

44

whites had almost ceased to be dangerous. Indeed, the aborigines had now come to recognise in "the Riders of the Plains" their best friends and guardians. ^{p.578}

We have already commented upon the admiration for the police which took possession of Sitting Bull himself and upon the warm personal friendship established between him and Major Walsh and other officers of the force. The details of the Sitting Bull episode have already been recounted elsewhere.

It was through the instrumentality of the Mounted Police that the ranching industry was first established in the Canadian West. Fresh horses were continually required for the force itself, as the work was very severe. For example, the police escort assigned to duty in connection with the tour of the Marquis of Lorne travelled two thousand and seventy-two miles at an average rate of thirty-five miles a day. Upon the representations of Major Walsh a police farm was accordingly established near Fort Macleod.

In the Saskatchewan Herald of September 23, 1878, there appeared anonymously a stirring ballad which well depicts the work of the police in these early days, and, indeed, fairly represents their spirit and duties from that time to this: /page 579 to poem.

The practical extinction of the buffalo herds in the later seventies and the early eighties reduced the Indians to the direst extremities and greatly increased the difficulties of the police in their efforts to restrain the wretched aborigines from depredations. The degree to which they were successful reflects great credit alike on the force itself and upon the care-burdened chieftains who cooperated in teaching their braves respect for the law. Horse stealing, of course, was very common, and among the Indians themselves there were very few who viewed it as a crime.

This rendered exceedingly hazardous any attempt to arrest an Indian "rustler," but the police never flinched from their duty. If space would permit, many stirring anecdotes might be told in this connection. The following are typical: