favoring the other side, though an assistant did his best to obtain proper justice. Macleod made a strong plea for fair play, but was howled down. The temper of the crowd became dangerous; there were even threats of lynching directed at the Mounties.

In the end the judge ruled for the release of all defendants. One man promptly filed a counter charge against James Macleod for hailing him into court, and Helena police escorted the Canadian officer to jail. Within a day he was free again. The authorities knew very well he was innocent. But for a few hours the alleged murderer who had Macleod jailed was toasted as a hero.

"That'll teach the Queen's Cowboy he can't fool around with us!"

When the police returned to Canada after the trial, this nickname followed James Macleod. The Queen's Cowboy! Though it had been given in derision by hoodlums, when the name crossed the boundary people approved of its fine western flavor, "The Queen's Cowboys" became an affectionate nickname for the Mounties which endured for many years.

## Chapter Four

**J**erry Potts had found a fine site for a new post, and Fort Walsh had been built in the Cypress Hills.

“Now we must build a post somewhere on the Bow,” Macleod said. Ottawa had approved of this plan of Macleod’s and sent reinforcements to keep his western command up to strength. Then came a new dispatch to tell of an important visitor.

“General Selby-Smyth is making a western tour,” Macleod told his staff. “We’ve been asked to provide escorts while he’s in our territory. Winder, you know the general, I believe?”

“Yes, sir – he’s commander of all militia forces in Canada. A stickler for spit and polish.”

The Assistant Commissioner smiled. “So I have heard. However, our men look pretty spruce when they have a mind to. And the new uniforms will help.”

A few days later 50 men under Inspector Brisebois paraded, with complete kits and several wagons of supplies. Macleod watched with pride as the smart looking troopers rode through the gate in formation.

When they reached Blackfoot Crossing, the Bow River was in high flood. Hot weather had melted snows in mountains near the stream’s source, and its banks were overflowing. Under Macleod’s direction, canvas tarpaulins were wrapped tightly under the floor and up the sides of each of three wagons. Once the canvas was lashed in position, it was rubbed with waterproof axle-grease and the three improvised boats tied together. In the cumbersome craft they ferried men and equipment over the muddy water, with horses swimming behind. Two long days were needed to complete the crossing.

“I allowed extra time for such emergencies, Macleod assured his men. “We’ll reach the Red Deer with a few days to spare, and that time can be spent polishing buttons and shining our leather before the general arrives.”

They passed the Three Hills landmark at the edge of the prairies, and soon were in the parklands north of the plains. It was a beautiful region, abounding in game but the police were convinced the mosquitoes out-numbered all other forms of life.

“I’ve heard stories about these bushland mosquitoes,” Macleod joked.



“Your words make a good sound in my ears.” Chief Crowfoot said.

“One westerner told me they were ferociously large, and many of them weigh a pound!”

Happily, pests were not so numerous once they reached the Red Deer River, where they camped on the south bank. A log shack on the opposite shore housed a half-breed trader, who rowed across and offered to take officers back to look at sights of interest. This was known as the Tail Creek Crossing, a noted landmark on a river which served as unofficial boundary between the Blackfoot Union in the south and Crees to the north – Stoneys lived in mountain regions to the west.

For two days they polished equipment and mended clothing. They were almost ready for the general’s inspection when a horseman galloped in from the north. He hurried to Macleod and saluted.

“There’s been a change of route, sir. General Selby-Smyth plans to ford the Red Deer at the Wolf Crossing.”

“How far away if that, Jerry?”

“Maybe 50 miles upstream. But rough country to travel, full o’ trees, ravines, sloughs, and de big Divide hills.”

“Well, according to this new schedule, we’ve got only two days to reach it.

Break camp at once.”

Exhausted but triumphant, they completed the hard journey well within the allotted time. After tents had been pitched on a meadow near the Wolf Trail ford later called Red Deer Crossing, Macleod walked through the camp and praised his men for the fast trip.

Selby-Smyth arrived next morning, considerably the worse for wear himself, plagued by insect bites and sunburn. He praised the fit-looking troopers. Then he and the Colonel rode south to Fort Macleod with a small escort, leaving the main troop to break camp at leisure and choose a fort site in the Bow River valley.

Father Doucet, a Frenchman who was trying to learn the Indian dialect and start a mission among the Blackfoot, was already camped near the junction of the Bow and Elbow streams when the police chose that site for a base. The poor priest was half starved for food and company, and welcomed the bustling activity soon in progress all around his tent. Workers of the I. G. Baker Company had contracted to build the post, freeing the Mounties for more important police duties.

“A lovely valley, flanked by rolling hills,” wrote Cecil Denny. “Thick woods border the banks, while mountains with snowy peaks tower to the west.”

Everyone thought it the most attractive spot yet chosen for a police fort. James Macleod accepted the government’s invitation to christen the new garrison. When he paid it a visit, he was thoroughly charmed by the setting.

“During my youth on Skye, I learned a little Gaelic,” he told the assembled men. “There’s a word. Calgary, which means, ‘clear running water’. With two good mountain streams coming together just beyond our palisades, that pleasant sounding name aptly describes the prospect here!”

Thus the foothill city of Calgary was created by the North-West Mounted

Police in the autumn of 1875 and named by James Macleod.

He had been most interested in Selby-Smyth’s confidences. The general told of severe criticism of the government’s handling of western

affairs, the police force labelled a complete failure by the administration’s political enemies in the east. Selby-Smyth was delighted to find proof to the contrary. He told Macleod that his report would stress the wonderful job done by the police, taming the frontier within one brief year and making further colonization safe and practical. Already cattle ranching had started near the fort on the Old Man River, though buffalo hides remained the basic industry – 15,000 buffalo pelts worth \$3 to \$4 each had been exported from Fort Macleod to Benton during the previous winter’s trading period.

The general approved of the scarlet tunics and smart appearance of the police uniforms, and of their white helmets worn on ceremonial occasions. Macleod proposed a wide brimmed hat, instead of the pill box forage cap. Selby-Smyth ignored the suggestion. And he wanted all officers to wear swords, because of the psychological effect upon Indians!

There were now five important police forts in the west, with the original stronghold at Fort Macleod the key position because of its command of Blackfoot territory. Another advantage was that it straddled the main Benton trail, which permitted police control over much of the American-Canadian traffic. There were many small outposts. Fort Kipp had been established during the winter of ’74; now Macleod sent word to Superintendent Jarvis at Fort Saskatchewan to station two or more men at the Tail Creek Crossing. An officer and trooper were also sent to Kennedy’s Crossing on the Milk River south of the Cypress Hills, where border activity could be watched.

“It may be early for optimism,” Macleod said one morning as snow fell again. “But I’m convinced we’ve accomplished our main purpose – we’ve successfully brought law and order to the west.”

As the year drew to a close, a dispatch from Ottawa brought word that James Farquharson Macleod had been officially thanked by the Parliament of Canada for winning the friendship of the Blackfoot Confederacy. He was offered a promotion. He was named one of three Stipendiary Magistrates under the North-West Territories Act, his new duties to begin on January 1st of 1876. Superintendent Irvine had arrived back from Winnipeg, and was named the Assistant Commissioner at Fort Macleod. Yet there were tears in the eyes of many a weatherbeaten trooper and officer, when James Macleod spoke an affectionate farewell as commanding officer on the last day of the year.

One of the first letters he penned during the new year was to Mary Drever. The newly-appointed magistrate, now nearing his 40th birthday, had been engaged to her since before his march to the west.

Macleod felt it was now safe to bring a wife to the cluster of log

huts in pleasant view of the mountains. And it might be possible to have a settled home life. There would be travelling involved in the new work, as his judicial district included the large territory from Bow River south to the boundary. But most cases would be tried at Fort Macleod itself, and they could live in frontier comfort near the stronghold. However, the marriage could not take place for some months.

