

Camp, Maggie River, C. P. R.

2 Aug, 1885.

Acc. 976

My dear George,

I did not forget your birthday yesterday, and intended to write last evening in honour of the occasion; but have deferred till to-day to have more time. It was useless to attempt to send a letter to reach you on your birthday so I think the best way wd be to write on the day instead. I do wish you very sincerely many happy returns of the day. We are both under canvas now, this being my first experience of camping for any length of time together. There are a great many things now that I would like to ask you about, in regard to camp life, now that I understand it better; but I must defer my questions till I see you again.

Your letter of the 11<sup>th</sup> June, from Victoria, reached me at Peninsula Harbour, L. Superior,

For example, the beds of broken stone for foundations to Culverts are left by the specification to class as 2<sup>nd</sup> class masonry, at an outrageous price. The Co now demand at meeting the figure, & the Contractor is suing, & no amount of re-measurement can get them out of the muddle. Again, rockwork is divided into "trap", "mica schist," & "granite", at 3 distinct prices; & as it really consists of pieces, mostly banded white & black, & intersected with dykes of diorite, classification is rather a puzzle. If it is so much jointed as not to require blasting, it is "horse rock" in situ, at a 4<sup>th</sup> figure. As the road stands, the banks are low, the curves irregular, & trains cannot run more than 12 or 15 miles an hour with safety; & it will be a very long time before the few gangs they now have pottering about can bring it into anything like shape. The road appears to me a vast monument of luxury & incompetence, for which the country has to pay. I am told on good authority that a much less expensive route c<sup>d</sup> have been found inland, back from the lake shore, but the Directors thought this wd take longer to build, as it c<sup>d</sup>

on the 5<sup>th</sup> July, forwarded from Metz; and at that, it went round by Port Arthur. I was very glad to hear from you, and of your safe arrival at Victoria. I trust you will be able to make your arrangements satisfactorily for your proposed expedition. We only stopped about 3 minutes at Ottawa on our way up here, so I did not have had much time to see you there if you had come to the Station. I was sorry I missed seeing you the day you passed Lachute with Luther, when Thorne + I were there. I did not know till our return to Montreal that you intended passing on that train.

I came out here for "3 or 4 weeks," but have received instructions to proceed from one thing to another; but will now finish about the middle of this month if there is nothing further they want done. I want

to finish them, as I want to return  
before Florence comes up from Mexico.  
Dodwell ~~and~~ and I have been together  
almost all the time, till about a week  
ago; + then we were instructed to separate.  
I got an assistant yesterday which will  
be a help to me; + have 2 men + a cook.  
We have been put to great shifts, being a dork  
here + there without proper outfit in the  
way of hand-cars, mules, &c.; but for  
supplies, there is a Supply Car passing about  
once a week, to supply the Camps of Sec-  
tion men. Our work has been re-measuring;  
masonry, timber, and excavation; at var-  
ious points. There was some talk about col-  
lusion between the Engineers + Contractors  
as to quantities on one part of the line;  
but the truth is the Syndicate has sac-  
rificed everything to rush + hurry,  
from the general route down to the  
last detail. There was no Chief Engineer  
+ the specifications were drawn up by men  
who may be good enough business managers  
but know little or nothing abt construction.

only be built from the ends, while  
by the shore route it was begun at  
intermediate points. Many parts of  
the shore route have cost \$80,000  
a mile! + it is extremely winding  
& can never be a road for fast trains.

They were all well at Metro at  
last accounts (July 14) with the  
exception of Father who has been  
somewhat troubled with rheumatism  
or lumbago; but he was better when  
I heard last.

I will address this to Ottawa  
to be forwarded.

Again wishing you many happy  
returns of the day, I remain,

Your affectionate brother,

William

