



The R.C.M.P.



Teacher Input Suggestions



- Contact your local R.C.M.P. detachment and arrange to have an officer speak to your class.
Prepare your class by developing appropriate interview questions.
You may wish to make an audio or video tape of the interview.
- A film is available on The Musical Ride.



The information sheets can be used :



- as independent reading
- for group activities
- for individual or small group enrichment
- as a centre in your Canadian studies
- as a general interest topic to be read and discussed





History of the R.C.M.P. Law and Order



When we look at the history of Canada, we learn that native peoples were the first to live in this country, hundreds of years before anyone else. Then, almost 400-450 years ago, explorers from Europe and from the United States discovered that this huge land was here with its beautiful forests, lakes and animals.



Some of these explorers decided to come to Canada and settle here. In 1870, the large region then called the Canadian Northwest became part of Canada. This area was already settled by native communities. Traders moved north to begin to do business with the natives, but along with the honest people went others who tried to steal from the community, and those who only wanted to sell whiskey to the natives.



Whiskey was a new drug to the native peoples, and many suffered badly from its effects. There were those who also became addicted to the whiskey and it affected their behaviour. Fights began between criminal bands of native peoples and the whiskey traders threatened the safety of all those who were trying to live in peace in Canada's beautiful Northwest.



Groups of people often organize themselves and establish rules that all members of the communities should follow to keep "law and order". Primarily because of the troubles in the Northwest, the government of Canada decided to form a police force that would work throughout the country, to make sure people would obey the rules and laws of Canada.



This force was formed in 1873 and was called the North West Mounted Police.



Going West

Settlers who moved to Canada began trading with the native peoples of this country. Some didn't trade fairly. They wanted valuable furs, and in return, gave alcohol and weapons to the native peoples. The native peoples weren't familiar with the dangers of these goods and a number of serious problems came from this trading situation.

The men of the N.W.M.P. were sent to the west, on horseback and on foot, to deal with the fur trade.

When they went out west, the men had to build houses for themselves, and stables for the horses.

They had to chop down trees for the log houses, and cut shingles for the roofs. It was a hard life!

Illustrate a home for an R.C.M.P. officer.

DRAWING

Whiskey Trade

The whiskey-traders built forts of their own in western Canada. A well-known fort was called "Fort Whoop-Up". It was about 8 kilometres from where Lethbridge, Alberta, is today.

Fort Whoop-Up consisted of living quarters, a stockade and stables. It had a cannon to protect it.

The men in Fort Whoop-Up traded whiskey to the Indians. The N.W.M.P. put an end to that illegal trade.

Fort Whoop-Up is a funny name for a fort! Why do you think it was called that?

Can you make up any other names for frontier forts?

Fire Water

The alcohol that was used in the fur trade was called "fire water" by the native people and by the traders.

Can you make up new names to describe the following items?

- | | |
|--------------|------------|
| e.g. alcohol | fire water |
| gun | _____ |
| boots | _____ |
| helmet | _____ |
| spicy food | _____ |
| log home | _____ |
| horse | _____ |
| pencil | _____ |
| school | _____ |



R.C.M.P. Duties and Uniform

When the first officers signed up with the N.W.M.P. they received: a grey cork helmet, a scarlet jacket, black pants, blue coveralls, black boots, brown boots, silver spurs, a brown belt, gauntlets, a fur cap, mitts, moccasins, a buffalo coat. Around 1900, the broad-brimmed hats still used today became part of the uniform. The men had complained the helmets were too hot, and the pillbox caps could not protect them from Canada's blazing summer sun on the prairies.

The King of England officially recognized the North West Mounted Police in 1904 by granting them the title of Royal. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the force we know today, was formed in 1920 when it was merged with the Dominion Police and given authority over federal law enforcement.

The gauntlets are still issued, but only as part of the dress uniform, and today's R.C.M.P. officers wear a brown tunic for their day-to-day duties.

Today, there are more than 20,000 R.C.M.P. officers across Canada. (Women began to be admitted in 1974.) They enforce the law in all of the Territories, and serve as provincial police in all provinces except Ontario and Quebec, which have their own provincial forces.

People joining the R.C.M.P. learn about becoming police officers at a special school called the National Training Academy in Regina, Saskatchewan.



