

THE MOUNTED POLICE IN THE WAR.

The Dominion Government has acted sensibly in withdrawing the Northwest Mounted Police force from police work and imposing on the western Provinces the task of protecting themselves against their own criminal classes. The motive of this change is to convert the police force into a military one and to assign to it military functions. It does not follow that in order to perform these the force as a whole must be sent abroad, but its release from civic duties and its subjection to rigid military discipline will result in making it quite equal in striking power to any body of cavalry the world has ever seen. Many of its veteran members have already enlisted and gone to the fighting line, where it has been the good fortune of some of them to distinguish themselves; from time to time others may be allowed to go as individuals if they volunteer for that purpose.

From its initial establishment the Northwest Mounted Police Force has had a quasi-military character, sphere, and reputation. Its members were expected to display unfaltering courage in the most dangerous situations, to remain cool and calm under the most irritating provocations, and to endure uncomplainingly the most exhausting hardships. A single mounted policeman has been known to walk into the midst of a none too friendly Indian band, arrest one of its members, and take him away to stand his trial on some charge of wrong-doing that was to the accused a matter of life or death. True, not a few of them have during the past forty years come to violent deaths at the hands of assassins, but such incidents have had no effect in deterring others from performing the most dangerous tasks. It was only natural that when the war broke out the members of such a force should desire to get into it as speedily as possible, and it is just as natural that it should now be planned to make the whole organization a purely military one.