

*Battleford, 1884*

The first building to the right is the telegraph and post office. The third building is A. Macdonald's store. The first figure on the right is Ronald Macdonald. In the first buggy is Robert Macdonald and Mrs. J. B. Parker. Leaning against the next vehicle is Alex. Macdonald (lately deceased), the owner of the townsite then laid out. The driver of the team is H. Gisborne, superintendent. McFarlane, Clouston and Latimer are also in the picture.

Having formed an attachment for Battleford, the writer accepted a proposition that he should take the position of teacher in a school which it was proposed to open. Up to this time, no public schools existed in the Territories, but upon the North West Council undertaking to pay half the salary, a board of trustees was appointed and the school officially opened. My recollection is that these trustees were nominated by the North West Council: P. G. Laurie, William Latimer and Wm. McKay. I held the position for a few months when I resigned to take other work, my successor being W. B. Cameron, well known author of "On the Trail of Big Bear."

At this time, announcement was made that the existing line east of Humboldt would be abandoned, and a new line constructed to Troy (now Qu'Appelle), where it would connect with the C.P.R. Telegraphs. The work was commenced in the Summer of 1882, starting from Troy, and late in that year reached Touchwood, about six miles from the Hudson's Bay Post of the same name. The name of the telegraph office was changed to Kutawa a few years later, when an office was opened at the Company's post. In the interim there was a gap between Kutawa and Humboldt, messages being carried between the two offices by the mail carrier, or given to any reliable traveller who might happen along. By bridging the gap, some 80 miles, in this way Edmonton and Battleford were enabled to keep in touch with eastern points without too great delay. [See F. N. Gisborne's report of 1883 in Appendix I.]

*Report on Government Telegraph Lines for Fiscal Year Ended 30th June, 1883, by F. N. Gisborne, Superintendent.*

#### NORTH WEST TERRITORIES

The lines in Manitoba and the North West Territories which had been formerly operated by the Department of Railways and Canals, were transferred to the Department of Public Works during the summer of 1882. At the time of transfer the lines which had been constructed were as follows:

From Prince Arthur's Landing to Winnipeg, via Selkirk .....	433 miles
From Selkirk to Edmonton, via Humboldt.....	812 "
The entire length being.....	1,245 "

But the route of the Canadian Pacific Railway having been altered, the cost of maintaining an originally cheaply constructed pioneer line (already much out of repair) through a swampy and wooded country being very costly, with no possibility of an appreciable revenue, it was deemed advisable to abandon *in toto* that section which extends from Selkirk to Humboldt, a distance of 426 (corrected to 416) miles; and, in order to connect the Humboldt to Edmonton, 396 miles section, with the telegraph system of the North West Provinces, a line between Qu'Appelle Station (on the line of the Canadian Pacific Railway) and Humboldt, a distance of 141 miles, was begun during the Autumn of 1882, and completed during the past Summer, communication being now established between Edmonton and Winnipeg via Qu'Appelle Station on the Canadian Pacific Railway telegraph line. The line now controlled and operated by the Department of Public Works in the North West Provinces is, therefore, at the present time as follows:

Prince Arthur's Landing to Winnipeg, via Selkirk	433	miles
Qu'Appelle Station, via Humboldt to Edmonton	537	"
Total	970	"

And to this is being added a branch line extending from (the) Saskatchewan to Prince Albert, a distance approximating 100 miles.

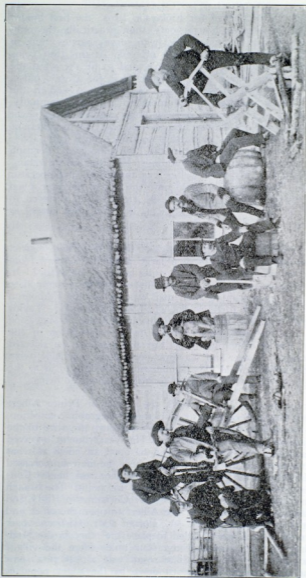
In the meantime, organization of a Telegraph Branch had been completed at Ottawa within the Department of Public Works, of which Hon. Charles Tupper was the Minister.

F. N. Gisborne, who had been associated with Cyrus Field in the laying of the first Atlantic Cable, was appointed General Superintendent; D. H. Keeley, Assistant General Superintendent, and Hartley Gisborne, son of F. N. Gisborne, District Superintendent for North West Lines, with headquarters at Battleford, which place he reached during the Summer of 1882. Upon his arrival the writer again took the position of operator at Battleford, Mr. Richardson taking the lineman's work, in addition to his duties as postmaster. Both offices were installed in the original telegraph building on the flat within a few yards of the Battle River. A partnership was formed under the name of Richardson & Macdonald, doing a general agency business. This was permitted by the Department, it being recognized that the salaries paid—the maximum being \$60.00 per month—made necessary some additional source of income. In July, 1883, the

firm brought to Battleford for Finlayson Bros., the first binder used in the Territories, bought oats, then practically the only grain grown, which it retailed chiefly to survey parties; and, in fact, dealt in any commodity which offered. At this time coins of any denomination were very scarce, and to fill the want the firm issued tokens, which had been printed in the Herald office good for 10, 25 and 50 cents each. These were signed by the firm and freely accepted by all members of the community. Several series were issued. A very large number were never presented for payment, having been carried away by travellers or sent east as curios. The partnership continued until July, 1884, when the Government ordered that the Post Office and Telegraph Office be operated in separate buildings, Mr. Richardson retaining the post office, while the writer was appointed chief operator of the line. This position he held until the end of the year when Mr. Richardson was, by order of the Department, restored to the post of operator, retaining, in addition, his place as postmaster.

To the firm is due the name of the village and district known as Bresaylor. In 1882, a large group of settlers from Manitoba selected lands some 35 miles west of Battleford. In the beginning no post office was established, but to accommodate the people a bag containing their mail was sent by the Edmonton mail carrier once in three weeks which was addressed "Taylor Settlement," and left at the most convenient house. I suggested that we give the settlement a name by a combination of the names of the principal families. For this purpose we selected the Bremners, Sayers and Taylors, borrowing a syllable from each in the order named, this combination appealing to us as the most euphonious, and that is how *Bresaylor* came into being.

During the Summer of 1883, the people of Prince Albert petitioned the Government to give them telegraph connection, offering to provide the necessary poles to carry the wire to the nearest point on the existing line. The Government received the request favorably and arranged to open an office at what was later known as Clark's Crossing, where the main line crossed the river, the building being erected on the west bank. Connection was made with Prince Albert at this point. The branch was completed two or three days before Christmas of 1883, and Mr. Gisborne proceeded to Prince Albert to open the office and install the operator, Mr. A. A. Porter. Mr. Gisborne had, unknown to the citizens, decided to place the office in the Hudson's Bay Post at Goshen, some four miles from the village of Prince Albert. The immediate result was a near riot, some wire and a few poles being torn down by the angry populace



*Citizens of Battleford, 1884*

Reading from left to right—Johnstone, Clouston, Williamson, Merigold; Gisborne, Young, Macdonald, J. S.; Smart, W. H.; Strang; Wyld, R. C.

and Mr. Gisborne's person threatened, he in turn bringing action against several of those implicated. The matter was promptly reported by wire to the Minister at Ottawa, Sir Hector Langevin, who at once replied deprecating the action of the citizens in taking the law into their own hands, but asserting that he personally had not been advised of the arrangement and that he was desirous of meeting the wishes of the citizens. Eventually, charges were withdrawn and the matter settled by the establishment of offices both at Prince Albert and Goshen. So was the Telegraph born at Prince Albert.

