

I was furthermore directed (in January, 1870), to increase the force on the Thunder Bay Road, in as far as the season and the nature of the locality would permit, so as to have the larger bridges completed and other necessary preparations made, before the opening of navigation. In order the better to ensure these instructions being carried out, an active and experienced officer, Mr. Lindsay Russell, was despatched by way of Superior City, from which place he had to walk two hundred miles on snow shoes to Thunder Bay. A copy of his instructions is annexed, and I may here remark that he executed them with energy and skill.

It was at this time apprehended that the insurgents at Red River might endeavour to tamper with the Saulteux Indians, a tribé which occupies the country about Fort Frances and the Lake of the Woods in formidable numbers, and in order to establish and keep up friendly relations with these Indians, by direction of the Government, I sent instructions to a trusty agent at Fort William, to proceed to Fort Frances where he had long resided, and enter into communication with the chiefs and leading men of the tribe. A copy of these instructions is hereunto annexed.

Before the navigation opened, it became necessary to secure the services of a number of skilled voyageurs to manage and navigate the boats, and agents were accordingly despatched to the various localities throughout the country where the desired class of men was to be found.

Furthermore, in hiring men for the Public Works, in view of the probability of the necessity arising of their being required as voyageurs, such only were engaged as had had some experience in navigating the inland waters of the country, or in driving logs in rapid rivers. The total number of men thus engaged, either as workmen or voyageurs, was eight hundred, and it was kept at that number throughout the season.

Having been in communication with the military authorities, at various times, during the month of April, I was most careful to inform them as to the condition of the Thunder Bay Road, and the character of the country generally, through which the Expedition would have to pass. They were furnished with maps shewing the length, respectively, of the portages and navigable sections; and in order that there might be no misapprehension as to the state of the road, I submitted to them a memorandum of which the following is a copy:—

“MEMORANDUM.

“OTTAWA, 25th April, 1870.

“When the work of road making was brought to a close last fall, a section of 25 miles, reckoning from Thunder Bay, was practicable to waggons, with only one interruption at the Kaministiquia, which was then unbridged, and continuing on the line an additional section of ten miles was cut out in such a way as to be practicable to oxen with sleds or carts.

“The two large rivers—Kaministiquia and Matawin—which cross the line, were bridged last winter, and bridges were also built over the more considerable of the smaller streams, so that, practically, the work of bridging may be considered as completed.

“It may be added that portage roads were laid out and opened, in as far as such work could be done in winter, between Shebandowan Lake and Lac des Mille Lacs.

“At the same time instructions were sent to the officer in charge, to set all the available force to work on the road as soon as the snow should have so far cleared off, as to admit of operations thereon being resumed, so that about eighty men are by this time engaged on the unfinished section of the line.

“An additional force of 120 men will be sent to their aid by the first steamer, and a week later, a further number of about fifty will go up.

“OPENING AND IMPROVEMENT OF THE PORTAGES.

“The voyageurs who go up in charge of the first shipment of boats should, immediately