

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police

The police service which is now known as the Royal Canadian Mounted Police was organized in Toronto, Ontario, in the year 1874, under a special act of Parliament. The original Force consisted of three hundred young men, and was given the name of Canadian Mounted Rifles. Its objectives were to keep the peace and promote progress in the then known West.

To reach their immediate destination the group was moved on the Great Lakes by boat. It was necessary to cross United States territory, and a quibble of international law gave rise to the necessity of a change of name and title. The Prime Minister struck out the word "Rifles" in deference to this quibble, and stated: "This body of men shall be men of peace and not men of war." The name was changed to that of Northwest Mounted Police, and later ratified by another Act of Parliament, which is still known as the Northwest Mounted Police Act, and the men are still wards of the Canadian government.

In recognition of the work of this Force as Empire builders by the wielding of peace, Queen Victoria ordained that they should be known as "Royal", and thus the name was changed again to Royal Northwest Mounted Police. It was not until after the World War that the present title of Royal Canadian Mounted Police was adopted, and the Force commenced to operate throughout the entire Dominion.

Today these men stand as Federal policemen, watchdogs of the Federal Treasury; they stand as internal protection of Canadian ideals and democracy against all isms and propagandists of subversive agitations. Representatives of the whole Dominion, and primarily policemen, this body of men is now the vanguard of civilization. They protect the life and property of all the people; they uphold the Canadian traditions; at all times they uphold and abide by their only motto, "Maintiens le droit."

Today the Royal Canadian Mounted Police are ever pressing northward into the vast regions of a Dominion which is as yet the home of only eleven million Canadian people, and is still for many thousands of miles a great unexplored region.

The three hundred men of 1874 have now increased to an approximate twelve hundred, but the tendency is to decrease rather than to increase the Force's enlistment. As in the past, the idea in regard to crime is not to be known as the great detective, but to become known as the great preventers of crime and criminal tendency.

The Royal Canadian Mounted Policeman is a picked man. He must be a Christian young man, in his twenties, and must profess a religious belief and contribute to such. He must be able to produce unimpeachable references and give an accurate personal history, with the background of his parents and grandparents. He submits and must pass the most rigid medical examination, including the Wassermann test, and in physique he must approximate five feet ten inches in height.

The pay is so low that it does not attract men who are merely looking for money; the authorities hope to attract, and do, the man with idealism, vision and patriotism, and naturally there is with this a bias to the adventurous in mind. The Royal Canadian Mounted Policeman has a fine social standing; when traveling he gravitates to the best accommodations available. He is at home in Government House or in a dance hall of hoi polloi. The secret of his success is not that he always gets his man, but his high standing in the eyes of the people among whom he lives.

Passing severe educational tests, written and oral, the entrance examinations approximating the standing of the Junior College, the subsequent training in law and all that comes within the scope of his profession, the Royal Canadian Mounted Policeman carries with him a gentlemanly restraint. He does not arrest by force if that can be avoided; his tradition is a relentless, fearless and dogged efficiency. He has found the disarming smile of confidence more potent than the blustering scowl of the near-bully who places his faith in a brief authority.