Work being scarce in these early years and Battleford being the headquarters of the Government Telegraph Service, many of the residents took positions with it for longer or shorter periods. Many names familiar to old-timers are found on its list of employees. In 1882, Robert Patton was lineman west of Battleford, having for assistant W. B. Cameron. In 1883, Robert C. Macdonald, afterwards superintendent, was agent-lineman at Humboldt. J. H. Sully succeeded R. Patton. In 1884, William Latimer succeeded Tremont and J. Dyke-Parker and W. C. Gillies were appointed linemen at Eleanor, S. B. McFarlane taking a similar position at Battleford. Of these, Cameron, McFarlane and Gillies are at present residents of Vancouver, Parker entered the ministry and is now rector of the Anglican Church at Qu'Appelle. Wm. Latimer died June 15th, 1899, and Robt. C. Macdonald, November 29, 1925. Of Patton and Sully, I have lost trace.

In June, 1882, William McKay (better known to old-timers as "Billy") was appointed lineman at Edmonton, his beat extending to Grizzly Bear Coulee, some 150 miles, a tremendous distance for one man to cover with a horse and buckboard through a district which at that time contained not one settler. This beat he patrolled until the course of the line was changed in 1887 when, with linemen stationed at Fort Pitt and Saddle Lake, the work became much lighter. For 25 years Mr. McKay held his place—one of the most efficient and dependable men who ever occupied such a position. He was one of the fortunate few who, while doing his work, acquired a competency. He died at Edmonton.

William Latimer, who was a lineman at Battleford at the breaking out of the Rebellion, was, like Jas. McKernan, a veteran of the N.W.M. Police of 1873. He was, however, one of those badly injured in the historic stampede of the horses during a storm at Dufferin just before the expedition set out, and so missed accompanying the Force on its westward march. Retiring from the Police in 1880, he assisted greatly in building

up the town of Battleford, and was one of its most respected citizens. W. C. Gillis was also an ex-member of the Police. During the Rebellion, in company with McKay, of Edmonton, he spent several weeks on the line at the risk of his life in the endeavour to keep the wire working between Edmonton and Eleanor. He remained in the service for many years as agent at Pakan (then called Victoria) and later at Edmonton, resigning to take up other work. J. Dyke Parker, who had come into Edmonton from his post at Eleanor, joined the Scouts and took part in the operations of Strange's Column until the surrender of Big Bear, when he resumed his duties as lineman. S. B. Macfarlane, also a lineman during the trouble, was later an agent of the C.P. Railway on the Medicine Hat-Lethbridge branch, and afterwards for many years agent of the Government Telegraphs at Lilloet, B.C., where he took a prominent part in the affairs of the town until his retirement to Vancouver.

When an office was opened at Clark's Crossing in 1884, Richard J. Molloy, of Charlottetown, P.E.I., who had been a newspaper publisher there, was appointed agent, Mr. Molloy having been a telegraph operator prior to becoming an editor. When, in 1887, it was decided to grant federal representation to the Territories, Mr. Molloy was chosen by the people of his district as the Conservative nominee for Saskatchewan, while the Conservatives of Prince Albert, in the same constituency, selected D. H. Macdowall. The Liberal standard-bearer was ex-Governor Laird, but Liberal opposition was negligible at that time. There seemed little difference in the strength of the Conservative contestants, but eventually at the request—or command—of Sir Hector Langevin, Mr. Molloy withdrew, much against the wishes of his supporters and to the regret of the telegraph employees, who had hoped to see one of their number in the federal parliament. He remained in the service for several years, eventually taking a position with the C.P. Railway at Qu'Appelle, where he was very popular. He died in Brandon on September 1st, 1900.

In March, 1885, came the Rebellion, the causes of which have been dealt with by others and need not be gone into here. But it was the Rebellion which proved the incalculable value of the telegraph line and abundantly justified its construction. Without it the trouble could not possibly have been brought to an end during that year. Had there been no telegraph, I am satisfied that many additional bands of Indians would have joined those of their kinsmen who had gone on the warpath: For the Indians had the "Moccasin Telegraph," swift runners and horsemen, knowing every foot of the country, who carried

the alarm from one reserve to another, always with boastful lies of great victories gained over the Whites. Without the wire, the condition of affairs throughout the whole northern country would have been absolutely unknown outside, for the Police were too few and too much occupied to establish a patrol to the newly-built railway to the south. Indeed, under the conditions, such an arrangement would have been impossible, and a chaotic state of affairs must have resulted. Police officers, Indian agents and missionaries did splendid work in pacifying and persuading the Indians of many reserves from rising, but lacking the information they received by way of the telegraph, their efforts would have availed but little. A knowledge of the fact that troops were on their way did more to keep the Indians on their reserves than all other influences combined. Indeed, had the rebels possessed a capable leader, the results might have been disastrous, in any case, for it would have been a comparatively easy matter to have cut and carried away sections of the wire, which would have put it out of operation until repaired—a work hazardous in the extreme. The wire was cut on a few occasions, leaving it on the ground, but these were ordinary breaks which were easily repaired by linemen who, however, took great chances of being ambushed. The Rebellion cost the country about 7 millions of dollars, but without the telegraph, it would have cost many times that sum, while the loss of life would have been infinitely greater. From a fairly complete knowledge of the conditions existing at the time, I am convinced that only individual Indians kept the peace from unselfish motives. And, considering the difficulties of the elders in restraining their young braves, for whom war spelt glory and the glittering promises of the rebel leaders, this is scarcely to be wondered at.

On March 13 I left Battleford for Ottawa in company with R. C. Laurie and my brother, the late R. C. Macdonald. Mr. Laurie, like myself, was bound for Ottawa, while my brother was conveying us to Swift Current, intending an immediate return to Battleford. While trouble had been brewing all Winter, no overt act had been committed as yet, and it was hoped that quiet would be restored without the shedding of blood. But, on our arrival at Swift Current, we were horrified to learn that, while we were on the trail, the Indians through whose reserves we had passed had risen and murdered Tremont and Payne, the latter a farm instructor on the Stony Reserve. Arriving at Winnipeg, Mr. Laurie joined the 90th Regiment as lieutenant, while I proceeded on my way as far as Toronto. Here I wired the Department, offering my services, and was instructed



to hold myself in readiness to join Col. Otter, who was in command of the forces ordered to relieve beleagured Battleford.

Returning via the United States with a ticket to Swift Current, I was met at Qu'Appelle with a message that I was to join General Middleton's Column instead. I was ordered to Fort Qu'Appelle, which was being used as a base for supplies, to take charge there until General Middleton reached Clark's Crossing, when I was to join him. En route from Qu'Appelle to Clark's Crossing, G. S. Wood was in charge of the telegraph service. The trail paralleled the wire, and he cut in at each stop to send or receive telegrams. On the arrival of the Column at Clark's Crossing, I was instructed to join it at once. Leaving Fort Qu'Appelle at mid-day by buckboard express which carried mail for the troops, we had a late supper at Touchwood, and, continuing our drive, reached Humboldt at 3 a.m., having driven 125 miles in 14 hours with two changes of horses.

We reached the Crossing at 10 p.m., crossed the river at midnight and I was awakened the next morning in Mr. Molloy's residence by the sound of the guns in action at Fish Creek.

