

Dufferin
June 11. 73.

MCGILL UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES	
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Dear Paper

Your letter dated Montreal

June 2 arrived this morning, & I was glad to know of your safe return from N. S. & that the prospects of getting the iron business settled up are good.

Dr. Bishop's letter arrived in due course, & I have since received the copy mailed to Collingwood. Capt. Cameron has ordered a copy of the book mentioned in it in hopes of finding something more. At the same time the position of the N.W. angle is now pretty certainly determined.

I have been here ever since my arrival, but now hope to get away in a few days, probably in the first instance to the West, & perhaps next month to the Lake of the Woods.

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Capt Cameron lives, with his wife in a little house of his own about a quarter of a mile down the river from the Barracks, & we do not see a great deal of him here. He seems to occupy himself generally in writing out general orders & memoranda, & has not much to do with the actual work of the Commission. He is always hatching some great project, such as the getting out of some improved cart, or some new way of making a fence at the farm of 52. Last winter he had a snow-plough built on a new model. When completed it was found quite beyond the strength of a horse to move, & so after a time was broken up & some fabulous number of tables made from the timber.

Capt Anderson the Chief Astronomer is in reality the managing head of the party, & has a great deal of common sense, & tact.

The quarters here are quite on an extensive scale; they cost altogether some 36,000 dollars & consist of 6 or 8 very well built wooden

houses, of various sizes & appropriated to various uses. There are also belonging to the commission about 170 horses, 30 yoke of oxen, waggons & carts innumerable, two ambulances, &c. &c. requiring a small army of men to look after. For our efficient protection, for ascertaining the nature of the country in advance we have 30 half-breeds as mounted scouts, all armed with Spencer rifles & riding little unshod Red River ponies. This escort is one of Cameron's ideas & generally looked upon as nonsense, especially as all the teamsters, servants &c. are to have spencers as well.

The officers are as follows. Capt. Anderson. Capt. Salway & Scatterstone Assist. ant. astronomers. Ashe & King Sub. assist. astron. Col. Forrest (just arrived) Surveyor. Russel Surveyor. Boswell Vet. Surg. Quarter Master of the horse generally. Dr. Burgess Surgeon, with an assistant Dr. Miller. Lieut. Ward Secretary. Capt. Haerker. Quarter Master. Commander! Hallett of the half breed brigade.

Allman farmer; & four humble servants.
 Nearly all these mentioned were in Quarters
 here at the time I arrived but now several
 parties have started out & almost the
 whole establishment is gone.

When I get off I shall have sufficient transport
 to take somewhat long excursions, & can besides
 join any party that appears to be favourably
 situated. I have put down for my department—
 1 Red wine cart, or two if necessary. 2 pack horses,
 1 riding horse. 2 teamsters. 1 bill tent,
 2 H.B. tents, besides this I will have my servant,
 & assistant. The latter is a Sapper named
 Duckworth, an invulnerable man who skins birds
 beautifully & has been actively employed in that
 line since my arrival.

There is absolutely no geology here, & so as
 soon as I got settled I began collecting
 plants & shooting birds. I now have nearly
 all the plants in bloom, & will soon get to

help of Duckworth have a very fair selection
of the birds. The plants are not peculiar
being apparently mostly common Canadian
forms. The birds too are mostly eastern
with just a few which I have not seen in
Canada. Yesterday a great Crane was sent
in from the Marais River. It measured
over 7 feet from tip to tip, & appears by reference to
Falck's book to be *Grus Americana*. It was
unfortunately very high, but by liberal treatment
with Carbonic Acid overnight we managed to
get it so much disrupted as to make it
possible to skin it. I think after all it will
make a very good specimen.

I wrote out a memorandum yesterday
asking that anything curious in Botany or
Zoology should be preserved for me, & also
stating the most important points to be noticed
& asking to be informed of any geological exposures.
This is to be circulated to the various parties &

hope may be of some use.

Dr Cooper the Surgeon & Naturalist to the American party has his specialty in ornithology. He has written a book on American birds & I believe is just an authority in that line. I came up in the boat with him & the rest of the party from Anorhead & have seen him since once or twice when down at the American fort. He does not seem to know over much in other branches of Natural History, knows a little botany, but does not go in for geology at all.

He has been shooting in stony birds at a tremendous rate ever since his arrival here.

I got all my boxes together at last, after considerable trouble, & am now only missing one black valise & its contents. If this does not come down from ferry next boat-

I fear it - is lost - for good. - all.

I got the Commissioners consent to write for a Beaumont firm for Duckworth & hope to get it up by express pretty soon. I have also ordered a good many small things from St. Paul. It is an advantage so far as getting things are concerned to be a head of a separate department, as all one has to do is to write a requisition to the Quarter Master stating needs for said department. Otherwise everything has to be passed through the secretary & any amount of red tape trouble.

The photographers (who are members of that most useful Corps the Royal Engineers, every one of whom has at least one trade) have made quite a little collection of photos. I shall get copies of these as soon as I can as they are quite cheap, & will be interesting as mementos. A few days after

On arrival we were all photo'd
 in a group with a background of clapboarded
 house. As soon as any copies are printed
 I shall send one home that you may
 see all hands.

This morning there were two run-aways.
 First a large two horse wagon loading to go west
 with Capt Anderson who was just about to start,
 went off & smashed up two spring wagons, &
 narrowly escaped running over a man &
 pulverising the half-breed's horses which were tied up
 in a clump. Next the Quarter Master's horse
 ran away with him in a sort of small gig.
 He jumped out & escaped unhurt, but the
 horse took the machine into the bushes & he
 wrecked it all to flinders.

Please excuse this unprinted letter in which I have
 put down just what I happened to think of just
 I believe me
 your affectionate son
 Capt W. Dawson