

During the building of the Canadian Pacific Railway it was the duty of the Mounted Police to suppress the traffic in intoxicants among the employees, keep a general oversight over the railway camp, and preserve order/p.582/ along the right-of-way. In a letter dated January 1, 1883, Sir William Van Horne expressed his gratitude for the efficient manner in which these onerous duties were performed. "On no great work within my knowledge where so many men have been employed," said he, "has such perfect order prevailed."

When the great American transcontinental roads were under construction they were continually impeded by the Indians. A few sporadic attempts in this — direction were made in Canada, but the energy and sang froid of the police prevented any serious trouble.

On one occasion Chief Pi-a-pot and his band resorted to the stratagem of passive resistance, deliberately encamping on the right-of-way and refusing to move. A complaint was duly registered with the police authorities and a sergeant and a constable were sent to move the troublesome band. Accompanied by a jeering mob of the barbarians, they went directly to Pi-a-pot's tent, conveyed the command for him to remove his encampment and informed him that if the order were not obeyed forthwith they twain would undertake the task at the end of fifteen minutes. The proposition was received with laughter. The sergeant accordingly took out his watch and he and his companion stood at attention beside the tent door for a quarter of an hour, much to the entertainment of the Indians. When the time had expired the sergeant returned his watch to his pocket and, without further parley, the two constables cut the guy ropes of Pi-a-pot's tent, causing it to collapse on the heads of its surprised occupants. The whole encampment was instantly in an uproar and nothing but the chieftain's vigorous personal efforts saved the lives of the policemen. Pi-a-pot was no fool. He understood well enough that these two audacious Red Coats had behind them the whole might of Canada and the King, and he promptly ordered his braves to strike camp and leave the railway line free of obstruction.