

CLARKE'S CROSSING, N.W.T., 20th May, 1885.

SIR,—I have the honor to report that on the 10th inst., I left the Saskatchewan Landing in charge of barge "Captain Leonard," having on board thirty (30) officers, non-commissioned officers and men, as follows: 5 officers, 4 non-commissioned officers, 21 men, being part of Companies 2 and 4, 7th Fusiliers; also their necessaries and a large cargo of oats. At 9 a.m., we got stranded, our men having to take to the water and after two hours' hard work succeeded in floating her. At 3 p.m., we again grounded and laboured until 6.30 p.m., in the water, without any effect; we then rested for the night and tried it again early the following morning, without any hope of success. About 6 p.m., a small boat arrived from Major Smith, 7th Fusiliers, asking the trouble. I informed him by letter, stating that unless he sent help to take me off I would have to unload on the following morning. I received a message to save the cargo if possible, but if I could not, to unload. After working until 10 a.m., I decided to unload, and in order to save the oats as much as possible I made a base of hay bales and piled the oat bags on top, leaving them high and dry, about 20 miles from the Landing, on the right side. We continued getting stranded from four to six times each day, our men having in most cases to strip and remain from half to two hours each time, until Saturday. On that day, about 10 a.m., I noticed the "Capt. J. A. McDonald" stuck fast with all men in the water, although far in advance. I thought it proper to snub up and wait, on account of her being the last boat. She got loose about 2 p.m., and we sailed in company until about 5 p.m., when both got stranded. The men of both boats got out and worked on my boat but could not free her until we unloaded, which we did and cleaned her out. When cleaning her out we found a quantity of oats and water (8 inches) in the hold. It took us until Sunday, 9 a.m., to get her loaded and floating again. During the entire time that we were separated from the flotilla, the reveille was sounded at 3.30 a.m., and ran till dark, making every effort to counteract our difficulty.

Before closing this report, I beg leave to draw your attention to the helpless condition my boat was left in. Our rations were so limited that I had to limit my men to three, and afterwards two hard tacks per day, while I understand some of the flotilla had plenty and to spare. And I assure you if it had not been for the timely aid given us by your boat our men might have suffered from hunger.

I beg leave also to state the absence of any medical assistance; a number came from the water attacked with cramps, &c., and we were perfectly helpless. We ran with several accidents to the boat, and found no tools for repairs on board, which also caused delay.

I have the honor to remain, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

(Signed)

R. DILLON,

Captain.

Lieutenant-Colonel DEACON,  
Commanding the "Flotilla."

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SIR,—I have the honor to report that I was in command of the barge "General Middleton," left the Landing at 9 a.m., on Monday, May 11th; arrived here at 11 a.m., Wednesday, May 20th.

The third day out, on account of high winds and swift current, we ran into a long creek about 4 miles in length, coming into shallow water, where we found it totally impossible to get out, and after trying every means in our power, digging in the water with spades, &c., men being in the water from 3 p.m., to 9 p.m., and from daylight to 9 a.m., we were under the necessity of dumping out sixty bags of oats