In accepting the government's appointment as magistrate, Macleod realized the need for an impartial judge in the region. The Mounted Police arrested law-breakers, police arranged the time and place of trials, police presented evidence of guilt before their own officers, who then decided the fate of culprits. There had been criticism of this police dominated jurisdiction – not from Indians, who had no past experience with courts and relied upon Mounties to treat them fairly. But it was and is a principle of British and Canadian law that no man should be judge in his own cause. Above all, the accuser should not be associated with the judge.

Some cases concerned puzzled young braves, who had tried to win fame by stealing horses from enemy camps. Macleod was tactful in dealing with them, knowing the horse raiding had been long considered a courageous and honorable pursuit. Now the time had come to protect property rights, even those of traditional enemies. This required many explanations, with Jerry Potts acting as interpreter.

"This man's a good Indian," Jerry said on one occasion. "Besides he's my third wife's only brudder. Maybe he just make a little mistake, huh?"

The magistrate had to smother a laugh. Yet his sympathies were often with red men hailed before his bench, and he was as lenient as the law allowed.

OTHER white men were not so understanding, especially a few of the early ranchers. Most were worthy pioneers who prepared the way for agricultural progress in the territory, but some believed that the only good Indian was a dead one. When hungry tribesmen shot a cow for food, one cattleman stormed before Macleod with a question.

"Judge, I wanta know somethin' about Canadian laws. If I catch a redskin meddlin' with my cattle, is it okay if I kill the Injun?"

"If you do, you'll probably hang for it!"

Macleod had served six months as magistrate when Commissioner French resigned as commanding officer of the police. Ottawa promptly sent a special dispatch to Macleod. He read it, then entered the fort and showed it to the police officers. The troops were assembled on the parade ground, and Superintendent Irvine made the announcement:

"Colonel Macleod is our new Commissioner!"

After assuming command, he rode east to Winnipeg. There he and Mary Drever were married, but they parted immediately after the ceremony. The new Commissioner had to visit all police forts and outposts, so he started his tour at once while his wife travelled east to Ontario to meet the rest of his family.

Macleod's first important duty as commanding officer was to provide a police escort for Lieutenant-Governor Morris of the Northwest Territories, who had arranged for Cree Indians to sign Treaty Number 6 at Fort Carlton. At Swan River, 82 policemen rode in formation behind the commissioner as they headed towards Cree territory. Some bands were opposed to the Treaty, and the presence of the Mounties helped to maintain order during negotiations. Governor Morris praised Macleod and his men for their fine work on that historic occasion.

One Cree Chief who refused to sign Treaty No. 6 was Big Bear.

"I do not like hanging," he said. "Write in the treaty that there must be no hanging for Indians."

Governor Morris told him that the Queen's laws could not be altered so easily. Any man, white or Indian, who committed a murder must face the penalty of death by hanging. Why did the Indian chief object to this ruling, which really had no bearing at all upon the main purpose of the Treaty?

"Hanging is terrible," insisted Big Bear. Perhaps he had a premonition of his own destiny, for he later died on the gallows.

In July, Inspector Denny had arrested an Indian murderer from Crowfoot's band near the mouth of the Red Deer River. Chief Crowfoot made use of the occasion to confide in Denny; the Sioux had recently sent a gift of ceremonial tobacco to the Blackfoot, asking them to cross the border and help to wipe out all American soldiers. After the victory, the Sioux promised, they would return to Canada with the Blackfoot and kill all the Mounted Police and white settlers so that western lands would once again belong to Indians.

"I did not accept their tobacco," Crowfoot told Denny. "I refused to betray my friends the Mounted Police. Now the Sioux have sent a second message and threaten to make war on my tribe, after they defeat the Long Knives. If the Sioux attack us, will the redcoats be our allies?"

Denny assured him that the police were on his side.

"Good!" exclaimed Crowfoot. "Tell my friend Stamix Otokan I have 2,000 warriors, ready to help the police to drive back the Sioux!"

Hearing this, Colonel Macleod realized the threat of war was very real – just when he hoped to make a safe home for his wife! He redistributed his 300 men, reducing staff at northern and eastern depots to concentrate troops in forts close to Montana territory. It was known that American cavalry planned attacks on all factions of the Sioux Nation; if the soldiers won their battles, there remained but one direction the beleaguered Sioux could flee – north into Canada.

And this at a time when buffalo herds were badly depleted; 40,000 robes had been shipped out of Fort Macleod during the past few months; every trading post in the Territories was doing a tremendous business in bison hides. The Commissioner knew the animals could not long survive such slaughter, and tribal war might break out over the few good hunting ranges left.

“There’s trouble ahead for all of us,” he warned his officers. “Keep your men ready, and be careful in dealings with Indians.”

The fort on the Old Man River was made police headquarters, Macleod acting in the dual capacity of commissioner and magistrate. Moreover, the government notified him that he had been appointed a member of the recently organized North West Territorial Council.

“There has been a massacre of Long Knives!” Blood Indians told the police. “The Sioux have won a great victory, killing all the soldiers who came against them!”

The battle of the Little Bighorn had taken place on June 25, 1876, but bad news was slow to filter north. There were only rumors at first, then gradually the truth became known. Colonel Custer had advanced with the 7th United States Cavalry, riding far ahead of his supporting troops. Crow Indian scouts warned him the Sioux were massed in great numbers. Custer rashly disregarded their report, estimating the enemy at no more than 700. He ordered an attack, riding to the most forward position with his own unit of 265 men. The Sioux, in fact, numbered over 8,000; they ambushed

Custer’s force and cut them to pieces.

At once the Americans mustered a powerful army, determined to avenge the massacre. All Indians on United States reservations were disarmed to prevent them joining the fray, then the cavalry started a drive against the Sioux.

“Death to Sitting Bull!”

This Indian was a Medicine Man who became famous as an orator before being elected a chief of the Hunkpapa band. The chief of the

Sioux Nation was a much wiser leader named Black Moon. Army men were convinced that Sitting Bull had led the attack against Custer, though it was later learned he had little experience as a warrior. Indeed, Sitting Bull probably had not fired a single shot during the tragic fight. His followers claimed that he had stayed in a medicine lodge, casting spells to ensure a Sioux victory.

“Death to Sitting Bull!”

IT became the rallying cry in Montana territory. Yet Indians were not wholly to blame, for they were defending their very lives. There had been a series of broken promises, invasion of reservation grounds, corrupt Indian agents making huge profits at the expense of tribal warfare, abuses and harsh treatment that angered not only Sitting Bull but all chiefs of the Sioux Nation. Their homelands had been ruthlessly plundered by whites. After the Custer Massacre, which would have been a Sioux Massacre if Custer had been successful, the bands quickly dispersed and several groups headed north.

“Keep watch, all along the border,” Macleod ordered his police.

During September, reports reached Fort Walsh that Sitting Bull’s band was 80 miles south. Walsh sent scouts to survey the region. They brought back words that there was a large Sioux camp 10 miles south of the border. Perhaps the braves were merely hunting buffalo, as scouts claimed. Nevertheless, Walsh thought it prudent to send messengers to nearby American outposts, warning whites of the Sioux in their vicinity. Fort Benton and Helena papers praised the Canadian policeman for his friendly tip, which sent scattered farm families and ranchers rushing into towns and forts for protection.

“If they cross the border, be firm but tactful,” the Commissioner told his men. “Explain our laws and insist that they heed them while on our territory. Above all, try to keep the peace.”

The Sioux did not attack army outposts or settlers’ homes on that occasion. They were hungry and needed robes for tents and clothing, so their hunters harried the few buffalo left in the area. And for the present, they stayed south of the boundary.