When General Middleton left the Crossing on April 23rd, it was intended that the telegraph line to Prince Albert should be utilized, Mr. Wood sending telegrams to me to be repeated over the main line to Qu'Appelle. But after one or two futile attempts to carry out this arrangement, it was abandoned. The wire had been broken in so many places, and was in such bad condition that it was found more expeditious to send mounted couriers direct to the Crossing than to attempt maintaining the line. On the 24th, following the Fish Creek engagement, couriers arrived with official despatches and private telegrams, while we were swamped with press messages, each correspondent naturally desirous of obtaining priority. However, apart from the official despatches, each was forwarded in order of the time filed, a procedure which was maintained throughout the campaign. In the beginning, Mr. Molloy was my only assistant, and, as he had to keep a strict record of all messages handled and look after all outside matters requiring attention, my time was fully occupied for 16 hours each day. Later I was assisted by Alex. Lanskaik, of Toronto, one of the finest operators in Canada, who took charge of the night work. Harry Wilson, also of Toronto, a well known old-time operator, was in charge at Humboldt where the Body Guard and the united 12th and 35th Battalions had been concentrated in readiness to advance should their services be required. Herbert McCleneghan was in charge at Fort Qu'Appelle. Mr. McCleneghan entered the service the following year, being agent and circuit manager at various points on the

line until his death at Onion Lake April 18th, 1924. Two operators were kept at Qu'Appelle solely for our work, and as there were few interruptions to the working of the wire, and these quickly attended to by Superintendent Gisborne, an excellent service was maintained between Battleford and Qu'Appelle throughout the campaign. The fear of an Indian raid was our greatest worry. A company of the Midland Battalion was stationed across the river, but, so far as we were concerned, it might as well have been in Port Hope, had the Indians made a descent on us. Immediately following the fight at Cut Knife Hill, General Middleton sent me a note stating that a report had reached him that Poundmaker was about to attempt to join Riel, warning us to keep a sharp lookout, as such action would necessarily take the Indians into our vicinity. Mr. Molloy had his wife and several young children in the house and it was impossible to send them to any safer place. Naturally this added greatly to the anxiety of the parents, though Mrs. Molloy was brave and cheerful throughout.

Saskatoon, first settled in 1882, was at that time a small hamlet on the east bank of the river. Immediately upon learning of the result at Fish Creek, the residents of the village offered to provide hospital accommodation for the wounded, an offer gratefully accepted by General Middleton. Ambulances were improvised by stretching skins across wagons, and on these the wounded were laid and conveyed to Saskatoon, a distance of about 30 miles. On various occasions, I visited the wounded, some of whom were personal friends, and found them thoroughly appreciative of the unselfish kindness of the people of Saskatoon, who left nothing undone that could aid in restoring them to health or relieve the tedium of convalescence. Among the patients later on was Riel's secretary, with whom I held several conversations, and who apparently was much surprised to find himself treated as kindly as the others.

Life at Clark's Crossing during these days was full of interest, excitement and color. Convoys of teams arrived with supplies, unloaded and returned to Fort Qu'Appelle, couriers from General Middleton came and went, newspaper correspondents, anxious to give their papers the latest and most sensational news, accepted the wildest rumors and telegraphed them as facts, unwilling to wait until the reports were verified or disproven. As operator, I received many telegrams from people in the East praying for news of relatives, who frequently were in another part of the country. Of course, realizing their great anxiety, whenever there was a chance of obtaining information by personal enquiry or by telegraph, I did so, and advised the relatives accordingly.

There was at this time no telegraph communication west of Battleford. Indians were swarming throughout that district, making it impossible to keep the line in repair.

While the troops were on their way to Batoche and Prince Albert, large quantities of supplies were arriving at Clark's Crossing, the steamer "Northcote" bringing a full load from Swift Current Crossing, while trains of wagons loaded at Fort Qu'Appelle added constantly to the bulk of stores. There were literally thousands of packages of canned beef, sugar, tea, flour and other provisions piled to a height of three to five feet on the west bank of the river and within a few feet of the water on a flat shore. One morning the operator at Swift Current telegraphed to me that the river was in flood, and, knowing from experience how rapidly the river rose in these June floods, I hunted up the officer in charge of the supplies and advised him as to the conditions. He answered to the effect that he was quite capable of doing his duty without outside advice. But when the flood arrived 36 hours later, there was a great scurrying to secure men from the Midlands Regiment across the river to salvage the supplies. A scow brought over was loaded to capacity and an attempt made to take it back across the swollen river. But before reaching the further bank it sank, the men having a narrow escape for their lives, while the contents of the barge went to the bottom of the stream. Meantime, the water was rising faster than the workers could remove the goods to safety from the sandy shore, and hundreds of cases, undermined by the water, toppled into the river and were carried away by the current. At some future day, dredges deepening the river may come upon deposits of canned corned beef. So far as I know, the matter was never made a subject of investigation.

Batoche was taken May 12th. Four days later three Mounted Police Scouts, Houri, Armstrong and Dale (or Diehl) happened upon Riel some three miles from General Middleton's Camp. He was quite willing, even anxious to surrender, but feared personal violence from the troops. The scouts, however, re-assured him, pointing out that he was unknown, and they at once conducted him to the General's tent without attracting attention from any quarter. That evening these same scouts arrived at Clark's Crossing with despatches from the General to the Minister of Militia, advising of Riel's capture and the ending of the Rebellion so far as this district was concerned. Houri also brought for me from the General instructions that no mention of the event was to be made on the wire, and that under no circumstances were newspaper correspondents or

others to be permitted to make it known over the telegraph. This order was due to the fact that it had been decided to take Riel to Ottawa for trial, and the General feared demonstrations en route should it become known that Riel was on the train. However, on the following day, probably due to instructions from Ottawa, I was advised that Riel was to be taken to Regina, and the taboo regarding information was off. Hourie, to whom the rebel chief surrendered, had in his possession a revolver, fully loaded, handed over by Riel. It was of so small a calibre that it could have been carried in the vest pocket. He offered me one of the cartridges from the cylinder, and was surprised to find that I placed no value on it. Shortly after the Scouts had left the General's camp to come to the Crossing, it became known that Riel had been taken and the majority of the press correspondents hurried to the telegraph office to advise their various papers. I showed them the General's prohibition, and with one exception they all accepted the situation gracefully. This man stormed and insisted that I take his copy despite the General's veto. Finding threats and storming of no avail, he went away, returning an hour later gleefully announcing that he had secured a courier to carry his correspondence to Humboldt, the nearest telegraph office, some 60 miles east. I replied that I was much obliged for the information since I would at once telegraph the operator not to send it—a contingency which evidently had not occurred to him. I believe he must have sent a second courier after the first as none ever reached Humboldt.

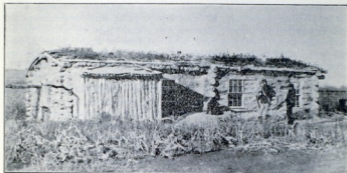
Two days later Riel was started on his way to Regina by the steamer *Northcote*—a journey which was to prove his last—in charge of Captain G. H. Young. The steamer halted at Clark's Crossing for about an hour in order to despatch telegrams, and Captain Young took me to the boat to meet Riel, who was dressed quietly, and who in manner and appearance was as unlike a desperado or rebel chief as was possible to imagine. His captors were treating him courteously and he appeared to have the liberty of the boat, though no doubt he was being closely watched.

