

which was under my immediate personal command, and which chanced to be called upon to take the most prominent action in putting down the rising, only referring to the others when necessary for the perspicuity of my narrative.

On the 23rd of March, at 2 p.m., I was informed by the Minister of Militia and Defence, Mr. (now Sir Adolph) Caron, that the French half-breeds under Riel—the well-known rebel who had been driven out of Manitoba by Lord Wolseley in 1870—were causing such trouble in the North-West Territories as would probably necessitate military action, and that the Premier, Sir J. Macdonald, wished me to start as soon as possible for Winnipeg. Mr. Caron gave me no specific directions, but I understood that on my arrival in Manitoba I was to be governed by circumstances, and if necessary take the field against the insurgents in the North-West. The Canadian Pacific Railway at that time was not quite finished, and as it was considered necessary that I should lose no time, I had to take the American train through Chicago and St. Paul from Toronto, for which place I left that evening, with my Aide-de-camp, Captain E. Wise, then of the Cameronians, now of the Derbyshire Regiment.

We arrived at Winnipeg at 7 a.m. on the 27th, after three days' and three nights' continuous travelling. I drove at once to Government House, where I learned that reliable news had arrived from the West of the defeat, with the loss of eleven killed, of a party of North-West Mounted Police and Volunteers near Fort Carlton, a stockade mounted police station not far from Batoche, Riel's head-quarters. After conferring with His Honor, Mr. Aikin, the Lieutenant-Governor, I resolved to proceed at once to the North-West, taking with me the Winnipeg Militia, which had already been called out in anticipation, and which consisted of a battery of artillery of two nine-pounders M. L., three officers, fifty-nine non-commissioned officers and men, commanded by Major Jervis, a small troop of cavalry, thirty-five strong, commanded by Captain Knight, and the 90th Battalion of Rifles, 290 strong, with twenty-four officers, commanded by Major Macleand. I inspected these troops at once, and found them in fairly good order and full of fight, and I gave orders that the Rifle Regiment should be prepared to start with me that night for Qu'appelle, whither a detachment of thirty men and three officers had already been sent; the battery, which was not complete in horses, to follow the next day with the infantry reserve ammunition, and the cavalry to remain behind at Winnipeg.

The weather was very cold, with a good deal of snow on the ground, and each man was supplied with three blankets and a waterproof sheet, being already in possession of fur gloves and caps, mufflers and high snow boots.

During my short stay of a few hours at Winnipeg I was lucky enough to obtain the services of two men who were to prove of great assistance to me. One was an old friend, Major Boulton, the other a Captain Bedson, the Warden of the Government Gaol, at Stoney Mountain, near Winnipeg. Boulton had served at Gibraltar with our 100th Regiment in 1860, when I was Aide-de-camp to the General commanding the

brigade there. He soon after left our service, and being Canadian born, returned to Canada, and eventually settled down near the Shell river. He had been made prisoner by Riel in his first rising in 1869, and barely escaped being shot by him as a poor settler called Scott was. Boulton heard of my arrival, found me out, and offered to raise a small body of mounted scouts and join my force. I at once accepted, and I may add here that he joined me on the 15th of April, seventeen days after he had received authority from Ottawa to raise them, with sixty men horsed, equipped, armed with repeating Winchester rifles, with transport complete; and right good yeoman service did he and his men perform during the campaign. Bedson had served in our 16th Regiment, and his services were simply invaluable to me during the whole campaign. He is dead, I regret to say, after attaining the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel in the Canadian Militia.

I left Winnipeg at 6 p.m. of the day of my arrival there with the 90th Rifles, 260 strong, having with me, besides my Aide-de-camp, Lt.-Col. Houghton, Deputy-Adjutant-General of the District, Captain Bedson, Mr. Secretan, a friend of Bedson's, and a Mr. Macdowall, a gentleman in the lumbering trade at Prince Albert, both of whom were also of great use to me afterwards. We arrived the next morning at about 9 a.m. at Troy, which is, or was, the name given to the Canadian Pacific Railway station at Qu'appelle. Here we detrained, and as the weather was very cold, and a great deal of snow on the ground, I put the troops into the emigration sheds instead of encamping them in their bell-tents. My reason for selecting Qu'appelle as the primary base was that it was the nearest spot on the Canadian Pacific Railway line to Winnipeg—which may be said to have been my real basis—from whence there was a direct trail to Batoche, Riel's head-quarters.