Meanwhile, the Commissioner completed the distribution of his forces. He kept 130 officers and men at Fort Macleod, placed 95 at strategic Fort Walsh, 45 at Colonel French’s former barracks at Swan River, 35 at Fort Calgary, 20 at Edmonton, and 11 at Battleford. Four seven-pounder cannons from Winnipeg were hauled to Walsh’s fort, to strengthen that vital position. Fort Macleod still had the two nine-pounders and two mortars dragged west during the march of ’74.

Gunner Officer Winder supervised improvements to the garrison on the Old Man River, and as another winter drew near, the originals of the western force were justly proud of their frontier settlement.

The Sioux crossed into Canada, with Chiefs Black Moon and White Eagle in charge. Their combined camp numbered about 300 lodges, sheltering 2,000 men, women and children.

“We have no place to sleep. We are hunted by the Long Knives and must run all the time. That is why we have come to the land of the Great White Mother, because Indians are safe in this country. Let us become your children.”

This was their impassioned plea to Superintendent Walsh. They had pitched their teepees near Wood Mountain in the midst of good buffalo range. The police gave them some badly needed ammunition for hunting, also a little flour, sugar, and tea. And the Irishman Walsh lectured them on the importance of obeying all the Queen’s laws.

Black Moon and White Eagle promised to heed the redcoats. They were desperate for a sanctuary.

“Where is Sitting Bull?” Walsh asked them.

But either the chiefs did not know or would not tell. It was learned later that the Bull’s Hunkpapa band was far to the south, camped on the banks of a Missouri tributary, with only a few scattered buffalo between them and starvation.

“Does Sitting Bull intend coming north?”

“We have heard that he may ride this way,” Black Moon cautiously

admitted.

“Then let him not come with a loaded gun or a naked knife. In this land, the children of the White Mother have forsaken war. Be sure he knows this.”

Crowfoot was greatly disturbed by the arrival of the Sioux. He rode at once to Fort Macleod and talked with Stamix Otokan.

“If your policemen cannot make them leave, remember that my warriors are strong!” said the chief. “Send the Sioux back to their own country, or my braves will drive them out.”

The commissioner used all his diplomacy to calm the great chief. He knew that the Blackfoot, as well as their rivals the Crees and Stoneys, would not willingly sacrifice any good buffalo pastures to outsiders. Yet Macleod urged the Indian statesman to keep his young men away from the Cypress Hills, to avoid all contact with the refugee bands.

“Your people now find enough meat on prairies near the Bow River and north to the Red Deer. You do not need to hunt southward, near Wood Mountain in the Hills. The Sioux were chased into Canada by the Long Knives, whom you dislike. They are fellow Indians, and sought a place where their women and children could sleep without fear. They did not come to fight your people nor my policemen, and there is no need to beat the war drum.”

When Crowfoot at last realized the truth of this, the commissioner had Jerry Potts translate another message. Queen Victoria wanted Crowfoot and all other chiefs of the Blackfoot Union to sign a treaty.



“The Sioux have won a great victory!” Blood Indians told the police.

“Not now, but soon. Consider this well, because it means much to your people. The buffalo are disappearing, and you may soon need the white men’s help. When that time comes, we will be your friends. But you should sign a treaty, that there may be complete understanding between us.”

Crowfoot had heard about Crees making a treaty agreement at Fort Carlton earlier in the year.

“Blackfoot are not the same as Crees,” he declared haughtily.

“All Indians are the children of the Queen Mother,” said Macleod. “A treaty is very good medicine, an honorable pact between the Queen and your people.”

The chief promised to discuss it with his councillors. Meanwhile, he hoped Stamix Otokan’s police would keep the Sioux from ranging north of the Cypress Hills.

“If you cannot stop them, my own warriors will drive them back and chase them right across the border!”

When the great Crowfoot stalked out, the Commissioner sighed and wondered how long he and his helpers could keep the powder keg from exploding all over the west.

Christmas was fast approaching. It was to be a more comfortable one at their improved fort and a festive time was planned – with such luxuries as eggs, at \$6 a dozen! Two officers had installed their wives in houses outside the fort, and mail couriers brought huge packets of letters and parcels from far away relatives. James Macleod kept his loneliness to himself; thousands of miles separated him from his young wife. Perhaps they would be united some time in the new year, in the now dangerous territory between the Blackfoot and the Sioux.

## Chapter Five

**E**arly in 1877, Ottawa notified the Commissioner that the first meeting of the Territories Council would be held at Swan River during March. Macleod was eager to attend, because of the urgency of the buffalo situation, and the effect their disappearance would have upon the Indians.

“I’m leaving you a lot of worries,” Macleod told officers on the eve of his departure. “Try to keep the tribes apart. And we must not let the Sioux use Canada as a base from which to make raids on American outposts, or we’ll have an international row on our hands.”

Under Sitting Bull’s leadership, it was possible that the powerful



It was the most attractive spot yet chosen for a fort, and when Macleod was invited to christen the garrison in the autumn of 1876, he named it Calgary.

Sioux might change their attitude to the small garrisons of Mounted Police. The redcoats had barely enough ammunition to fire a single volley. Macleod had already informed Ottawa of the shortage; more cartridges were on the way by a secret route. But the Commissioner fervently hoped none would have to be used against Indians.

It was a long, roundabout journey to the council meeting. He travelled by horseback south to Helena, whence he rode a stagecoach into Utah Territory, and the town of Corinne – end of the steel of the Union Pacific railway at that time. It was a comfortable train trip back to Chicago, where James Macleod had a happy reunion with his wife.

Together they journeyed by train to Fargo in North Dakota, then by stage to Winnipeg and bobsled to Portage la Prairie. A Métis with a fast dog team agreed to transport them the final 300 miles to Swan River. By day they sped behind barking dogs over wind packed snows, while at night they sheltered under the flimsy protection of a canvas tent. Often the wolves howled, ringed round the tiny camp. There was the whine of blizzards, the hooting of horned owls, the bitter sting of 20 below zero weather, but none of this daunted young Mary Macleod. Her questions about his work in the west, and her eager enthusiasm for the countryside through which they were travelling banished Macleod’s fears for her happiness in the new life.



White Dog faltered. His allies were not watching him, their eyes rested in admiration on Walsh and his redcoats calmly enforcing their law in the midst of the Indian war camp.

“You’ll do all right, out on the Old Man River,” he assured her.

At the former police headquarters the three councillors met in the home of the Honorable David Laird, newly appointed Lieutenant-Governor of the Territories. The troublesome state of Indian affairs took up most of their time, but James Macleod managed to propose legislation to protect the buffalo. Several plans were discussed; they even considered imposing a closed season! At last it was made unlawful for anyone, Indian or white, to kill buffalo calves. The intention was excellent, but when this clause was later put on statutes, police found it impossible to enforce on the wide prairies and bison slaughter continued unabated.

The Commissioner wrote back to Fort Macleod to his friend Inspector Winder, poking a little fun at officialdom.

“The great Council of the mighty Territory met this afternoon for the first time. Too bad we can’t have your cannon to thunder forth the fact! There are three members, Hugh Richardson, Mathew Ryan, and myself; the two first do not speak to each other and Ryan does not speak to me! I have proposed a triangular duel to settle the matter. Remember me to all!

After the meetings the Macleods travelled east to Ottawa and were the guests of Lord Dufferin, Governor General of Canada. The Commissioner was praised for his achievements. “The Queen has notified me,” said Lord Dufferin, “that a special medal is being made for Chief Crowfoot, in recogni-

tion of his loyalty to the Crown.”

They talked about the threat of fighting between Sioux and Black-foot which jeopardized the security of the entire west.

“American authorities must be advised, once again, that we cannot accept any responsibility for their Indians. They must take them back.”

“It’s more complicated than that,” said Macleod. “Till now, their soldiers seem concerned only with killing the Sioux. That is why they have come to Canada, and I feel sure more are on their way – including Sitting Bull and his followers. We cannot blame the Indians for trying to save their own lives.”