After Batoche, the troops moved on to Prince Albert where such Indians of the district as had arisen, surrendered. Then the General, with his forces and with additional troops from Battleford, proceeded by steamers to Fort Pitt in order to effect the capture of Big Bear and his allies, Pitt being reached on June 2nd. The troops gone, there was little telegraphing to do at Clark's Crossing, and I was ordered to proceed to Pitt, which order I obeyed, arriving there by steamer on the heels of the military forces. The telegraph line passed about 40 miles south

of Pitt, and I was given a lineman, a horse and buckboard, with seven men of "B" Battery as escort, and instructed to cut in on the wire and open an office at the nearest point, which was a little north of where Marshall Station is now. Here, in a park-like glade we pitched our tents and established an office which was called Straubenzie, after Col. Straubenzie, a Crimean veteran attached to General Middleton's staff. During the ensuing month, the name became a familiar one in the Canadian newspapers, all news of the Big Bear chase being sent through this office. Mounted couriers arrived and departed daily, bearing despatches to and from the Department at Ottawa, as also by courtesy press reports for the newspapers. Telegrams interchanged between the General and the Militia Department were a medley of ordinary English words and others adapted from Slater's Code, with which I was familiar, and, as a result, knew the contents of all messages handled by me. Throughout the campaign I was impressed by the reluctance of the General to permit the troops to take any avoidable chance against the enemy, with the evident desire of sparing his civilian soldiers as much as possible. With this view, his subordinates were not in agreement, claiming that there would be less loss of life were the troops permitted to make direct attacks. On the morning of the final day at Batoche this difference of opinion was so accentuated as to cause strained relations, the officers in the afternoon, headed by Colonel Williams, taking matters into their own hands and ordering a charge without reference to the General, who at the moment was in his tent. The charge having been successful and virtually ending the campaign so far as the Metis were concerned, the matter, by common consent, was dropped. Officially, the General was given credit for the successful ending.

Once only while at Straubenzie was the wire tampered with, when it was apparently hacked through with a hatchet about four miles from camp. Interruptions occurred a few times, but these were accidental and never of long duration, though we could not as yet get through to Edmonton. Life here, however, was far from being all cakes and ale. We suffered greatly from lack of food, as, except for forwarding despatches, the military authorities appeared to have forgotten, or to have overlooked our existence. Upon one occasion, we lived for three days on a pot of beans, which the cook had boiled upon receiving them. We had not even hardtack to accompany them, the result being that when the beans went sour, as they were certain to do in hot weather, we all suffered from what appeared to be ptomaine poisoning. I had been sending in urgent letters to headquarters pointing out our situation, finally receiving an apologetic letter

from Colonel Osborne Smith, who had charge of the commissariat, stating that different parcels of supplies intended for us had, through mistake, been forwarded to other camps. With the note came a quantity of provisions, hard tack, corned beef, beans and tea, sufficient to cover our present needs, but at no time did we receive regular supplies. When I had been at Straubenzie about two weeks, the men of "B" Battery received orders to



*Wood Mountain*

Police Headquarters and Government Telegraph Office, where Sitting Bull surrendered to Inspector Crozier, 1877. Figures in photograph: Dr. Haultain and J. Stuart Macdonald. Photo taken by Superintendent Jarvis.

rejoin their command, and an equal number of men from the Mounted Police replaced them. The men of the Battery had been badly off in the matter of clothing, but they were Beau Brummels as compared with the Police. The latter had been scouting the woods in quest of Big Bear for some weeks, until both inner and outer garments were reduced to tatters. For shirts, they wore discarded flour sacks through which openings had been made for heads and arms, while what uniforms they possessed were mostly rags. Going out of my tent one warm afternoon, I noticed several of them squatted down, nude to the waist, and apparently absorbed in watching something on the ground. Curious to see what was holding their attention, I strolled over to Constable Bell, who was nearest, to question him when I saw that his apology for a shirt was spread over an ant-hill, of which there were many in the vicinity. I said to him, "Where is Corporal McMinn, he appears to be the only

absentee from the party?" He answered: "The Corporal is behind that bluff; he has two ant-hills." But despite their hardships in the matter of food and clothes, and the fact that they received little consideration from some of the militia authorities, these men were ever ready to undertake any duty which presented itself. And let me say here that the Mounted Police had a much larger share in putting down the Rebellion than they have been given credit for, and I speak as one who was in a position to know. General Middleton's attitude towards them was, if not unfriendly, at least not cordial, and this disposition was reflected in some degree in the stand taken by a few of his subordinates. This, however, was not true of such of the Militia as were stationed at Battleford, where the relations of the two forces were at once cordial and appreciative.

Towards the end of my stay at Straubenzie, Corporal McMinn and I, while riding along the line, came upon a solitary mounted Indian. Upon questioning him, he explained that he had taken no part in the Rebellion; that he had been on a visit to relatives at Edmonton, and was returning to his reserve near Battleford. As Poundmaker had surrendered and there was now no trouble south of the river, we allowed him to proceed. McMinn's comrades, however, credited him with having shot the Indian, and only last season, 42 years later, I heard the story told as a fact with a wealth of detail. Probably much history is made in the same fashion.

Late one evening a courier brought from headquarters a number of important telegrams, most of which contained instructions to various Commanding Officers regarding the movement of troops. I had barely started sending these when the wire ceased working. From the fact that a slight current came through, I knew that the wire was on the ground. By five o'clock the following morning, the lineman and I were on our way eastward, taking the despatches with us. After some 20 miles we came upon the wire lying on the ground for a distance of about 100 yards. To effect a circuit, it was necessary to find a moist place in which to ground the wire, but although we dug some distance we could obtain no sign of dampness. In this dilemma I, being bookish, remembered Gulliver's action at a critical time, and repeating the incident to Joe, suggested that he follow Gulliver's example. But Joe's sense of decorum was outraged, and he vehemently protested that he had not come from Montreal and risked his life a hundred times among savages to undertake tasks such as this. Then I told him that I would return in five minutes and if when I returned the wire was not working, he should consider himself discharged, and

that he would have to get back to Montreal as best he could—which, of course, was sheer bluff. But, on my return, the wire was working clearly, and the “ground” held long enough for me to get the despatches through to their destinations.

In the latter days of June, Big Bear’s prisoners, aided by the Wood Crees who had grown tired of their allies from the plains, escaped in small groups and falling in with detachments who were searching for them, were, by degrees, brought into Pitt. By the end of the month all were in safety, hungry, ragged, tired to exhaustion, but no longer in dread of massacre. By this time, Big Bear, driven from point to point until unable to continue, surrendered to the Police near Carlton. With his surrender, the final act was complete, the Rebellion was over, and the troops at Fort Pitt, their work done, were glad to embark on the steamers which were to carry them eastward.

