

MOUNTED POLICE DETACHMENT AT WOOD MOUNTAIN.

Mountain was visited periodically. Soon after the withdrawal of the Police in 1875, the storehouse, which had been purchased, was pulled down by a Half-Breed. This building, before its acquisition by the Police, while not in use by the Boundary Commission, had been used by the occasional visiting missionary priest for a chapel.

The presence of the Police in the vicinity was responsible for an immediate increase in the population at Wood Mountain. Early in 1875, Commissioner French reported that a large settlement was forming there. Trade was being carried on with Fort Benton, and large quantities of spirits were being introduced. "Settlements, fed from Wood Mountain, were also forming in a North-Westerly direction towards Edmonton. At a point about 100 miles West and somewhat North was another Settlement called 'Hunter's Settlement', on the South slope of the Cypress Hills, where a large trade in furs was carried on." At this time the Government decided to establish a post of one Division (50 men) at Wood Mountain, and another at Hunter's Settlement. Later, the plan was changed and Fort Walsh was the result.

During December, 1876, United States Indians, mostly representatives of the Sioux Nation, numbering about 500 Braves, 1,000 women, 1,400 children and 3,500 horses, entered Canada and camped at Wood Mountain. They represented an advance party of Sitting Bull's followers, who were retreating from the American troops intent on capturing them for the destruction of General Custer's forces at Big Horn Valley in June, 1876.

The attention of the Mounted Police immediately became focussed on this new danger spot. Sub. Inspector Edmond Frechette, an 1874 appointee, who had done good work in the Carleton district in 1875, was sent to observe and interview the invaders. Inspector Walsh did not wait for his subordinate's return but followed him rapidly from Cypress Hills, arriving at the Indian encampment on December 21st.

Black Moon, an Uncapapa Sioux, was in charge of the camp, which adjoined White Eagle's Santee Band, who had been in the district for many years. Black Moon's lieutenants were Lazy Dog, The Little Knife and The Man Who Crawls.

Slohan The Sioux emphasized their good intentions and asked for ammunition for hunting. They were lassoing the buffalo which they killed with knives made into lances; some were using bows and arrows. At this time the buffalo were plentiful in the vicinity of Wood Mountain, as they had recently changed their range East from the Cypress Hills.

Inspector Walsh warned the Sioux as to the necessity for their good behaviour; that their asylum depended on their future conduct. Returning to Fort Walsh he made immediate arrangements for opening a look-out station at Wood Mountain. On January 30th, 1877, a detachment, consisting of one Constable (present rank Sergeant) and two Sub. Constables (present rank Constable) was opened; Joseph Morin as Guide and Interpreter was also sent there. The Constable, later a Superintendent in the Force, was A. R. McDonnell, an 1876 recruit from L'Original, in the East; the Sub.