

(1) REPORT OF THE BRIGADE SURGEON, ON THE STATE OF THE COLUMN
UNDER COMMAND OF MAJOR-GENERAL MIDDLETON, C. B., FROM THE FORMATION AT TROY
UNTIL ARRIVAL AT PRINCE ALBERT.

PRINCE ALBERT, 21st May, 1885.

The 90th Battalion Winnipeg Rifles left the city in detachments on the 23rd March, 1885, and the three following days, as also the Winnipeg Field Battery, and assembled in camp at Troy, which place they left for Fort Qu'Appelle on the 28th March. At this time the weather was very cold, and the men suffered much from sore throat and sore eyes, caused by the keen wind and exposure. On the 6th April, the 90th, 316 strong, and the Winnipeg Field Battery, 60 strong, also French's Scouts, 30 in number, left en route for Prince Albert, and, owing to the stormy weather, together with the mid-day thaw, the men had a very hard time on the line of march. At the outset I may just remark that most of the men composing the 90th were taken away direct from the desk and the counter, and many of them are also very young, and had received but little training, the regiment not having been long formed. A change so sudden might have been expected to produce disastrous results, but I am happy to be able to report that such has not been the case, as the men, though young, were of fine physique.

On the 9th April, I joined the Column near Touchwood Hills, and we were at the same time strengthened by "A" Battery, R. C. A., 120 strong, and part of "C" Company Infantry School, numbering about 35.

We continued the march to Humboldt by way of the Salt Plains, a very wild and bleak part of the country, the march over which was very trying to all hands, as the ice gave way in the pools on the trail, and the sloughs had commenced to fill with water, which caused the men to tramp all day in wet boots and pants, with little or no means to dry them for the next day.

On the 13th we reached Humboldt, having marched 87 miles in four days. It was necessary in order for supplies to overtake the Column to remain one day—Sunday—at Humboldt, during which I had stretchers made to supplement those in the ambulance waggon. I instructed the bandsmen of the 90th in their duties as an Ambulance Corps for the field, caused bandages and other requisites to be issued to them and to the non-commissioned officers, ready for emergencies, and further prepared the general medical and surgical outfit for immediate service. On the 16th April, we were joined by Major Bonilton's Mounted Infantry, in number 70, with Dr. Ralston in medical charge. On the 17th April, we reached Clarke's Crossing, where we were joined by the 10th Grenadiers, about 260 strong. On the 22nd April, we marched for Batoche, and on this day the weather, which had previously been bitterly cold and windy, became warm and genial, and on the 24th April, at about 9.30 a.m., we had our first engagement at Fish Creek. The day was most trying on the strength of the men, as they fought all day without any food or drink other than what was taken at the morning meal, at about 5 a.m., and, though young, the men stood the hardship both well and bravely. Immediately after the first shot was fired, the ambulance was well up to the front. The 90th were in the advance, and the first man wounded was Captain W. Clark, and, being mounted, I hurried to the spot and caused him to be removed from under the heavy fire of the enemy, ordering at the same time the Ambulance Corps and all the Medical Staff forward to a point where they could be most effective, and at which point Dr. Ralston had already two wounded scouts in dressing. The Bands of the 90th, under Bandmaster Gooding, proved themselves most valuable during the day in bringing the wounded and dead from the field, which they did most fearlessly, while under a heavy and continuous fire from the enemy. During the day we had 46 killed and wounded, who were well and promptly dressed, just outside the range of fire, but at the outset we were so suddenly attacked that we were compelled to commence operations at once under cover of the nearest bush, with skirmishers to protect us. To attend to this large number, of whom 40 were wounded, I was ably assisted by Dr. Whiteford of the 90th, Dr. Grant of "A" Battery R.C.A.;