

THE RED RIVER EXPEDITION.

JOURNAL OF THE RETURN TRIP.

STEAMER "ALGOMA,"
LAKE HURON,
July 8th, 1871.

Having just passed Sault Ste. Marie, I consider it high time to commence giving you a sketch of our journey from Manitoba as promised. The day also is propitious for indoor work such as letter writing, as that species of zoological rain yecept, "cats and dogs," has drown us all into the cabin.

However, to commence, the second or Quebec battalion embarked from Lower Fort Garry on the morning of Wednesday, June 7th, at 10 o'clock.

As Lieut. Col. Casault, C. M. G. had received orders to remain in Manitoba a month after the departure of the troops, and Major Irvine along with Capt. MacDonald being left with the service Company, the command of the regiment devolved on the next in signiority Capt. Samuel MacDonaid.

The force embarked in ten boats, and numbered twelve officers, one hundred and five rank and file, and twenty voyageurs.

At the hour of embarkation, a cold "Scotch mist" with occasional spurts of heavier rain descended on our devoted heads as we rowed down the river.

A little before sunset, however, the rain cleared off, so that by the time we reached the mouth of the river, where we encamped for the night' everything promised a fairer to-morrow.

Up bright and early next morning: not a ripple on the bosom of Lake Winnipeg. We rowed steadily until noon, when a slight breeze arose, which gradually increased and hurried us along until having favored us as far as Elk Island, we found on doubling the the Point that it blew right ahead.

We had hoped to reach Fort Alexander this evening, but this idea had to be abandoned, as the wind increased in violence, so running across from Elk Island to the main land, we encamped at Point de la Metasse.

On the next day (Friday 9th), the storm still continued, moderating, however towards evening, so that we ventured to make sail, and steer for Fort Alexander, which we reached about 8 p. m.

On Saturday we left Fort Alexander, and passing over Pine Portage, encamped on 2nd Silver Falls Portage.

The following day we proceeded as far as Grand Bonnet Portage, Divine service being held there by the chaplain, at 6.30 p. m.

On Monday we passed the 1st and 2nd Gallais de Bonnet Portage, and sailed about ten miles up Bonnet Lake, as our guide determined to try to ascend the Penawa river, and thus avoid the dangerous "seven portages."

As the river was too low to be navigated by the boats of the expedition on its advance to Fort Garry, the Quebec Battalion had the honor of being the first troops which ever passed over this route.

There are ten portages to be passed, none of which are named. Accordingly the officers of the first Brigade thought they were entitled to dub them as they pleased. Lots were drawn with the following result:—

- Portage No. 1.....Simard
- " " 2.....Dennison
- " " 3.....Vaughan
- " " 4.....Fletcher
- " " 5.....Macdonald
- " " 6.....Barrett
- " " 7.....Casault
- " " 8.....Wolsley

- Portage No. 9.....Jarvis
- " " 10.....Patterson

The shortest of these is Barret Portage, being only seven yards in length; the longest is Vaughan Portage, which is five hundred.

On Tuesday evening we encamped on the Long portage. All through Wednesday, the work was most laborious on the river. It is exceedingly shallow and strong, so that the boats had to be dragged almost the entire way from the fourth to the last portage. On Thursday morning at half past eight we re passed Otter Falls, Portage La Barrun, and Slave Falls, oncamping at the last named.

The next morning, Friday, 16th, at about 8.30, we arrived at the 3rd Pointe de Bois, and here an accident occurred to the boat of a Rev. Mr. Spence, a native Church of England Missionary, bound for his station at Islington, which might have proved serious had we not been there to render assistance. He had portaged and launched his boat, when unfortunately the painter or rope having been carelessly knotted, parted and before the voyageurs could prevent it, away went the boat drifting towards the rapids, when she was speedily capsized; and after performing some gymnastic exercises, not considered altogether consistent with the gravity which should characterize a sober-minded boat, she finally scouted the foot of the fall, and keel upwards, proceeded to novigate the lake below. One of our boats was manned, and proceeded to capture the erratic one. In this our men were successful, and had the satisfaction of returning Mr Spence his boat, not much the worse after her eccentric frolic.

Had we not happened to arrive when we did, there is no doubt that until other aid arrived there would have been for some time a clerical Robinson Crusoe on a Winnipegian Juan Fernandez.