While the trouble in the northern part of the Territories was at its height, there was more or less unrest in the south and the Government hurriedly constructed telegraph lines from Calgary to Macleod and Lethbridge and from Moose Jaw to Wood Mountain, the latter place being the headquarters of a Mounted Police Division. This latter line was built under the direction of Mr. John McMillan, the present manager of the C.P.R. Telegraphs, then a young man under twenty. There was no trail, but Andre Gaudry, a well-known half-breed, undertook to guide the builders by the shortest route. The line was completed at the end of June and on July 4th, the day on which the troops commenced their homeward journey, and on which Colonel Williams died aboard the steamer North-West, I was ordered to proceed to Wood Mountain and open an office there. Arriving at Wood Mountain, I found the Post in charge of Inspector (later Superintendent) A. R. Macdonnel, who, in addition to the regular Police Force, was in command of a body of scouts recruited from the Regina and Moose Jaw districts. There was very little disaffection among the resident half-breeds, a number of whom were amalgamated with the Scouts, but the nearness of the Montana boundary left the country open to raids from horse thieves and other bad characters with whom northern Montana was at that time infested. In addition, after Batoche, many of the rebels making their escape to Montana, passed that way and it was feared that they might be tempted to commit depredations while enroute. Police patrols were established eastward to Wood End and west to connect with a similar patrol from the Cypress Hills. The Summer was a busy and exciting one, but with the coming of Winter nomadic travel ceased and



the majority of the men, including myself, were withdrawn to Regina, returning the following Spring with Major Gagnon in command.

The Telegraph Office at Wood Mountain was installed in the Officers' Quarters, which were comprised of a series of squat log buildings loosely connected, comprising four rooms in all. The roof was of sods, and during heavy rains leaked so badly that we were compelled to shift our table and our beds to that part of the rooms where the least water came through. It was in this building that Sitting Bull surrendered to Major Crozier after the Custer massacre. In 1888, however, new frame quarters were built, the contractor being the late R. H. Williams, of Regina, after which living conditions were much improved. Major Jarvis succeeded Major Gagnon as Commanding Officer, with them being associated at different times Inspectors Wattam, Drayner, Baker and Primrose, the latter being at present Police Magistrate for Edmonton.

Shortly after opening the office at Wood Mountain, the Department sent a pair of telephones for experimental purposes, one of which was installed at Wood Mountain, the other at Moose Jaw. These were, to the best of my knowledge, the first telephones reaching the Territories, and, although many improvements have been made since that time, these instruments worked as clearly as those of today. On one occasion, Agent Rutherford, of Moose Jaw, got a Sioux Indian into the office while I got another into mine where, under the guidance of J. H. Thomson, who spoke Sioux fluently, he was instructed how to proceed. It was amusing to watch the look of amazement that came over his countenance as he recognized the voice of the speaker who he knew had gone to Moose Jaw. He then spoke in turn, receiving a reply, whereupon he dropped the receiver and turning to Thomson said excitedly: "If it costs a pony, I'm going to have one of those things; it speaks Sioux as well as I do." However, the reaction of another Indian on the following day was altogether different. Having just returned from a hunt, he had not learned of his friend's experience and when he heard the voice of his relative, he rushed into the adjoining room expecting to find him there. Then, exclaiming that the box contained a devil, he hurried from the building and never entered it again.

I remained at Wood Mountain until the Spring of 1890, when I was succeeded by J. H. Thomson, to whom I had taught telegraphy, and who continued there as agent until his death in March, 1923. Thomson was an ex-policeman, having joined the Force in 1876. He was a man of good education and at the

same time a skilled mechanic. His whole lifetime in the West was spent close to the Montana boundary, where he was the best known and one of the most highly respected pioneers of Southern Saskatchewan. He had an intimate knowledge of the Sioux language and character, and was of great service to the Government in their negotiations with that people.

In the Fall of 1884 the Department decided to change the route of the line between Battleford and Edmonton. There was at this time no settlement, except at Bresaylor, throughout the district through which the line passed, while Indian Agencies at Onion Lake and Saddle Lake, on the north side of the river, were without communication of any kind. It was, therefore, decided to erect a new line from Battleford, crossing the river at Fort Pitt, with offices at Pitt, Mooswa, Saddle Lake, Victoria (now Pakan) and Fort Saskatchewan. The breaking out of the Rebellion prevented this change being put into effect immediately, the work commencing in the Spring of 1886. Between Battleford and Pitt an innovation was made in that the poles were of iron, hollow cylinders 15 feet high,  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches in diameter, with a double ground plate to hold them firmly. The experiment was a thorough success, the poles immune to prairie fires, lightning and other foes of wooden poles, remained in place until the line was abandoned 40 years later. From Pitt to Edmonton the line was built of tamarack poles under the direction of Lineman McKay, with G. H. Clouston, of Battleford, as foreman of the work.

In September, 1886, an office was opened at Henrietta, near the elbow of the North Saskatchewan, with L. P. O. Noel as agent. Mr. Noel, then a youth of 16, remained in the Service for many years, for the greater part of the time as agent at Battleford. He ultimately resigned to enter the Department of the Interior as Agent of Dominion Lands, a position which he still holds as agent at Winnipeg.

Naturally, many changes in personnel have occurred since the inception of the Service. F. N. Gisborne, the first General Superintendent, was on his death succeeded by D. H. Keeley, who held the position until 1925 when he was superannuated, dying in the following year. Mr. Keeley was succeeded in the position by the present incumbent, Major J. E. Gobeil, M.C., who had for many years been Technical Assistant to the General Superintendent.

In the West, Mr. Hartley Gisborne retired at the end of 1897, being succeeded by the writer, who in 1905 was promoted to be General Inspector of Western Lines. He, in turn, was

succeeded by his brother, R. C. Macdonald, who retired in 1924 and was succeeded by Mr. J. D. Noel, who had been for some years Superintendent of the Saskatchewan Division, and who now took charge of both provinces.

The greater portion of the original lines have been abandoned, owing to the fact that the commercial telegraph companies now occupy the districts once served by the Government lines, but much outlying territory is still served by the latter. Hudson's Hope, B.C., at the head of the navigation of the Peace, is the terminus of one line commencing at Edmonton. This line serves many important intervening points—Fort St. John, Pouce Coupe, Grande Prairie, Peace River and others. From Athabasca a line extends down the river to McMurray, while a second line from Athabasca runs eastward to Lac La Biche, serving points between. Another runs from Battleford north to Isle la Crosse, a distance of 300 miles, and is an important factor in opening that district to settlement. As the country develops, it will be found necessary, as the commercial companies will not undertake this work until settlement warrants financial returns on the investment.

Perhaps nothing better illustrates the progress made in the former North-West Territories in a single generation than a comparison of the telegraph business of 35 years ago and that of today. In 1891, the writer was joint agent at Moose Jaw for the Government Telegraph Service and the C.P.R. Telegraphs. At that time he did all the commercial telegraph work of Moose Jaw, and, in addition, delivered telegrams received and did such work for the railway as was not handled by the despatchers, of whom there were three: A. Wilcox, J. Rutherford and C. D. Fisher, the former of whom is still in harness as Assistant Manager of the Canadian National Railway at Winnipeg. Today there are some 70 telegraph employees in Moose Jaw. An even more striking example is furnished by the growth at Edmonton. In 1898, the combined business of the C.P.R. and the Government was handled by the Government Agent, George Voyer, and later by his successor, Sam McNamara, while today there are 145 employees on the staffs of the different telegraph companies. A tremendous expansion in 30 years!

# Appendix

## 1. *Report of F. N. Gisborne*

### TELEGRAPH LINES —NORTH WEST TERRITORIES

Ottawa, 8th November, 1883.

Sir,—I have the honour to report that I left Ottawa, August 22nd, and arrived at Winnipeg, via New York and Chicago, on the 26th of the same month, having meanwhile examined the Postal and Rapid Systems of telegraphy, between the two latter cities, and also several systems of telephony to which I shall refer in a separate report when treating upon such subjects.

Having purchased the necessary outfit, viz: a pair of horses, harness, buckboard, etc., etc., and attended to various matters of business connected with line construction contracts in progress, I left Winnipeg for Qu'Appelle Station on Saturday, September 1st, and having completed all requirements on Monday, the 3rd, started the following morning for Fort Qu'Appelle accompanied by one man, and by Mr. Hartley Gisborne, the District Superintendent (in a single horse buckboard) then en route for his new headquarters at Battleford, as directed by the Minister of Public Works.

When at Fort Qu'Appelle. I found it necessary to make arrangements for a new station house, as Mr. Clarke then notified me that from 1st January next he should charge \$10 a month rental for a small corner in his dwelling house, plus a large estimate for fuel and light. Versus such demand, a central town lot upon which a well-built, two-roomed house has been erected, was offered to the Government either at cost price, viz: \$360, or at a rental of \$8 a month, and I recommend that the offer of purchase be accepted.

The land between Qu'Appelle Station and Fort Qu'Appelle (eighteen miles), is good and well adapted for settlement, and the telegraph line has been substantially erected upon the winter trail, which is approximate to the summer route of travel.

After passing over a well-watered and wooded prairie country for twenty-five miles, bad weather overtook us, and during the ensuing night our horses, though hobbled, were

stolen. Our District Superintendent's pony was found next evening and a most diligent search was instituted during two subsequent days, both Indians and half-breeds being employed under a promised reward of \$50, if successful in finding them, but without avail, and I was finally necessitated to return to Fort Qu'Appelle to procure another pair of horses (under an agreement to purchase or to hire them *pro tem* if meanwhile the stolen horses were recovered). I may here state that having given due notice of the theft to the Mounted Police, and having offered the above reward they were finally produced from the hiding place, (where they had been cached in expectation of a higher reward being offered), within a week of my departure and are now in possession of our District Superintendent, who requires them for the service.

Despite such delay we arrived at the Government Model Farm at Touchwood on Sunday, the 9th September. The land throughout the sixty-six miles traversed, is almost uniformly good, though somewhat marshy in spots, with plenty of good water and groves of poplar trees. The telegraph line follows the winter trail, which is shorter and better adapted for line repairs during the most inclement season of the year.

After leaving Touchwood Model Farm, we traversed a well wooded and watered lay of land for about ten miles (upon which several Cree Indians had erected neat log huts and had cultivated small fields of grain), until we entered upon a treeless and, in great part, alkali plain over which the telegraph line was erected in a substantial manner for a distance of about thirty-three miles until we struck the rising, and well wooded ground of Humboldt, where the newly-built telegraph line terminates and connects with the old line from Winnipeg via Fort Pelly (Livingston) to Edmonton, upon the abandoned northern route of the Canadian Pacific Railway.

Humboldt telegraph office is at present in a log hut which belongs to the mail contractors who now require it for their own service, and it will be necessary to erect a small station house two or three miles south of its present position, where good water and wood are abundant.

The land about Humboldt is very well suited for farming purposes, and is of inviting appearance to settlers.

Finding that the old telegraph poles were rotten and that the line could be materially shortened by following the established western trail towards Prince Albert, I entered into a written agreement with Mr. Andrew McConnell (the contractor

for the Prince Albert branch line, who had also erected the poles across the Touchwood to Humboldt alkali plain), for the erection of an entirely new line of poles, using the old wire, etc., for a distance of fourteen miles at \$60 a mile, and also instructed him to thoroughly repair the line, putting in alternate new poles where required as far as Clark's Crossing on the South Saskatchewan River, and for which he would be allowed a fair proportionate price, upon the certificate of our District Superintendent.

We left Humboldt on the 13th September. The trail passes over a long rolling prairie destitute of wood for thirty-two miles. When several heavy bluffs (the local name for groves of trees) are found upon rising ground where I have since had a small log shelter hut, 20 feet by 10 feet, constructed for the use of line repairers and their horses, and I may here state that such huts (where a little firewood and hay can be stored) are absolutely necessary for the due maintenance of the line during the winter months. They are divided into two compartments, each 10 feet by 10 feet, one with a mud chimney and log flooring for the repairers (who here meet midway between stations), the other chamber being for the shelter of the horses. The cost of these huts, including doors and one small window, is, per contract, \$125 each.

From shelter hut No. 1 the telegraph line passes over good land with occasional outlying bluffs of small poplar wood, marshes and ponds, twenty-eight miles to Clark's Crossing on the South Saskatchewan. Here, contrary to expectations, there was no ferry boat, as advertised in the newspapers, and we had to travel down the eastern bank of the river, fourteen miles to Saskatoon, the proposed future town of the Temperance Colony. At Saskatoon there were three or four framed buildings awaiting the arrival of a raft of lumber from Medicine Hat Station on the Canadian Pacific Railway, to complete them. Here we found the scow ferry destined and then en route for Clark's Crossing, and having embarked the three horses and two buckboards, we laboured for three hours and were carried three miles down stream before we could effect a landing upon the opposite side of the river, and had then to drive back along its western bank to Clark's Crossing where we arrived long after dark.

The telegraph wire was carried across the river at Clark's between two rotten poles, since replaced by two heavy spruce spars for which I paid \$15, per contract, as they had first to be rafted up stream many miles and then hauled up the steep banks of the river there over 100 feet in altitude. From the

western side of Clark's Crossing the branch telegraph line to Prince Albert starts, and it will be necessary to erect a repeating station house either upon the right or left bank of the river. Meanwhile, however, an office has been opened by Mr. Caswell, a resident telegraph operator, who, with his brother, has erected a small house upon their pre-empted farm land, about two miles north of the Crossing, and upon the Prince Albert route.

When there, the poles (poplar), furnished cost free by the Prince Albert inhabitants, had lately been delivered on the ground, and have since been erected by the contractor, Mr. Andrew McConnell, who expected to complete the connection about the end of November.

I may here state that as poplar poles rot off at the surface of the ground within two or at the longest three years, and can then be reset, shortened by three or four feet, to last another season, it would be much more economical to procure spruce, hachatack or iron poles, even at a cost of two or three dollars each, rather than to make use of such fragile and unreliable timber, more especially as even poplar poles will now have to be transported for many miles (sometimes thirty) as the small bluffs or groves have been culled for those in use to such an extent that little other than bean stick can be procured within moderate hauling distances. I shall refer to this subject again at the end of this report.

Leaving Clark's Crossing, open rolling prairie destitute of wood, was traversed until we arrived near the elbow of the North Saskatchewan, at a flat-bottomed ravine known as Telegraph Coulee, distant thirty miles, where, also, a shelter hut (No. 2) has since been constructed, and about a ton of hay stacked for winter use.

Travelling westward nine miles, we next crossed Eagle Creek, a wild and precipitous ravine, with a clear stream of running water at its base; then came rolling prairie, capped with poplar bluffs, upon good though sandy land, which stretched northward three or four miles to the banks of the North Saskatchewan, and then passing through several wooded, steep gulleys, we arrived at the east side of Battleford River at 6 p.m., 18th September, 302 miles distant from Qu'Appelle station.

With the exception of one heavy fall, caused by the seat of the buckboard giving way, and by which I was much cut and bruised, the journey was accomplished without accident.

Considering the rotten condition of the poles the telegraph line throughout was in tolerably effective condition, the wire

plover, were in wonderful abundance and easy of approach; but no deer, and only two prairie wolves, two foxes, a few badgers and skunks, with numerous gophers and muskrats, were seen throughout my entire journey of over 1,000 miles.