“I’ll ask the Prime Minister to look into the matter.”

The Government approached Washington, suggesting that the Sioux be guaranteed safe passage from the Cypress Hills onto reservation lands in the States.

“Now the feasting’s over,” the Commissioner told his wife. “We can get back to the job.”

New recruits who had been enlisted in Ontario accompanied the Commissioner to the Missouri and by paddle wheeler up river to Benton.

Once there, Macleod bought horses and they formed a picturesque cavalcade as they travelled north. A wagon had been set aside for Mary Macleod, but she preferred her own mount, riding sidesaddle near her husband at the head of the column. They crossed miles of rolling prairie.

Several rivers were in flood, but such fordings were now commonplace for the Commissioner. In due course they came in sight of the log palisades and felt the balmy breath of a chinook blowing from the Crows-nest Pass.

Every policeman at the fort, every person in the surrounding settlement had turned out to welcome the young woman. Macleod had earned his position as the foremost citizen of the Canadian west and his wife was quickly accepted as first lady.

Meanwhile Sitting Bull had crossed the border. Walsh had been watching for him. One day he met a band of Teton Sioux under Chief Four Horses, who said, “Sitting Bull is my adopted son and my people are his followers. He is not with us now, but I know that his eyes are turned this way.”

A few days later word came that an extremely large party had crossed the boundary near Pinto Horse Buttes. Superintendent Walsh, one inspector, three constables, and two scouts set out at once, sure that

the newcomers would be led by Sitting Bull. The police found a heavily marked trail, and soon became aware that Indian sentinels were watching them from the hilltops. Walsh set a fearless example and led his men right into the centre of a huge encampment of 500 lodges. It was the first time white men had entered Sitting Bull's camp without being challenged or molested.

The famous medicine man declared that while he hated Long Knife soldiers, he had a high regard for British redcoats. Walsh made it perfectly clear that Sioux were considered American Indians, welcomed only as visitors north of the border. While in Canada, they must abide by the Queen's laws and make no trouble. Sitting Bull readily agreed to each condition, adding, "Yesterday, I was fleeing from white men, cursing them with every breath. Today, white policemen build their lodge next to mine and give me the hand of friendship. A great change has taken place in my heart."

Next morning one of the police scouts noticed a new arrival leading three horses that belonged to a well-known Catholic priest.

Walsh was convinced the animals had been stolen. It was his duty as a policeman to recover them and arrest the thief. Yet what could he do? He and his handful of men were surrounded by Indian warriors, all of them armed to the teeth. To kill a few white men would be nothing to the Sioux. They were all seasoned veterans of the fight against American cavalry.

It would have been easy for the Superintendent to turn a blind eye to the evidence. He could have argued with good cause that the odds were against him, that it would be foolish to risk his own life and those of his men for the sake of a few horses.

Yet Walsh did not hesitate for a moment. He felt instinctively that to show weakness of any kind would be fatal.

Boldly he made his way through the crowd and accosted the stranger, a south Assiniboine, named White Dog.

"Touch me if you dare!" the man shouted.

Walsh looked him in the eye. He spoke quietly, with a subdued force. In Canada, he said, horse thieves were always arrested and punished.

White Dog could hardly believe his ears. The policeman must be mad. He did not seem to realize that he had no power to back up his words.

Walsh gave a terse order to his constables. "Bring the leg irons!"

White Dog looked round in appeal to his Sioux allies. Now the

white man had gone too far! He was truly out of his mind. But the Sioux were not watching White Dog. Their eyes were on Walsh and his redcoats, calmly enforcing their law in the midst of the Indian war camp. White Dog saw something in their faces that drained his own courage. It was admiration. The Sioux were impressed by the madness of these policemen.

The horse thief faltered. He saw the leg irons and realized that Walsh meant to use them. Next moment he was begging for mercy. He claimed the horses had been running loose on the plains; he had merely captured them, because they seemed to have no owner.

Walsh did not believe his story, but he accepted it. He had won his point. The police confiscated the horses to return to their owner. As for White Dog, he left the camp in disgrace.

Later back at Fort Walsh, the Superintendent had an Indian visitor named Little Child, a friendly Saulteaux Chief whose camp was 30 miles from the police garrison. He told a grim story.

"American Indians moved onto my range, 250 lodges led by Chief Crow's Dance. They are South Assiniboines. The chief demanded that my band of 15 lodges acknowledge his leadership. We refused, whereupon Crow's Dance sent a band of warriors against us. They tore down and wrecked all our lodges, shot our dogs, and forced my people to flee for their lives. I told Crow's Dance that I would ask for police help, but he boasted that he does not fear redcoats. He said he will eat the heart of any white man who comes against him."

"We'll soon see about that!" said Walsh grimly.

Within an hour 18 police were riding towards the camp, with Little Child as guide. Walsh took along Dr. Kittson, because he expected a clash and the surgeon might be urgently needed. They hurried on through the twilight and the darkness.

All night they rode after the guide. The vast silence of the prairie night was broken only by the drumming of their horses' hoofs, the rattle of accoutrements. Sometimes a man would cough or speak briefly to a comrade. A coyote's eerie call would sound at times from the darkness.

Just at dawn, when a grayish light was glowing to the east, the guide halted on a knoll and pointed. Below them they saw the sleeping camp. All was quiet. They had not been noticed.

There were some big rocks on the knoll that formed a sort of natural fortress. Walsh detached three men and the doctor to remain at this strong point.

“Cover our retreat if we have to run for it!” he observed. “We can fight it out here, if necessary.” He beckoned to the remainder. They advanced boldly into the camp.

No one challenged them. They went directly to the chief’s teepee and hauled him out of his blanket at the point of their carbines.

“Crow’s Dance – you are under arrest for malicious damage to property!”

Within a few minutes they had arrested nearly a score of the leaders.

The camp began to awaken. Warriors rushed from their teepees whooping and brandishing tomahawks. They stopped in astonishment when they saw their chiefs and head men shivering in the morning air, with the policemen’s carbines aimed at their heads. The sheer audacity of it stunned them.

Not a shot had been fired.

Bewildered, the Indians listened while the Superintendent lashed them with his tongue. He let them know that their part in the destructive raid had left them open to severe punishment. But, thanks to the mercy of the redcoats, only the leaders would suffer.

Then the police rode out with their prisoners.

Crow’s Dance was given the stiffest penalty - six months imprisonment with hard labor. The news spread all through the Hills country.

“Obey the redcoat police, my brothers! Heed what they say and do not break their laws, lest they imprison us or send us back to the land of the Long Knives!”

SOMETIMES Mary Macleod accompanied her husband on patrols within a day’s ride of the home fort. One morning they travelled along the river valley to Crowfoot’s camp. There the Colonel presented his wife to the head chief of the Blackfoot, whose stately appearance and courtly manner delighted her.

After the pleasantries, the Commissioner made an announcement. “When poplar leaves turn golden and ducks fly over in flocks, let all Indians come to the camp of Bull’s Head to meet a messenger from the Queen Mother, who desires a treaty with you.”

Crowfoot made a counter appeal. He asked that the meeting be held at his own favorite camping ground, the Blackfoot Crossing 60 miles down the Bow River from Fort Calgary.

“The Blackfoot Crossing let it be,” said the Commissioner.

Early in September of 1877, Macleod told Inspector Crozier of Fort Calgary to prepare a campsite for the treaty commission at Blackfoot Crossing. Crozier took all of “F” troop with him, also the recently organized Mounted Police band under Sergeant Lake. Sub-Inspector Cecil Denny travelled the windy Bow River from Calgary to the Crossing in a boat, which was to be used for ferrying passengers across the stream at the camp.

Meantime, Lieutenant-Governor David Laird journeyed the many hundreds of miles to Fort Macleod, accompanied by Assistant Commissioner Irvine and a strong guard of police. A guard was necessary, because thousands of treaty dollars were in the Governor’s wagon. Laird rested for a few days at the Old Man fort, while James Macleod led two troops of men north to the crossing. September 17 had been chosen as the date for beginning negotiations, and all was ready by that time.

More than 1,000 sun-whitened buffalo skin teepees were erected by Blackfoot tribes on the Bow’s south bank. Across the stream to the north were Chief Bobtail’s Crees of the surrounding district; more Cree bands from the Battle River were among them, with Father Scollen as their adviser. West of the Crees were Stoney Indians from the upper Bow region and mountain valleys to the northwest as far as the Kootenay Plains. Stoney teepees were clustered round the tent of their mentor and friend, the Reverend John McDougall of the Morley Mission.

“And look at all the traders!” cried Mary Macleod, touring the bustling camp with her husband.

“Aye, and some of those gentry will bear watching,” he commented. “Indians haven’t learned the value of paper money, so it’ll be up to us to protect them from the sharks.”

Some traders had been on the site for two weeks; they had built rough log enclosures to house their stocks and provide display booths. Others had large wagons arranged as stores, or canvas awnings pitched over their wares.

In the crisp September sunlight the scarlet tunics of the police showed vividly among the browns and ochres of thronging Indians. Smoke from a thousand campfires hung over the crowds in a blue haze, as they moved here and there enjoying themselves. Feather-adorned braves, streaked with paint and wearing beaded skin clothing, shuffled their moccasined feet to the rhythm of ancient dances. Grave chieftains squatted together to smoke and converse peaceably. When the pulse of tom-toms throbbled in the valley it was with no menacing voice. For the drums spoke not of war but of old ceremonies, of the dance or the medicine pipe; they

called the people to rejoice and feast on buffalo tongues. The squaws as they tended their wailing babies looked up at the sound of the drums with a new brightness in their black eyes; grandmothers, warming their old bones in the sun, nodded and smiled as the fast rhythms thrust up memories of a time when they too were beautiful and light of foot.

The Blackfoot had camped here for many years. On surrounding hills, the burial platforms of their fathers were lashed to trees; piles of stones marked the graves of once illustrious chiefs. Now they willingly shared their sun dance valley with old allies and enemies alike.

There were 100 policemen. Another hundred whites represented trading firms, Montana freebooters, guides, interpreters, and the missionaries. And more than 6,000 Indians were scattered along the three-mile valley. Buffalo meat was plentiful, as large herds were grazing nearby and every day the hunters brought in ample supplies. Fresh hides were pegged flat on the ground for the women to scrape. Other squaws hung strips of meat on smoking and drying racks, boiled the buffalo bones to extract marrow fat which they would then mix with berries and meat in pemmican bags. The children played at archery games, ran races, or splashed in the river shallows. Wearing distinctive horned head dresses, the medicine men blew shrill notes on their goose wing whistles, shaking their leather rattles as they attended the sick and cast their spells.

The guns boomed a summons to the first meeting, and 1,000 painted warriors rode toward the marquee, with the great Crowfoot advancing at the head of a group of chiefs and councillors. Robes were spread on the ground, and the Indians seated themselves on stipes facing the speaker. Lieutenant-Governor Laird and James Macleod had been appointed the Queen's Commissioners for the occasion.

The Honorable David Laird explained that the treaty was a sacred agreement between the Queen Mother and her children. The Queen had their welfare at heart; already she had sent the redcoated police to protect them. As they knew, buffalo would soon be gone and a new way of life would have to be found for all prairie Indians. If they entrusted their country to the Queen Mother, she would care for them. They would have reservations, allowing one square mile of land for each family of five. They could choose any site for their lands, which white settlers would never be allowed to take from them. They would be taught how to grow their own food, though there would be no interference with hunting and fishing rights. Ammunition for hunting would be supplied free to each band once a year. When they signed the treaty, \$12 in cash would be paid to every man, woman, and child present, \$5 a year thereafter, with \$25 for chiefs. In addition, the Queen's Government would supply them with tools to farm the

land, or with cattle to stock their fields.

"Think on my words," concluded Laird. "Tomorrow, we shall meet again. Your friend Stamix Otokan and I will try to answer all your questions. Each chief and councillor will have a chance to speak for his followers. We are in no hurry, and every leader must be fully satisfied before he signs the treaty. Go now, and consider what I have said to you."

Indians scattered; soon their drums were throbbing again. The police band gave a robust concert, much to the delight of the open-mouthed children and their mothers. The police gave rations to any Indians who asked for help; it was made clear that the food was a free gift and had nothing to do with any treaty obligation. The half dozen white women present put on their best finery and gathered at Mary Macleod's tent for a sociable cup of tea, while sentries paced slowly back and forth in front of the yawning muzzles of their cannons.

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Mary Macleod stood quietly by holding the sleeping baby, while Bad Boy wolfed down the food and kept the gun aimed at her.

## Chapter Six

Assemblies were held every day of the week. More Bloods and Piegans arrived, swelling the ranks of the Blackfoot Union. Some of the Indian names were of great interest to the whites: Sitting-On-An-Eagle's Tail, of the Piegans; Father-of-Many-Children, of the Bloods; Old Sun, of the North Blackfoot; Rainy Chief, Heavy Shield, Bear's Paw of the Stoneys.

They asked many questions. Most legal aspects of the treaty were beyond their understanding. But notables of the various bands had complete faith in James Macleod. If the Bull's Head said the treaty was good for them, they were quite willing to take his word. Red Crow, head chief of the Bloods and an outstanding leader, summed up the general feeling when he said, "Three years ago when the Mounted Police came to my country, I met and shook hands with Stamix Otokan. Since that time he has made me many promises and has kept them all – not one has been broken! I trust Stamix Otokan and will leave everything to him. I will sign."

On September 21, 1877, matters reached a happy climax, with Indians in full agreement on accepting the treaty.

On that date, Crowfoot had this to say, "While I speak, be kind and patient. I have to speak for my people who are numerous, and who rely upon me to follow that course which in the future will tend to their good. The plains are large and wide. We are the children of the plains; this has long been our home, and the buffalo have always been our food. I hope you now look upon the Blackfoot, Bloods, Piegans, and Sarcees, as your children, and that you will be considerate and charitable to them. I trust the Great Spirit will put into their breasts to be good people, also into the minds of the men, women, and children of future generations. The advice given to me and my people has proven to be good. If the police had not come to this country, where would we all be now? Bad men and whiskey were killing us so fast that very few of us would have been alive today. The Mounted Police have protected us, as the feathers of the bird protect it from the frosts of winter. I wish all my people good, and trust that all our hearts will increase in goodness from this time forward. I am satisfied; I will sign the treaty."

Next day, September 22, as Crowfoot placed the first signature upon the paper, he was heard to remark: "I shall be the first to sign and the last to break my promise!"

A long procession filed past the little flag decked table, each chief and councillor making a mark opposite his name. The Honorable David

Laird was the first to sign on behalf of the Canadian government. Macleod being next as fellow Commissioner, followed by police officers and Methodist and Catholic missionaries. Mary Macleod then put her signature on the important document, the first of the women witnesses.

Tribes had been allotted reserves totaling over 930,000 acres of land, while 50,000 square miles of territory had been surrendered to Canada.

At the final assembly, Commissioner Macleod spoke with deep feeling to the Indians.

