

MOUNTED POLICE DETACHMENT AT WOOD MOUNTAIN.

Division, Fort Walsh, showed 1 Inspector, 2 Constables and 20 men, all of "B" Division, stationed at Wood Mountain Detachment.

In 1879, Inspector Walsh was constantly at Wood Mountain, although the Headquarters of his Division was at Fort Walsh. The closer he came to realizing his ambition—the return of the Sioux—the more assiduous he had to be in his attentions to them. It was a time of great anxiety. One of the Sioux, obstructing a Constable in his work, was handled a bit roughly. Immediately the Sioux made plans to attack the Fort. Superintendent (new rank) Walsh, after making hasty preparations, called a Council meeting and managed to effect a reconciliation. About this time the Sioux gave themselves up to their annual fervour; they held a Sun Dance; torture by lacerating their flesh; hanging from poles by rents made in the skin of their breasts; to appease the wrath of the Great Spirit and wash away the sins committed by the tribes since their last Sun meeting. At this time there were at least 2,000 warriors in the Sioux Camp.

Everything was working to one of two conclusions: blood-spilling or departure. The buffalo, which had been plentiful since the winter of 1876-7, disappeared from the district. With them went many of the Half-Breeds to form a village of 150 families on the Milk River. Reports of an alliance between the Sioux and the Crees under Big Bear were received. The Crows stole the Sioux cattle and harassed the stray Sioux hunters. A final attempt was made by the Americans to persuade Sitting Bull to return; this time Abbot Martin, Right Reverend Bishop of Dakota, was the intermediary. He was unsuccessful. The acuteness of the tension was reflected at Wood Mountain Detachment by an increase in its numbers of five Constables.

The winter and spring of 1879-80 brought matters to a head. In between alarms, the post at Wood Mountain took the census of the Half-Breeds in the district; these were distributed as follows:—

	<i>Families</i>	<i>Persons</i>
Grant's Village, 20 miles from Wood Mountain.....	25	169
Portras (Poitras), 40 miles from Grant's; on Big Muddy River.....	8	63
Bonneau, 15 miles from Portras, also on Big Muddy River.....	4	32
Bellegarde, 4 miles from Bonneau.....	5	40
Total.....	42	304

Although the Indian situation overshadowed all other concerns, the usual duties of the Force were not neglected; the whisky traffic, smuggling, horse-stealing, and contraventions of the criminal laws received their share of attention.

At this critical time, destitution made its appearance. The country had all been burnt over in the fall and there was no feed for cattle; the Police ox-train and beef cattle were sent to the foot of the mountain to winter. In order to provide themselves with food, all but 50 Lodges of the Tetons wintered on the boundary line; a previous attempt to hunt in the Milk River district, whither the buffalo had gone, having resulted in their