For fifteen miles east and twenty-five west of Blackfoot Coulee to Grizzly Bear, the land is rolling and hilly with very little wood but excellent soil. Grizzly Bear is a flat alkali bottom about 150 feet below the surface of the prairie and from a quarter to a half mile wide, with bluffs of poplar upon its western bank, which extend twelve or thirteen miles westward, and bring you, at thirty miles distance, to Buffalo Coulee, a similar depression, each having a small creek of slightly alkaline water running through it. West of Buffalo Creek the country is also rolling and hilly, with innumerable ponds, timber bluffs, and excellent soil, until an alkaline plain and swampy ground of forty miles in extent intervenes between it and the marshy and wooded country about Hay Lake.

The telegraph line throughout this distance is in a very rotten condition, and is carried through and over lakes, and through groves of timber, now grown up, where it was formerly cut out by the C.P.R. surveyors; the wire is also small, No. 11, weighing 199 lbs. only to the mile, and is strung upon brackets much split, and from small glass insulators of inferior quality.

Having met the line-repairer from Edmonton, then distant about 100 miles, I learned that the telegraph line west of Hay Lake passed through a swampy and woody country quite impassable for wheeled vehicles for eighteen miles until it entered upon the main trail between Edmonton and Calgary, and as I had to pass over that trail and could then inspect the telegraph line erected thereon, when on my return journey to Winnipeg, we, per his advice, followed the Beaver Lake trail which runs northwest from a small lake fifteen miles west of Buffalo Coulee. This Beaver Lake trail for twenty-nine miles passes over rolling prairies, interspersed with several large shallow lakes, with occasional patches of wood and sections of good land, the intervening sections showing considerable alkali, and thence having crossed the headwaters of Vermillion River, a small running creek, entered upon rising ground which continued for twenty miles, the land throughout being very rich and producing grass and pea vines of luxuriant growth, until we arrived at the log huts and small clearings of two or three French-Canadian half-breeds, who have settled upon the north-eastern shore of Beaver Lake. This lake is a large shallow sheet of water said to be forty miles long by from five to ten broad, and frequented by countless flocks of ducks, geese and pelicans.



writing and arithmetic, but also instructed—the girls in household duties, and the boys, as soon as they are strong enough, at about 14 years of age, in the cultivation of the land, etc. A large general hospital, 80 by 80 feet, and three storeys in height, in which sufferers of all creeds will be generously attended to by Sisters of Mercy, was in course of erection; all the stone and brick work, carpentering, plastering, etc., being performed in the established workshops of the Mission.

Here also, the inhabitants were anxious to have telegraphic or telephonic connection via Edmonton, and they volunteered to provide good spruce or hachatack poles free of cost if the Government will construct a short nine-mile line to their settlement.

At Edmonton a large town has been plotted and the great bulk of lots actually disposed of at prices varying from \$50 to \$800 each, over a space exceeding 1,000 acres, and already over two dozen framed houses and stores have been erected thereupon.

By general consent and approval the telegraph station has lately been removed from an old and inconvenient room in the Hudson Bay Fort to a new building in a more central situation, and the operator, Mr. Taylor, is of opinion that the station will be more than self-supporting when a good and reliable line has been constructed.

As far as practicable (the station being destitute of almost every necessary appliance for maintenance until my visit when such requirements were promptly furnished) the line will be put in order for winter use by two or three active men whom I provided with a wagon, pair of horses, etc.

Leaving Edmonton on the morning of the 3rd October, we crossed the North Saskatchewan River by a wire rope ferry and mounted the high and heavily wooded banks opposite the Fort, where the last great massacre of Blackfeet Indians by their enemies the Crees, took place, and travelled alongside of the telegraph line upon the main trail towards Calgary until at about eighteen or nineteen miles distant (there are no mile posts or measured distances over the trails, a desideratum which if attended to would be an immense boon to all travellers) until it branched off at right angles eastward to Hay Lake. The poles were in a great measure rotten, the wire being small, and the insulators poor, as throughout the route eastward to within 25 miles of Battleford where No. 9 wire commences. The country through which we passed was inviting and fit for settlement, timber and water being abundant. Twenty miles further on.

distant about 185 miles from Edmonton, and certainly one of the most picturesquely beautiful places throughout the thousand miles over which I had driven my now thoroughly exhausted team of lean horses, despite their being carefully attended to, and regularly fed upon oats (two days only excepted) during the entire journey.

I may here state that at Calgary I was fortunate enough to make an exceedingly satisfactory sale of my entire outfit, which had cost about \$490, for the sum of \$367.50, so that my actual transport materials throughout the foregoing long journey cost less than \$125. I was also thus enabled to repurchase a necessary and thoroughly efficient outfit for our District Superintendent's service upon the line between Qu'Appelle, Prince Albert and Battleford, at a much less cost than if I had paid freight upon the horses and much worn material back to Qu'Appelle plus the hire of the mare taken from Fort Qu'Appelle, and the then value of an exhausted and lean pony which was estimated at \$40 only by the Calgary purchaser of the outfit as a whole.

From Calgary I proceeded per Canadian Pacific Railway via Medicine Hat, Regina and Brandon, to Winnipeg, and thence via Chicago to Ottawa, where I arrived October 29th, 1883.

In conclusion of this report I have now to add the following observations and recommendations:

1. That the telegraph line between Qu'Appelle Station and Humboldt, 151 miles, and between Clark's Crossing and Prince Albert, 95 miles, being newly built, although of poplar poles, is in good order; the wire, No. 8, weighing 376 lbs. per statute mile, and the brackets and insulators being of good quality.

2. That the line between Humboldt and Clark's Crossing, 60 miles, has been rebuilt for 14 miles, and repaired for 46 miles with alternate new poles, the wire being No. 9, weighing 303 lbs. to the mile, but the brackets being old, and the insulators of small and poor description.

3. That the line from Clark's Crossing to Battleford, 155 miles, is in a bad condition, the poles (poplar) being rotten; the wire, No. 9, good, but the insulators and brackets poor. It has, however, been placed in as good order as practicable by three repairers, for winter service.

4. That from Battleford to Edmonton, 302 miles, the line is upon its last legs, the poles being rotten, the wire, beyond

3. That telegraph stations be established at not over 100 miles apart, and that shelter huts for repairers' use be erected within 33 miles of each station, or each other.

4. That the lines between Qu'Appelle Station on the Canadian Pacific Railway, via Touchwood, Humboldt and Clark's Crossing to Battleford, and between Clark's Crossing and Prince Albert, be maintained in effective working order, the poles being gradually replaced by a better class of timber or iron, as required.

5. That the 24 or 25 miles of No. 9 wire, west of Battleford be taken down, and that the line thence to Edmonton, which passes through an almost entirely uninhabited country, one not likely to be settled or traversed by a branch railway for many years, and far south of the North Saskatchewan route of travel via Fort Pitt, be abandoned *in toto*.

6. That the offer of the inhabitants of Saskatchewan and of St. Albert to provide spruce and hachmatack poles, be accepted, and that a line be erected to those settlements, 18 miles and 9 miles, respectively, from Edmonton.

7. That an entirely new line, furnished with hachmatack and spruce poles, which contractors offer to deliver along the trail for \$1.40 each, be erected between Edmonton and Calgary, the distance being 180 to 185 miles.