Having passed the other two Pointes de Bois, on both of which the foliage was almost entirely destroyed by a species of caterpillar, we reached the Chute and Jocko in the midst of a rain storm, and encamped there.

On the 18th we arrived at the Grand Discharge, when some excitement was caused by the filling of a boat, and consequent danger of an old voyageur.

The following morning, with a fanning breeze, we proceeded on our last day's journey on the Winnipeg. At Les Dalies we made a portage, which we avoided on our former trip, as floating down the river, it is easy to run these rapids, but ascending, the boats have to be laboriously tracked for several miles, or a portage, 320 paces in length, to be made. We preferred the latter as being the most expeditious. We encamped after having left Rat Portage, at the Hudson Bay Post.

Strike tents early in the morning, and under the influence of a light breeze, embark on the Lake of the Woods. Encamp on an island within a few miles of the Grand Traverse.

Wednesday 21st.—After rowing a couple of miles a strong head wind compels us to seek shelter. We remain on a small island all day, and as the weather does not moderate, encamp there for the night.

On the next morning, Thursday, 22nd, at 5 o'clock, the wind being favorable, we make sail and at noon we arrive at Fort Louise, at the mouth of Rainy River.

We encamped that night about twenty miles up, where the Mattina River and joins Rainy River on the Minnesota side.

Friday and Saturday were spent in a tiresome pull against the current. On Saturday evening we encamp about six miles

from Fort Francis, the men pretty much used up with so much rowing.

On the following morning we reach the Fort, where we find a large number of Indian Lodges, a council having been called to meet the Commissioners Messrs Simpson, Dawson and Pither, in order to make the proposed treaty.

We rested here all day, Church Parade being ordered at 2.35 p. m. The Indians appeared to be interested in the service, inquiring what it meant. I may observe that, without a single exception, all the Indians assembled on this occasion were Pagans.

On the next morning, after having awaited for some time the arrival of Mr. Graham of the Public Works, who had expected to overtake us at Rat Portage, we sailed, and after a splendid run of six hours, we arrive at Baro Portage.

On Tuesday, with a fair wind we cross Lake Namekan, sail up Loon river, and pass the three portages in the neighborhood of Loon Lake.

On Wednesday we traverse Lake Nequaquon and enter the Malgre River, the latter part of this evening, and the whole of the next forenoon been occupied in portaging over rough rocks or tracking the boats.

Sturgeon Lake and DieuX Riviere Portage were also passed to day (29th), and the following evening finds us toiling up the tortuous French River. This is a wretched little creek, about nine miles in length, so narrow that ours cannot be used, but the boats had to be pulled up, and so shallow a it near the Portage that the men have to wade in the water and drag the loaded craft up against the current.

We entered the river at 5 p. m. and finding at 10 o'clock that we were still at a distance from the portage, we encamped in a kind of a morass, and in the midst of a thunder storm.

We got over the portage (French) by dinner time, and sailing up Windgoostigon Lake we arrive at Brule Portage.

Baril portage is passed the following day, and here we met a number of employes of the Board of Works proceeding to Fort Francis with the engines, boilers, &c., for the steamers to be placed on Rainy Lake and Lake of the Woods.

In the afternoon after a long pull of twenty miles we reach the Height of Lund Portage, where Mr. Dawson and a number of workmen and emigrants were encamped.

This portage is wonderfully improved since we passed it last July. It has been "curdroyed," and so made very easy to pass compared to formerly.

A few hours in the morning did all our portaging, and the brigade, having stoned themselves in three boats, we were taken in tow by the small steamer launch, which was formerly at Thunder Bay, and specuilly landed at Kashaboine Portage.

There we were delayed all day through the over-officiousness of a Mr. Van Norman, who had instead of delivering the message entrusted to him, made such a representation of our numbers that, in waiting for us as ordered by Mr. Dawson, the captain of the little steamer, owing to Mr. Van Norman's representation, thought it better to proceed to McNeill's Bay for more boats; so that instead of being able to proceed when were ready at 1 p. m. we were not on our way until 8.30, arriving at about 11.20 at the end of Shebandowan Lake.

On Tuesday, July 4th, being the next day we waited until the afternoon for baggage waggons; these arriving we marched at 1 o'clock, encamping at the Askondagie Creek.

The next morning at 6.30, we march one