"Your chiefs know what I have said to them during these past three years – that nothing would be taken away from you without your consent. You have witnessed the truth of this today. I also told you that the Mounted

Police were your friends; that they would never wrong you or see you wronged in any way. You see this is true also. The Mounted Police will continue to befriend you and will always be glad to see you. In turn, you must keep the Great Mother's laws." Then, pausing to direct a special glance at Crowfoot, Red Crow, and other friends among the chiefs, he went on. "Continue to look upon me as your friend. Any time I can contribute to your welfare, I shall be happy to do so. You say I have always kept my promises. As surely as my past promises have been kept, so surely shall those made with you today be carried out in the future. If they are broken, I will be ashamed to meet you or look you in the eye. Every promise will be solemnly fulfilled, just as surely as the sun shines upon us all from the heavens. And I shall never forget the kind manner in which you have spoken of me today!"

When Macleod got back to the Cypress Hills fort on October 1, he learned that Superintendent Walsh was at Sitting Bull's camp and that General A. H. Terry had been appointed the American Government's representative to negotiate with all Sioux on the Canadian territory to move them back to their own country. Many Canadians considered it a mistake to send this particular general on the mission, for he had been the commander in charge of what was called "chastisement action" against the Sioux Nation. Terry was, in fact, a diplomatic and kindly man, yet it was felt that Indians would resent him as an arbitrator.

"He will speak with a forked tongue!" Sitting Bull told Walsh. He refused to meet him. Wounded Nez Pierce Indians had recently arrived in Sitting Bull's camp with news that General Miles had attacked them and captured Chief Joseph – a fine leader and long-time friend of the whites. With this troubled states of affairs in Montana, the Sioux were positive nothing could be gained by talking with Terry. Finally, Walsh enlisted the

aid of Father Genin, a Catholic priest, and Sitting Bull agreed to attend the meeting.

During the ride to the fort, their party met Commissioner Macleod. He had decided to visit Sitting Bull's camp, to ask about the delay. Sitting Bull shook hands with the famous Stamix Otokan; they made camp and had a long talk together. James Macleod soon realized that the Sioux leader feared that General Terry was setting a trap to capture him at Fort Walsh.

"No army of Long Knives will be at our fort," Macleod assured the chief.

"This is Canada, where the Queen Mother's word is strong. I promise that our policemen will protect you from all harm while you obey the Queen's laws. But you know that your real home is across the border, so you should consider any good offer General Terry may make about a reserve." At last they marched to Fort Walsh, and James Macleod was much relieved.

Three well-armed companies of cavalry accompanied the Terry Commission, to the border, where the Americans were dismayed at the small size of Macleod's force waiting to escort them to the meeting place. The redcoats presented a fine appearance, in plumed white helmets and carrying red and white ceremonial lances.

Terry was obviously uneasy about his party's safety while in Canada. He knew the refugee Sioux numbered many thousands, while the Mounted Police had barely 100 men at their Cypress Hills fort.

"We'll have no trouble," Macleod assured him.

The conference was held on the afternoon of October 17th. Sitting Bull and his chiefs shook hands in the friendliest manner with the Commissioner, Walsh, and all other police officers present, but they scowled at the bearded general from the States. Stating that he spoke on behalf of the American president, Terry made an eloquent appeal. He urged all Sioux to move onto reserve lands in Montana territory, promising no punishment for past misdeeds. It was a fair offer, but when he added that all weapons and horses had to be surrendered at the border, the Sioux muttered angrily.

The General explained that rifles and ponies would be sold, the money obtained used to buy cattle for the Indians. But the proudly independent Hunkpapas and their allies had no wish to give up their arms and be at the mercy of the hated Long Knives.

"For 64 years you have persecuted my people," replied Sitting Bull. "Why have we left our country? We had no place to go, so we took refuge

here. I was kept ever on the move by your soldiers, until I was compelled to forsake my own lands and come here. Today I shake hands with these people."

He strode toward Commissioner Macleod and Major Walsh and clasped their hands, then whirled and said scornfully to Terry, "We did not give you our country, you took it from us! You think I am a fool, but you are a greater fool. This home of the English is a medicine house where there is truth. Yet you come here to tell lies. We do not want to hear them. Say no more. I will stay here!"

Several other chiefs spoke, denouncing the Americans and stating they had no intention of leaving Canada.

Further discussion being futile, the conference ended. Macleod had a long conversation with Sitting Bull. He stressed that the Indian's best hope for a secure future was to negotiate for an American reserve. Nothing came of this plea. Indeed, the wily medicine man claimed his branch of the Sioux Nation were really British Indians, so they had just come home again!

In the end, Macleod ordered that ammunition for hunting, rations of food, tobacco, and one blanket each be given to the Sioux delegates as thanks for attending the conference. General Terry was then escorted back to the border. The Mounted Police were glad to be free of responsibility for the Commission's safety, no doubt the Americans were equally happy to rejoin their cavalry units, waiting on the Montana side of the stone markers.

It was an evil time for Indians south of the line, with soldiers attacking any Sioux camp they could find. Sitting Bull's decision to stay in Canada seemed vindicated, in view of the continual warfare in Montana. But around the redcoat forts, all was peaceful. Evidence of the trust they had in the police was given when a young Blood escaped from the custody and returned to his band. Chief Red Crow quickly brought the guilty man back to Fort Macleod to be punished for his crime.

Mild weather allowed Indians to roam widely, and Macleod was concerned in case the two strong rivals. Blackfoot and Sioux, should clash on the hunting ranges. There were other anxieties. Big Bear, the Cree chief who refused to sign the treaty at Fort Carlton, moved to the Cypress Hills because buffalo were more abundant there. As spring approached, rumors reached the police that Louis Riel had moved close to the Milk River and was in touch with Big Bear. The story went that they were trying to form a grand alliance of all half breeds and Indians, to exterminate all the white men in the Canadian west.

"I can't see Crowfoot joining forces with his traditional enemies," Macleod said, discussing the matter with his officers. "All the same, we'd best send a patrol to call on Big Bear and ask him a few questions."

But when three redcoats rode there, the chief denied all knowledge of an alliance and professed to know nothing of Riel's plans.

Later on, Big Bear destroyed some surveyors' stakes and the police had to make a second call. This time his camp had been emptied of women and children, an ominous sign. Warriors were in full paint and spoiling for a fight.

By chance there was a Blood chief with the police that day. And then, the moment they entered the hostile camp, a Blackfoot scout rode over the nearest hill with a message from Fort Macleod. Big Bear at once suspected that the redoubtable Bloods and Blackfoot had joined the Mounties against him. He quickly changed his belligerent attitude, promising to keep the peace.

Jerry Potts brought startling news to James Macleod that Chief Crowfoot had met Sitting Bull some time during the past year. The meeting had taken place near the Red Deer River, where both bands had been hunting buffalo.

"And they didn't fight?" the Commissioner asked, astonished.

"No fight, sir. Dey meet in Sittin' Bull's teepee and talk like friends."

Did this mean that an alliance was actually being organized? Reports of a grand union of all Indians and half breeds in western Canada were headlined almost weekly in Montana papers, but Macleod was reluctant to believe them. Yet he thought it expedient to transfer police headquarters to Fort Walsh, closer to the danger zone. If trouble broke out it would be near Walsh's post in the best game district.

Macleod and his wife stayed on at Fort Macleod, now a thriving town. Liquor offences remained the commonest evil, while horse stealing was revived by American Indians. They dashed north of the line to raid by night, then herded the stock back to the comparative immunity of Montana where the redcoats could not follow.

A hundred details kept the Commissioner busy. He needed recruits to replace men retiring from the force; he needed more clothing for his troops, more horses and food supplies, treaty payments to all Indians were part of his responsibility, and lately the police had suppressed the worst tortures of the initiation ordeal of the Sun Dance, a yearly ritual of great importance to the Blackfoot. Another item was the starting of a Mounted Police ranch at Pincher Creek. Macleod hoped the venture would supply

the force with both mounts and beef. Always there were reports to be written, keeping Ottawa informed of rapidly changing conditions.