8. That prior to the erection of such telegraph line, a new main trail probably approximate to the present one though shorter, be surveyed out between Edmonton and the most convenient station for freighters, at or near Calgary.

Finally I may add that should the foregoing recommendations meet with the approval of the Government, I am of opinion that, when established, such lines would not only be self-supporting, but also at a comparatively small cost, tend very much to the prosperity of the inhabitants, and also to the more rapid settlement of the North-West; nor should it be forgotten that the Calgary to Edmonton line would be a section of its future expansion to the Peace River district.

I also take the liberty of suggesting that a very small expenditure of money upon the survey and improvements of the main trails between important points of distribution, would most materially lessen the cost of freight conveyance throughout the North-West, and, by facilitating the speed of mail delivery and passenger travel, greatly assist the immediate settlement of the country through which they run.

# Synopsis of the Work of Mr. Lindeburgh in the Service of the Government

*Contributed by his daughter, Mrs. Dr. MacKay, Tisdale.*

1874—John W. Sifton had the contract to build a Government Telegraph line from Cross Lake (18 miles west of Selkirk, Man.) to Fort Pelly, Sask.

1880—Mr. Lindeburgh was placed at Humboldt as telegraph agent there, and he also had charge of the Meteorological Observation Station there. Geo. Weldon, his wife, little daughter and his wife's sister, Miss Margaret Liggett, made their home at "Old Humboldt."

1882—A new telegraph line from South Qu'Appelle was built, passing through Fort Qu'Appelle, Touchwood Hills, across the Salt Plain to Humboldt; here it joined the original line built, in 1874, from Selkirk. Mr. Lindeburgh had charge of this construction.

1883—Humboldt Station was closed. Mr. Weldon and his family left, he becoming agent for the C.P.R. at Grenfell. Mr. Lindeburgh was sent to Touchwood Hills to open up a Government Telegraph Station there. He took land, built his own home and office, and opened up what is known as the Kutawa Telegraph Office, 70 miles from Qu'Appelle, the nearest railway station, and about 70 miles from Humboldt. He was line repairer, as well, from Fort Qu'Appelle to Humboldt.

1884—He married Miss Margaret Liggett in April of 1884. who was then living at Grenfell with the Weldons.

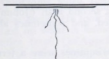
1885—The Indian Rebellion. Although there was no open fighting at Kutawa, the Indians were very hostile. A close watch had to be kept by the operator at the telegraph office. He was by the instrument day and night, snatching bits of sleep by his desk, ever ready for the "sunder" to receive the messages. The wire was cut west of Kutawa. Telegrams containing orders, etc., were received over the wire from Qu'Appelle and Fort Qu'Appelle, and despatch riders were sent out from the Kutawa office with them to the troops west.

ing about 5 miles from the Kutawa Telegraph Office. There was a very busy two years at this office doing all the business in the way of telegrams on the railway construction camps.

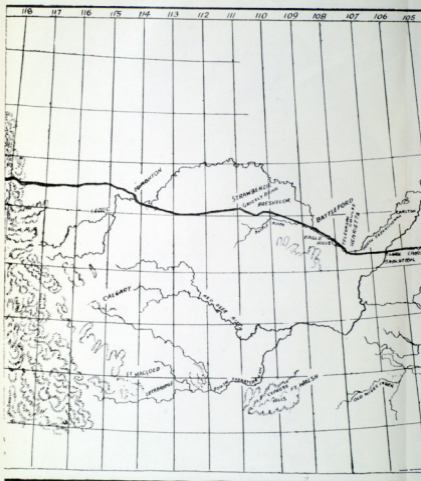
Following the building of the stations on the G.T.P. the business dwindled away from the government offices along the old line, and in 1922 the office at Kutawa was closed, the old line abandoned and dismantled in 1923, and Mr. Lindeburgh, after a continuous service of nearly 50 years, was given superannuation.

The last bit of construction work Mr. Lindeburgh did for the Government was when he was in charge of the building of a telephone line from File Hills Agency to Fort Qu'Appelle.

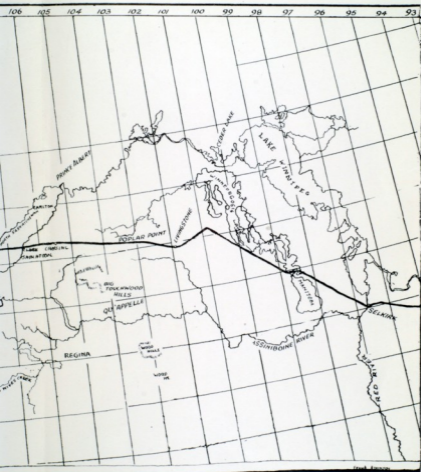
Mr. Lindeburgh still lives at the old home at Kutawa and has reached the ripe old age of 85 years.



With Crozier at Duck Lake, Carlton and Prince Albert.  
 Battleford in Danger.  
 Fish Creek and Batoche.  
 The Battle of Cut Knife Hill.  
 Frog Lake and Fort Pitt.  
 With General Strange at Frenchman's Butte.  
 The Wanderings of Big Bear's Son.  
 The Police Share in the Rebellion.  
 The Results of the 1885 Rebellion.  
 Louis Riel and His Colleagues.  
 The Saskatchewan Herald's Story of 1885.  
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Col. James Walker	Calgary
J. T. Warden	Cut Knife
Robert Jefferson	Battleford
D. H. McDonald	Fort Qu'Appelle
C. N. Bell, LL.D.	Winnipeg
J. W. Morrow, LL. D.	Medicine Hat
Ernest Brown	Vegreville
W. B. Cameron	Vancouver

Representatives—Chosen by the Society to assist the organizer in membership campaign; to refer Old Timers to the Society; assist in marking the historic spots; collecting documents and relics. These representatives are:

G. L. Cooke, M.D.	Lloydminster
R. A. Schrag	Vegreville
A. J. McCormack	Edmonton
H. J. Bell, LL.B.	Cut Knife
The MacKay Bookstore	Toronto
Thorburn and Abbott	Ottawa
Van Clelland	Winnipeg
D. M. Finlayson, M.L.A.	Iffley
William Dodds,	Cut Knife
Mrs. E. Storer	Moose Jaw
J. H. Mayall	Maidstone
Canada Drug Company	Regina
M. O. Harrison	Fort Qu'Appelle
J. C. Rowan	Yorkton
G. Goble	Rosthern
Mrs. Hugh McKenzie	Biggar
James Dymott	Paynton
E. J. Skafel, M.D.	Kamsack.

## THE OLD TIMER'S CHANT

A health to the land, my masters,  
And a toast to the rolling sea,  
The rolling, billowing wheat lands  
Tossing their plumes on the lea:  
A toast,  
And break your glass, lads,  
A toast to the long-trail men  
Who sailed the prairie schooners,  
Loaded and sailed again.

And a tear for the wives, old timer,  
The wives of the pioneer  
Who longed for the fireside comforts  
That few of them got while here:  
A tear,  
Our wives, old timers,  
With small hard-worked brown hands  
That never ceased from toiling  
For the rolling prairie lands.

A cheer for our sons, God bless them,  
And the daughters of prairie breed,  
Strong mothers of a nation  
Whose seed shall be our seed:  
A cheer,  
The Federation,  
East, West and North, be true!  
Our hearths, the King and Canada,  
The old land and the new.

—*Janet Munro.*