

called the Matawin Bridge, twenty-five miles from Thunder Bay, as that is the point to which the waggons, in the first instance, actually came. This waggon road was succeeded by a stretch of twelve miles, roughly opened, to the Oskondagé, and this, again, by a further section of four miles and seventy chains, ending at Ward's Landing. This latter was being cleared on our arrival.

There were thus three sections of road, more or less advanced, viz. : 25 miles of waggon road, followed by 12 miles of what is known in such cases as ox-road, and four miles and 70 chains of road under process of being opened, in all, 41 miles and 70 chains.

As the river will be frequently referred to, a sketch, shewing its position, relative to the road, is hereunto annexed. From Thunder Bay to the Matawin Bridge, the distance is, as stated, 25 miles by road. Between the mouth of the Kaministiquia and the same point, it is 45 miles by the river, presenting in this distance, 12 miles of quiet water, and 33 miles of shallow rapids, with falls occurring at intervals. The channel of the river, except in the short navigable sections, is exceedingly rough, paved in some instances with boulders of all dimensions and shapes, and in others with sharp schists set on edge. There is little or no danger to men in ascending these rapids, but every risk to boats. To drag them up is a mere matter of brute force, but to save bottoms and keels from being torn to shreds, requires great care, and the greatest care cannot prevent them from being seriously damaged. Although the risk to life is small, the labour of dragging boats over rocks and stones, which afford but an insecure footing, is excessive and otherwise very disheartening to the men.

From the Matawin bridge to the Oskondagé, the distance by the road, as already shewn, is 12 miles, by the river it is about 22. From the Matawin Bridge upwards, for a distance of about two miles, to a point called Young's Landing, the river is navigable, proceeding upwards from the latter point, a series of rapids is encountered, perhaps the most difficult that boats were ever forced over. These continue for eight miles, and on this section, none but experienced voyageurs can attempt to pass with boats. The rapids last referred to, end at a point called Browne's Lane, or Cauldron's Landing, and from thence to the Oskondagé, a further distance of twelve miles, by its windings, the river is navigable to lightly loaded boats. From the Oskondagé upwards to Wards Landing, four miles and seventy chains, boats and all material were conveyed by waggon. The total distance by land from Thunder Bay to Oskondagé was 37 miles ; by the river between the same points is nearly 70 miles. These descriptions, though tedious, are necessary to the full understanding of the measures adopted for sending forward boats and supplies.

In the memorandum submitted by me to the military authorities, (see page—) I had pointed out the fact that boats and supplies could at once be sent forward as far as the Matawin Bridge, and while this was being done, it was my intention to have set all the available force of workmen and voyageurs to improve and open the unfinished sections of the line, beyond that place, and I may here remark that this was, without any question, as events proved, the proper course to have adopted. It would have saved a vast outlay, and have enabled the Expedition to reach Shebandowan Lake earlier than it did.

A few days after the arrival of the first detachment of troops, the experiment of sending boats forward by waggons was tried, and it succeeded admirably. The waggons were arranged by means of long reaches (that is, poles of sufficient length to admit of the forward and after wheels being put as much as 18 feet apart), the boats were placed bottom upwards on the waggons, the gunwales resting on blocks fitted to receive and support them, and in this way twenty-eight boats were sent forward to the Matawin Bridge, the horses making the round trip, going and returning in three days, and in one instance in two days. Here, then, was proof positive that the boats could easily be sent forward by waggons. But the means of transport were at this time limited, and instead of increasing them, as might easily have been done, the boats were ordered to the river by the Commandant of the Field force. The distance as already shewn between Thunder Bay and the Matawin Bridge is, by land, 25 miles and by the river 45 miles. The road was practicable. The river for a distance of 33 miles, presented a series of stony rapids with frequent portages on rough and rocky ground. In order to ascertain how the boats would stand