In the midst of all this, Mary Macleod had an unpleasant adventure. One afternoon as she was rocking the baby on the sunny porch, she looked up to find the muzzle of a revolver pointing at her head. A large, fierce looking Indian was holding it.

He waved her into the house ahead of him. Once inside, he began to ransack the cupboards. It was food he wanted. He scooped it up in his dirty hand, wolfing down anything he fancied. All this time he kept the cocked gun aimed at Mary Macleod. She stood quietly to one side, holding her sleeping baby and pretending to be unconcerned.

Fortunately, Jerry Potts happened to call. He soon routed the Indian, abusing him in half Piegan, half English words of the strongest kind. During the months that followed, the ruffian often returned to plague her. Mary never learned his real name, but always referred to him as "Bad Boy." "If he ever touches the baby," she announced, "I'll scalp him!"

Suddenly, the once crowded pastures were bare. As grass sprouted green during the spring of 1879, few buffalo were there to graze on it.

Their numbers had been estimated at 15 million 20 years earlier; five years previously Colonel Macleod had counted 75,000 on a two-day ride. Last summer there had been enough for all, but now the prairies were empty. Small herds still roamed distant parts of the Cypress Hills, while a few sheltered in downstream valleys of the Red Deer River.

"The Sioux are hunting all the way to the North Saskatchewan," police were told. "Some white settlers have pulled out, they're so frightened of Sitting Bull's gang."

The Blackfoot blamed American bands for that season's scarcity of buffalo. Sioux at Wood Mountain and other camps in the Hills straddled the main migration routes from the south, hunters attacking the herds whenever they appeared. Chief Crowfoot believed this prevented the buffalo from reaching his tribe's hunting territory to the north.

"Tell the Sioux to leave!"

But the refugee Indians were of no mind to return to the war zone in the States. Indeed, their Cheyenne allies were even then trying to fight their way 600 miles north, to reach the sanctuary of Canadian soil. Commissioner Macleod had to leave all these problems to his officers, because he was obliged to go to the east to discuss police matters with the government.

"While we have great cause for thankfulness at the success of our

dealings with all our Indians in the West,” he reported, “I am bound to confess a fear that we are soon to be brought face to face with a danger which may involve very serious complications.”

He recommended that the 300-man force be enlarged, in view of their heavier responsibilities.

“Louis Riel poses a constant threat,” he told the authorities at Ottawa.

“We know that he has visited a Métis camp in the Cypress Hills, and is circulating a document which proposes himself as leader of all mixed bloods and Indians in Canadian territory. My friend Crowfoot won’t support him and has already rejected his request for an alliance. But it may be quite another matter with some of the Crees, particularly those led by Big Bear.

Let me assure you, gentlemen, we urgently need more police!”

Prime Minister Macdonald, in power once again, received a poignant letter from Sitting Bull’s nephew imploring the government to grant the Sioux a Canadian homeland. At the same time, Washington protested that Sitting Bull’s braves were making thieving raids into the States from the Cypress Hills. The Americans implied that the Hunkpapa Sioux were now Canada’s responsibility. What could be done with the trespassers?

“Now that buffalo are scarce,” Commissioner Macleod said, “our territory isn’t so attractive. I’m positive they’ll go back onto American reserves, but it will take time.”

Accompanied by 80 new recruits, the Commissioner headed back to his command.

The Cheyennes never reached Canada, being defeated and driven back to their home range. Meanwhile, Sitting Bull’s hold on the Canadian based Sioux was weakening. In a message sent to American relatives at that time, he dramatically declared, “Once I was strong and brave, but now I will fight no more. My arrows are broken, and I have thrown my war paint to the winds.”

Tribesmen were in desperate straits all over the plains. Crowfoot’s band stayed in the Bow Valley, between Blackfoot Crossing and Fort Calgary. Inspector Denny was in charge of the Calgary detachment and wrote that the Indians were actually starving to death – he had counted 21 dead in Crowfoot’s camp! The erstwhile hunters of buffalo were reduced to snaring gophers, shooting songbirds, eating grass to appease their hunger. Denny bought cattle from ranchers and gave 2,000 pounds of meat per day to the Blackfoot. It was barely enough to keep the large band alive. The

Inspector implored Macleod to bring extra food to the Crossing.

Macleod hurried there with Edgar Dewdney, the newly appointed Indian Commissioner, and they tried to cope with the disaster. Dewdney set a daily ration of one pound of beef, one and a half pounds of flour per person – all that could be spared at the time. Because of the long haul involved, flour was valued at \$12 per 100 pounds at the police forts. The Prairie Crees were in the same starving condition as the Blackfoot Union. Mountain Stoney and Woodland Crees who lived in forested foothills did not fare too badly; they had moose and elk, deer, bear, and rabbits to replace the vanished buffalo.

“John McDougall taught Stoney to raise potatoes in gardens near Morley,” the Commissioner told Dewdney. “We must get the Blackfoot to try it.”

“Yes, Crowfoot agrees to that. I’m sending for farm instructors. Meanwhile, we’ve got to dole things out – only six sacks of flour are left at Fort Macleod!”

Though they were not Canada’s charges, the Sioux also drew rations from the police. The strain told on everyone. The Indians were fretful with hunger, the police were overworked. Drawn faces and red-rimmed eyes revealed sleeplessness and anxiety.

One day Sitting Bull insolently demanded more than his fair share of the rations.

It was too much for the hot-tempered Walsh. His patience snapped. Furious, he gave the chief a violent push.

Sitting Bull crashed to the floor. In his rage he tried to draw a knife, but Walsh sprang on him and wrenched it out of his grasp.

Breathing heavily the two men stared angrily at each other for a moment.

Then Sitting Bull rushed outside to rouse his people!

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The men used their tunics to beat out the flames which had spread in seconds all over the tinder dry meadow.

## Chapter Seven

Walsh was appalled at his own lack of forethought. He should never have touched Sitting Bull. In his impatience he had ignored the fact that the old chief was probably deeply worried about the lack of food for his people. But to have shoved Sitting Bull and angered him into drawing a knife was a foolhardy gesture that the Sioux could not tolerate without losing face. Now the chief had rushed out to rouse his people and there would be a showdown. Walsh had gone too far and nothing but the most resolute action could prevent further violence.

Walsh instantly gave his orders. "Here! Place two long poles on the ground!"

The constables ran to obey him. With the poles they marked a line. They formed up behind it in a moment and brought their carbines to the ready.

The Sioux warriors were advancing in a body. Walsh shouted at them. "Anyone who steps beyond these poles will be shot!"

The Sioux hesitated.

At a crisp order from Walsh the police worked the bolts of their carbines, bringing a round into every breach.

The Sioux halted and began to argue. Sitting Bull was for killing the redcoats on the spot. The Indians overwhelmingly outnumbered them. The insult must be avenged. But, cooler heads among the Sioux, who knew that Canada was their only refuge, prevailed.

And then, as suddenly as it had flared up, the quarrel was over.

Somewhat abashed, Walsh and Sitting Bull apologized to each other.

James Macleod was constantly on the move during that terrible summer and autumn. He travelled 2,500 miles on horseback. In addition to visiting forts and outposts, calling on Crowfoot, Red Crow, and other Indian leaders, he had to attend another council meeting at Battleford, the new capital of the North-West Territories. Court cases became more numerous, demanding his presence as magistrate. Cattle killing was more often on the charge sheet, as starving Indians could not resist ranchers' beef. Compassionate as ever, Macleod tried to be fair. He kept urging ranchmen to fence their ranges.

