

munications 745 teams,³ working in perfect order, in connection with a system of depôts.

On the 2nd of April General Middleton left Qu'appelle Station, and marched nineteen miles to Fort Qu'appelle, a Hudson's Bay post. He halted there till the 6th, the time being fully occupied in rifle practice and general instruction of our small force, and in organisation of transport.

On the 6th we commenced our march in earnest. The country is not difficult for troops. Rolling prairie land, covered here and there more or less thickly with poplar 'bluffs,'⁴ it resembles much an English park. Engineered roads there are none, but there are few bad gradients, and few watercourses; and luckily for us the frost was still deep enough in the ground to give good bottom to what might later in the season have proved awkward quagmires. Though the season was breaking, the cold was intense. Our tent-pegs froze fast in the ground, and we had to cut them out on striking camp. Our boots froze to the stirrup-irons. There was a perpetual high wind, rain, and occasional 'blizzard.'⁵ But the troops trudged on constantly, doing twenty miles a day. At night we formed our wagons into a 'corrals,' after the American fashion, wheel to wheel and poles inwards, with the teamsters, tents, and horses inside the circle—the camp outside the 'corrals.'

Firewood and water were generally to be found in abundance. On the 13th we arrived at Humboldt. Halted the 14th, marched again the 15th. The General was anxious to secure Clarke's Crossing on the Saskatchewan as soon as possible. He hoped to be able to utilise the river as a line of communication, and the Crossing as an advanced post was therefore important. It was also on the telegraph line between Battleford and Humboldt. We had followed the river since leaving Qu'appelle, and by tapping it were generally in communication with Battleford and Ottawa.

We arrived at Clarke's Crossing on the 17th, having marched 177 miles in twelve days, or nearly fifteen miles a day including halts, and nearly eighteen miles a day exclusive of halts. We found there a small white settlement, capable of affording us a few supplies at extravagant prices, a telegraph station, and two ferry boats or 'scows.' The Saskatchewan is here about 300 yards across a muddy rapid river, with steep banks some 150 feet high, deep mud and shingle to the water's edge, strewn with huge masses of ice left there by the spring freshets. At the Crossing and on the march there we were overtaken by A Battery from Quebec, with two guns (9 pr. R.M.L.), the 10th Grenadiers from Toronto, and Bolton's Mounted Infantry.

³ A team means a pair of horses.

⁴ 'Bluff' is the North-West term for a wood. 'Heavy bluff' means thick wood.

⁵ A snowstorm with high wind.