

but the contractor maintained that his was the correct view, and that his men had only hired on the understanding that the troops would go, and they would refuse to go unless soldiers were sent with them.

Just then your telegram arrived, conveying instructions to send the Midland detachment and the 7th, *via* Moose Jaw, and I communicated with Major Bell, who advised that he could not furnish transport *via* Moose Jaw, and no forage was obtainable there, and recommended sending the troops back to Qu'Appelle, and thence by trail; but as meantime the river had risen several feet, and Captain Davis expressed confidence in making the run to Clarke's Crossing in three to four days, and Mr. Boyd still expected to take the barges down in four to six days, I considered that serious litigation and trouble would be saved, and your supplies would not be retarded, and the troops, whose early arrival was desirable, and who were burning to get to the front, would, from all these assurances, reach you more rapidly than by any other means. So I sent forward the 7th Fusiliers to the Landing, arranging that the headquarters and three companies and the detachment of the Midland Battalion should accompany the barges, and that two companies should remain at the Landing to load and accompany steamers on the next trip. This would have allowed about 20 men to each barge; but as I knew it was your wish that the whole battalion should join you as early as possible, I ascertained from Mr. Boyd that he claimed no remuneration for carrying men, but expected 200 men for aid and protection, and could carry 400 men. So I assembled the Captains of the 7th at the Landing. On their arrival and after they had seen the barges, asked whether their men would put up with the crowding so as to avoid being broken up into detachments, and if so I would send the whole regiment. They were unanimous and most urgent in their desire to go, offering to put up with any inconvenience and do all the work of the barges if permitted to go together. Under these circumstances Mr. Boyd offered to make more room by discharging his civilian hands, keeping only one for each barge as navigator, and this was finally so arranged; and proposed to give \$100 to the regiment if this were permitted, but I did not think this latter desirable.

I directed the senior officer, Colonel Deacon, to assume command of the troops, desiring that they should keep together for mutual assistance, and to this end placed the rations on one barge; the troops accordingly embarked early on morning of 11th May, companies being kept intact as much as possible, and the flotilla started under Mr. Boyd's orders, in close succession, about 8 a.m. on that day.

Colonel Deacon was instructed to forward me a report on arrival at Clarke's Crossing; but I first heard from Major Kirwan, on 18th inst., that three barges had arrived, and had thrown portions of load overboard. So I at once notified Major Kirwan to keep an account of all shortage on delivery of cargo, as their contract was a fixed rate per ton on what they delivered, and the contractors were responsible for what they received; also to obtain all particulars in his power, and after enquiry he reported he had ascertained all particulars about the supplies left in river, and I urged him to try and recover them, but he found he could not approach them with teams, and at that time could not reach them with barges. I also telegraphed to Colonel Deacon to call upon officers commanding the troops embarked in the several barges, stating that reports to this effect had reached me, and requesting an explanation by whose orders this had taken place. I forwarded to you a copy of his report when received, and now attach a copy marked B.

Colonel Deacon appears to have been under a misapprehension that he had control of the barges and the navigation, whereas his orders were simply to command the troops for military purposes, the control of the movements of the barges remaining with Mr. Boyd, who was responsible for the safe delivery of the cargo. Mr. Boyd, in his telegraphic report of arrival, made no mention of cargo thrown overboard; but when I met him at Moose Jaw, on his return journey to Winnipeg, he informed me he had reported his arrival to you, and that you had expressed yourself well satisfied and greatly pleased with his work, and had given him a receipt on which voucher he was to draw his pay, including extra allowance for the troops taken down the river, and as he did not apply to me for any vouchers beyond those for the quantity loaded

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