An incident that showed the Commissioner's fairness occurred on patrol near the Cypress Hills. It was just before snowfall, and the uncropped prairie grass was tinder dry. Macleod warned his men about the fire hazard, telling them to smother the camp fires thoroughly. Ten minutes later when he mounted his horse, the Commissioner, in an absent-minded way knocked ashes from his pipe and a live spark set fire to the grass. Within seconds, the blaze had spread all over the meadow. His eight policemen had already ridden ahead, but they galloped back to help. Using tunics to beat out the flames, they had a hard time fighting the fire. When it was at last under control, James Macleod smiled ruefully around at his smoke blackened men and said:

"One of us disobeyed orders, and I'm the guilty party. I'll pay for new jackets for all and replace anything else you damaged. From now on, please be more careful than I was!"

Shortly after this episode, a messenger brought bad news.

"A Mountie has been murdered!"

Constable Marmaduke Graburn had been one of the new recruits the commissioner brought from the east earlier that summer. The young man had been stationed at a horse camp near Fort Walsh. One autumn day, Graburn had scolded a Blood Indian named Star Child who was a persistent beggar around the camp. That evening when the policeman went alone to the nearby garden plot, an unknown marksman had put a bullet through his head.

"Send for Jerry Potts," ordered Macleod. "He's our best tracker. Perhaps he can find a clue."

Jerry soon spotted the prints of two unshod Indian ponies not far from the murder scene. It was found that the suspected Star Child had fled to the United States, which colored the case against him. When he returned to Canada two years later and was arrested, only circumstantial evidence was available and he was released. Later Star Child was convicted

of horse stealing and received a five-year sentence. He died in prison. No one ever learned whether he had killed Graburn, or not.

As the year ended, the commissioner sent a summary of police activities to Ottawa. The Force then totalled 362 officers and men: 182 were stationed at Fort Walsh under Assistant Commissioner Irvine; 89 men were garrisoned at Fort Macleod; 31 at Battleford; 29 at Shoal Lake; 18 at Fort Saskatchewan and 31 at Fort Calgary. Macleod stressed their efforts to alleviate suffering during the famine year, and speculated that hunger might well have stopped Riel, Big Bear, and others from organizing their rumored grant alliance.

One small point in his report was in the form of a recommendation. The commissioner had long disliked the pill-box hats, still issued as part of the police uniform; he proposed that these be replaced by felt hats with wide brims. Thus it was James Macleod who first suggested the scout style Stetson which ultimately became the distinctive head gear of the Mounties.

Eighty lodges of Sioux left Wood Mountain during the early weeks of 1880, moving to reserves in Montana. By spring, less than 200 lodges remained in Canada. A kindhearted Métis trader named Legare emptied his store, giving food to the starving bands. Policemen at Fort Walsh volunteered to halve their own rations to share with the stricken Indians.

"The suffering of my people makes my heart weak," Sitting Bull told Walsh.

The chief still refused to leave, but no longer stopped those who wished to surrender to the Long Knives and receive rations south of the border. When Walsh told the Sioux about a small herd of buffalo spotted by police 70 miles from their camp, the gaunt braves were too weak to make the long ride.

They still posed a threat to police, because hunger made them desperate. One group invaded a store run by a trader who had cheated them badly in the past, and threatened to kill him and his family if he did not give them food. Only the timely arrival of police prevented bloodshed.

Conditions had improved among the Blackfoot and their allies. The Indian Commissioner had organized a ration system, with police handling the distribution. Every fort and outpost had its cluster of teepees nearby, the tribesmen almost fully dependent on their white friends for survival.

At this time Ottawa decided that no member of the Force should stay more than two years at any one garrison, so the commissioner had to keep transferring his men. The new ruling caused some hardship, friends being forced to part and leave familiar scenes. One curious aspect of

the change was the gloom it cast upon Sitting Bull, when he learned that Walsh was to leave the Cypress Hills.

"Now my heart is on the ground!" mourned the chief.

The aging chief tried to get the superintendent to send him east to call on the Governor General's wife, Queen Victoria's daughter, the Princess Louise. Sitting Bull believed he could convince her that he was really a British Indian, entitled to a permanent home in Canada. Walsh refused his request, but assured him that the Americans would now give him fair treatment.

"I still do not trust them," Sitting Bull said, then changed the subject. "My friend, here is my war bonnet. I shall never wear it again. I want you to take this symbol of my former greatness."

Walsh accepted the gift; later it was forwarded to the Royal Ontario Museum at Toronto. The Irishman was sorry to leave his Indian friend, now almost finished as a Sioux power. That very week one of his sub-chiefs named Spotted Eagle led 65 lodges south to the States.

"One by one, my arrows leave the quiver!" said Sitting Bull.

Big Bear took his place as western troublemaker, assisted by a Canadian Sioux turned Cree named Chief Piapot. Their bands were camping in the Cypress region, and both chiefs were holding meetings with Riel and his supporters.

Meanwhile, white settlers were rushing west. A railroad was soon to cross the prairie, and enterprising farmers wanted land near the right of way. Newcomers thronged every outpost on the frontier, and when 39 police retired from service at Fort Macleod during the summer of 1880, most of them decided to stay on in the district as settlers and ranchers. The large Oxley Ranch was started on Willow Creek, not far from town. At the Porcupine Hills the sprawling Waldron Ranch was established and a former police officer, Inspector Walker, took charge of Senator Cochrane's vast range.

As the bright colors of autumn spread across the landscape, James Macleod faced a hard decision. He had been acting in the double capacity of Commissioner and Magistrate, with membership on the Territorial Council making further demands on his time. Increased settlement made court work in Edmonton, Calgary, Fort Walsh and Fort Macleod very much busier, and once again Ottawa realized that someone outside the police force was needed on the bench. The minister of the interior asked Macleod to assume the duties of a full time Magistrate. So on October 31, 1880, he relinquished his position as commanding officer of the Force. It was the end of an epoch.

The Canadian West had been saved from violence because police had marched to the foothills at exactly the right time, and because they had been led by men of high character. James Macleod had shouldered the greatest responsibility of them all as the officer who held the key position among the Blackfoot, whose loyalty he had won. He was loved by his comrades, respected for his courage and integrity, his fair dealing and kindness. When he shook hands with his men on that sunny fall morning and handed over the command to his friend Irvine, they knew that Macleod had done more than any one man to establish the reputation of the North West Mounted Police.

Busy years followed, with James Macleod travelling from court to court all over his large district. Horse stealing, cattle killing and rustling, petty thefts and a dozen other crimes were paraded before him for judgment. At intervals he had to travel the long miles to Battleford and attend meetings of the Territorial Council. During such trips he camped out in all kinds of weather, often sleeping in the open. Once at Fort Walsh he bunked on the floor, refusing to deprive a police officer of his bed. The Magistrate liked journeying with mail couriers, who knew the shortest routes and travelled at full speed. In June of 1881 he wrote to his wife:

“The Métis mailman was a companionable fellow, and drove like a Jehu! It only took us five days to reach Battleford . . . I have been sitting in council since 2 o'clock; it is now 5:30 and my head is muddled with questions about marriage difficulties, etc., that we have to decide. It takes the council a tremendous time to settle anything. By the way, the telegraph line is here now.”

The West was developing rapidly. The Marquis of Lorne wanted to take a tour and see it for himself. As the Macleod house was the acknowledged social centre of the northwest, the Governor General was invited to stay with them.

After his visit he sent them a little token of his gratitude. When the handsome silver box arrived with His Excellency's coat of arms embossed upon the lid, they found an inscription on it. It read: “To Col. J. F. McLeod.”

“It is a pity he didn't spell your name properly,” said Mary Macleod.

“The good Marquis can't be expected to know much about clan Macleod,” said her husband, smiling as he recalled the feuds of other years. “After all, he's merely a Campbell!”

But the Magistrate thoroughly approved when the Marquis of Lorne named the foothill territory Alberta.

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## **The Queen's Cowboy - James Alexander Farquharson Macleod**

Story by Kerry Wood

Illustrations by Joseph Rosenthal

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