I was met here by His Honor Mr. Dewdney, Lieutenant-Governor of the North-West Provinces, with whom we proceeded to the so-called hotel of the small town of Qu'appelle, no very luxurious establishment, but which I made my headquarters during my stay there. I passed the most of the day with my Aide-de-camp in sending and receiving telegrams, mostly in cipher, which made it very tedious work. In the evening, before he left for Regina, I had a long conference with Mr. Dewdney, who, I may mention here, assisted me to the full extent of his power in every way during the whole campaign. I found from him that Battleford and Prince Albert were the two most important settlements supposed to be in danger. They are both situated on the north branch of the Saskatchewan river, about 100 miles apart by land and about 280 and 170 miles respectively from Qu'appelle. Batoche, the rebel head-quarters on the south branch of the Saskatchewan, is about thirty-eight miles south of Prince Albert and about eighty miles east of Battleford.

We were still in telegraphic communication with Battleford by Clark's Crossing, but Riel had cut the wire passing by Batoche to Prince Albert, which latter place, therefore, communicated with us by mounted messengers to Battleford or Humboldt.

Mr. Dewdney considered that Prince Albert was comparatively safe, as Lieutenant-Colonel Irvine, commanding the North-West Mounted Police, was there with a force consisting of 180 mounted police, ninety volunteers, and a mountain gun, with plenty of ammunition and food for a month; but Battleford was supposed to be in a more ticklish position, being in dangerous proximity to a large band of Indians under a somewhat famous chief called Poundmaker, who was known to be discontented and in communication with Riel. However, it was garrisoned by a party of forty-seven mounted police, with a volunteer company of some thirty-five settlers, who, with the women and children, were all living in the so-called fort or stockade, with clear ground about it, the rest of the settlement having been abandoned. There was also an important Hudson Bay post at Fort Pitt, a stockade on the North Saskatchewan, some ninety miles to the north of Battleford, which was then being held by a detachment of twenty-four mounted policemen under Inspector Dickens, son of the late Charles Dickens. They were also in danger, being in close proximity to another large body of unfriendly Indians under a chief known as Big Bear.

The Indians still further to the west about Calgary, and Fort Macleod and Edmonton, were known to be discontented, but were kept in check by mounted police, and near Gleichen there was a large reserve of Blackfoot Indians, under an important chief called Crawfoot, but whom Mr. Dewdney thought likely to remain quiet. Indeed, he suggested that I should have a small party of them attached as scouts to my force, but that I declined, not thinking it advisable.

Up to this time the Red Indians had not joined Riel in any numbers, but were what is called "sitting on the fence," awaiting events, and it was generally feared that there might be a general rising of them if the Government troops met with any serious reverse.

It was known that Riel was doing all he could to induce them to join him at once, sending his messengers far and wide loaded with false statements. Among other lies, he informed them that England was engaged in a war with Russia, and could not spare a man of her army to help the Canadian Government, whose own soldiers were no use, and could not fight or move in the prairies, and that a large body of Fenians and Indians from the United States with artillery were coming to join him, &c. He even tried to work the old "eclipse of the sun" dodge. He ascertained from an almanack that there was soon to be an eclipse of the sun, he informed the Indians that on that day the sun would be darkened, and that as soon as they saw that, they were to consider it a warning from the "Manitou" for them to rise at once against the whites and join him, after plundering the settlements near them.

On the whole, Mr. Dewdney was of opinion that affairs were in a very critical state, and that if we were defeated, the consequences would be most disastrous to the country, as there would probably be a general rising of the Indians.

He further informed me that Lieut.-Col.