

On our way down the river—some 1,000 miles—we had some experiences of the dangers of its navigation. We were many times brought to a full stop, so suddenly as to throw us off our chairs, as we ran on to sand bars. There we would lie, churning up the sand with the stern-wheel, or twisting round by setting it against the rudders, or trying to crawl over by means of our grasshopper-legs' poles, sometimes for many hours. Once we passed close to a wrecked steamer in a backwater. She had been caught by the ice in shallow water and frozen to the bottom. The spring then lifted half of her away from the rest, and there the two halves lie rotting. There is very little life to be seen about the river: a few ducks and geese fly about in the mornings and evenings, and occasionally a farm is passed close to the top of the river ravine, but the trench it has cut is so deep that nothing can be seen of the prairie. It is curious how the cultivation is entirely confined to the river frontages. A few miles back there is not a sign of human habitation. The rivers are the only channels of communication, at any rate for heavy goods, at present. Where we started, at Fort Pitt, the river was nearly as wide as the Thames at London, and though it increased in volume, it did not much in width. Occasionally it nearly lost itself amongst shoals, and sand bars, and wooded islands, widening to as much as two miles, but this is exceptional. Near Lake Winnipeg the river expands into Cedar Lake, and between this and the big lake is a rapid. We had, therefore, to disembark here, and were carried in trucks on a narrow railway to the landing, where a regular ocean steamer waited for us. In the middle of Lake Winnipeg we were out of sight of land, and could easily imagine we were at sea, the quantity of gulls aiding the illusion. At the south end of the lake, the Red river runs through an enormous marsh, teeming with wild fowl, through which we steamed to Selkirk. Beyond this our steamer could not go, as she draws too much water, so we disembarked again and took the train for Winnipeg. Our arrival was the signal for a tremendous burst of enthusiasm, the whole town—I beg its pardon, city—was *en fete*, and we had to march through interminable streets, with every vantage place crammed with sightseers cheering themselves hoarse. I signed my name on biscuits and papers, presented by enthusiastic Canadians, until my hand ached, and when at last we got to our hotel we had to fight our way through a crowd every one of whom insisted on our drinking with them, or at least accepting a cigar. For three days no one seemed to sleep unless he was drunk, and the passages, stairs, and even pavements were so encumbered with people overtaken by liquor that it was no easy matter to get to one's room.

I start for Halifax in two days, and intend to do Niagara, the Thousand Islands, and the rapids of the St. Lawrence on the way.

Yours, —————

H. de H. HAIG, Major R.E.