

our women and children, we will massacre our prisoners." I answered, "put your women in a safe place, point it out, and we will not fire at it." I then pushed on our advance guard, and when I saw a chance, ordered a general advance. Our men responded nobly and were splendidly led by their officers.

"Col. Straubenzie drove the enemy out of their rifle pits at the point of the bayonet, and afterwards forced his way across the plain and seized the houses, of which we are now masters.

"Our men bivouacked on Monday night on the field of battle. In the heat of the action Riel sent another letter, stating that if the General did not retreat or grant an interview, the prisoners would be killed. The letter came too late, the advance being already ordered. The prisoners were rescued and are safe in camp. The enemy had not time to kill them. Our loss is five killed and fifteen wounded. The enemy sustained great loss."

MAY 30.—Strange's reconnaissance in force with Big Bear. Strange had 300 men, and found Big Bear with 500 braves strongly entrenched in a commanding position twelve miles north-east of Fort Pitt, and four miles back from the river on the north side. In the reconnaissance three volunteers were wounded.

JUNE 3.—Steele's Scouts had a brush with Big Bear at Onion Lake. Three scouts wounded.

THE COMMISSARIAT.

"An army crawls on its belly," is the military adage employed to show the intimate relations between military movements and commissariat supplies. Canada suddenly sprung into a war 2,000 miles away from the chief centres of population, found herself without even the barest skeleton of either an hospital branch or a commissariat branch, or a transport service. Food for 5,000 troops had to be provided. The attendant army of teamsters, foragers, surgeons, and others who wait upon the troops had also to be supplied. There was no Government depot of food supply. There was not even a round of hard tack or a ship's biscuit in store. The season was the worst possible time of the year, for winter had not disappeared nor spring set in. The snow was too soft to bear heavy teams. The grass was not long enough for the use of horses and cattle. There was no shelter along the wide stretches of prairie. When the Minister of Militia came to confront this particular phrase, he must for a while have felt that the difficulty was insurmountable, that it was simply impossible to undertake to gather together food supplies, waggons, horses, teamsters to send them off to the front to keep the fighting army well-fed. What the work is may be seen from the fact that on May 28 last, there left Calgary for Edmonton a convoy three miles long, consisting of 178 ox and

Indian-pony carts; 45 four and two-horse teams; and 80 double bull waggons, each hauled by ten huge oxen, conveying two or three hundred tons of supplies.

Fortunately the Minister of Militia in organizing the commissariat, availed himself of the help of the Hudson Bay Company. This help has been secured under the most liberal and honest conditions, the company agreeing to sell provisions from their stores at wholesale prices, and those provisions they had to purchase at market prices, receiving 5 per cent. profit, which sum was far less than would have been required for a new organization throughout such an immense territory. Lieut-Col. Jackson was ordered to Winnipeg, which city was designated as the head-quarters for distributing supplies. He was assisted by Lieut-Col. M. LaMontagne as supply officer. Subsequently Lieut-Col. Whitehead was appointed general transport officer. All these officers received instructions to communicate with Mr. S. Wrigley, commissioner of the Hudson Bay Company at Winnipeg. His experience was most valuable in the emergency. The results are before the people. The troops marching by forced marches found supplies, the horses found forage ready for them whenever they pitched camp. There was a close race between demand and supply occasionally, but the Hudson's Bay Company as a commissariat has proved a success.

ARMS, AMMUNITION, Etc.

Immediately upon the force being called out for active service, the Minister of Militia issued orders for the transport to Winnipeg of a reserve supply of arms, ammunition, accoutrements, and camp equipment, to provide for any emergency, and within a period of ten to fourteen days from the time the order was received, over 1,000,000 rounds of small arm ammunition, besides a supply of artillery ammunition and projectiles, 6,000 new Snider rifles, and 1,500 sets of accoutrements (new) were delivered in Winnipeg.

To meet the requirements of mounted corps specially organized in the North-West, a supply of Colts army revolvers and Winchester carbines were also sent forward to Winnipeg. The shipments of war material, camp equipment, clothing and necessaries continued to be made from time to time to meet all possible demands, until the quantity of small arms ammunition of all descriptions reached 1,510,000 rounds, and about 2,000 rounds of artillery ammunition and projectiles, this being exclusive of the small arms ammunition of 20 rounds per man issued to corps before departure to the North-west.

A reserve supply of clothing, boots, socks, undershirts and drawers, grey flannel shirts, blankets, and towels sufficient for 1,000 men was also sent forward to Winnipeg without delay. With exception of the uniform clothing, much of these articles had to be purchased, as the supply in stores was limited to the actual requirements of the permanent corps or schools of cavalry, artillery and infantry. Independently of this, the various corps before leaving Ontario and Quebec were supplied with camp equipment, blankets (two per man), water proof sheets. Boots, etc., and fur caps were supplied to such corps as required them.

THE HOSPITAL SERVICE.

Still another important branch had to be prepared. The department had to provide an hospital service for the field. Dr. Bergin, M.P., was appointed surgeon-general. The whole subject was carefully studied, and in a week after his appointment he had prepared a system suited to the requirements—the Minister of Militia had studied and approved it. The following data will be interesting. A fuller account of the work that had to be done in connection with organizing this important branch was published in the *Mail* of

APRIL 1.—Appointment of Dr. Bergin as surgeon-general.

APRIL 2.—Appointment of Dr. Roddick as deputy surgeon-general, and Dr. Sullivan, purveyor. Orders sent to Montreal for hospital furniture; sent to Winnipeg 8th April.

APRIL 12.—Dr. Roddick arrives at Winnipeg.

APRIL 14.—Dr. Sullivan arrives at Winnipeg.

APRIL 16.—Dr. Casgrain, Field Hospital No. 2. Dr. Roddick at Swift Current, where base hospital was established at that point. Four divisions were sent from this base:—Surgeon-Major Douglas, at Calgary, to accompany General Strange; Dr. Bell, at Clarke's Crossing; Dr. Gravely to Qu'Appelle; Dr. Wilson with first column (Middleton). Sick soldiers in Winnipeg were placed in civil hospital.

APRIL 23.—Base hospital was transferred from Swift Current to Moose Jaw.

APRIL 29.—All hospital staff except deputy surgeon-general, surgeon-major Casgrain, surgeons Bell, Gravely, Powell and Pelletier are relieved this day; eight dressers and two orderlies also discharged. Red Cross Ambulance Corps of Toronto, under Dr. Nattress, accepted 14th April, and sent to Battleford, where they arrived to meet wounded brought in from fight with Pound-Maker.