

THE RECENT STORM.

To the Editor of the Liberal.

S. Shore of Lake Winnipeg.
29th Oct., 1872.

Sir,—I have no doubt you will have accounts from other parts of the province of the recent storm. It began to be felt at the south end of Lake Winnipeg about two hours after sunset on the evening of the 24th. During that and the preceding two days we had frequent showers, accompanied with thunder. The wind on the 22nd was from the south, on the 23rd it blew from the north, and on the 24th it changed back to south, from which quarter it blew a stiff breeze all day. Shortly after sunset the wind changed around to the north, and towards midnight it blew a gale. By daybreak the country for miles around was under water. The waters of the lake, as you are aware, are very shallow, and the result of a change of wind is a motion of the water in the direction of the wind. The rise from the extreme low water point during a south wind is often as much as from four to five feet. All those who have skiffs or canoes are so well aware of this that at night they haul them up on land. But the raise of water on the night of the 24th was so sudden and so much greater than usual, that three fourths of the canoes and skiffs were adrift before the people became aware of the danger. By midnight the water rose to the level of the Indian tents. The first warning they received of their danger was from the crying of the children, who were aroused by the cold water. There was then a great alarm. The canoes were all afloat, and drifting away rapidly; the night was intensely dark, and the rain was pouring in torrents and the wind was bitterly cold. Mothers stood in the water with their children in their arms, and with their screams added to the noise made by the crying children. At one point there were seven tents, the occupants of which numbered about forty. Mothers could not in the darkness ascertain if all their children were safe. By the time the canoes were secured it was found impossible to save any of the articles in the tents, as the water was rising and the gale increasing. The whole of the party made their way to higher ground. In the morning only the top of their tents were visible.

About a mile and a half from this party was another, of two tents. The occupants were aroused about midnight, and made for their canoes. One family escaped along the shore to a higher spot of ground, but were obliged by the rising water to leave it and seek another, and were in imminent danger of having their canoe swamped by the billows, which were now of tempestuous size. During the whole night they were exposed to the storm, shifting from spot to spot dreading to go to the high land for fear of swamping. About three in the afternoon they arrived at the place where the other Indians were camped. Enquiry was made with regard to the occupants of the other tent, but little or no information could be obtained.

The storm continued with unremitting fury all day. In some places the driftwood which has lain for years at the highest water mark, was carried in some cases over the marshes two and three miles inland. Occasionally a shower of soft snow would take the place of rain, to yield in a short time to a pitiless hail. The thermometer stood all day at about 42°. The wind broke down trees of enormous size and tore away the banks of the lake in many places. Towards daylight of the 26th the wind abated slightly,

and the waters began to recede. Nothing had been heard of the occupants in the remaining tent, and shortly after sunrise a party of Indians went in search of them. The water was still high, but the wind was slowly dying away. The thermometer stood at 32°, freezing point. Slight showers of sleet occurred at short intervals. In about three hours the men who went in search of the missing family met with the body (for it could scarcely be called anything else) of the father. When restored to animation by the camp fire he gave an incoherent and tragic account of his combat with the storm. It was with great difficulty, and indeed not until he had had some sleep that a correct version of it could be got from him. It would appear that after securing a great many of his articles in his canoe the letter was carried away to a short distance, but between was deep water. The family consisted of the father, mother and five children when he observed that the canoe was beyond his reach he removed with his family to ground slightly higher, and then, a little after midnight, he constructed a stage of driftwood, upon which he placed his children. The water soon rose and swept this away, but not before the children were carried to a point still higher. Another stage was formed here and both father and mother held this to the shore by some branches of willow. Before morning this also gave way, being broken by the waves which were now dashing against it. By daylight the water carried within his reach a few saw logs belonging to McArthur & Co.'s mill, which had been lying here since last spring. Of these he secured five and lashed them as well together as the constant motion would permit, with a sturgeon net, over the top he placed the bark which had formed the covering of his tent. He then removed his wife and children from the wreck of the last stage and placed them on the log raft. Strange to say this hastily constructed raft withstood the storm for nearly ten hours. During the whole of this time Kay-pay-wa set-way was in the water, holding the end of the net on one arm and grasping the willows with the other. Towards evening some of the logs showed signs of working out, and while he moved towards them to secure them better a wave came and washed the whole before it, carrying it beyond his depth. For a long time he looked at it tossing on the waves, but the rising water compelled him to look to his own safety, and after some difficulty he succeeded in reaching a slight elm tree, the branches of which were barely strong enough to support him. Here he remained all night, and until rescued next morning. From his position he could see nothing more of his wife and children. The point to which the wind would bear them would be distant about three miles, and he thinks they were half way across this distance when he saw them last. The logs still held together and as far as he could see they were all on the raft, notwithstanding the sea which was now running.—But this was the last seen of them. Search has been made for the bodies but so far it has proved futile. Two fates awaited them. The raft was either broken up before reaching the high land, in which case they would have been drowned in deep water; or the raft may have reached the shore and benumbed with the cold and from want of food, they may have been unable to extricate themselves from the tons of drift with which the shore was lined, and thus have been killed by the very logs to which they may have owed their safety so far. The Indian, whose name is Kay-pay-wa set-way, is son of the old chief

Big Ears, of Oak point, and is stated to be a good hunter and an industrious man. He is recovering very slowly from the effects of his fearful exposure, but he will never forget the awful result of the flood of Wednesday.

The total rise of water from lowest water-mark was about fifteen feet on the exposed part of the lake, and on the marshes it would be about ten feet. The whole of the delta of the river was covered with water, and as this forms the hay ground of the settlers from the rapids down, a dearth of hay will throw them into the same condition as last year's fire did, for there is not a straw of hay where there were hundreds of stacks on Monday last. It is all swept away and mingled with the drift or rushes and timber.

The total rainfall exceeded 10 inches during the continuance of the storm. This includes melted snow and hail.

Yours, &c.,

B.

THE COST OF STANDING ARMIES.

From a mass of interesting military statistics published in the Berlin "Post," of recent date, it appears that the various European powers maintain under arms more than five millions of men in constant readiness for war, besides the reserves and militia, who are subject to more or less military duty. These five millions of men in the prime of life, represent so much labor withdrawn from the useful industries, whose aggregate production would amount to more than the total production of many important countries, as a few only of the European States have a male working population of five millions between the age of eighteen and fifty. But this loss of production represents only a part of the aggregate loss involved. The non-productive soldier must be paid, and productive labor must be taxed for his wages. He is also a wasteful customer and to feed and equip the standing armies employs the labor of at least two millions—perhaps more—of farmers, carriers and artisans; who are thus prohibited from contributing to the natural welfare and prosperity of the community. When all these considerations are taken into account, some idea may be formed of the enormous cost of maintaining exclusive military systems; and when it is remembered that these systems, nominally established to insure internal peace and security from invasion, are a constant temptation to war, with its inevitable accompaniments of waste, destruction of life and property, and increase of taxation, there is reason to hope that the people that have long and patiently borne these increasing burdens will soon demand that armies shall be disbanded, military establishments reduced, and international disputes hereafter be settled by diplomacy.

The Paris *Constitutionnel* learns that Mr. Reed, whom it describes as "formerly member of the English Admiralty," was asked by the German Government to undertake the organization of the German fleet, and the supervision of the defensive fortifications in the Baltic and the North sea. The appointments thus offered Mr. Reed were worth, it is stated, 500,000 francs a year. It is stated, however, that "the distinguished English engineer" has declined the offer of the German Government.