

We are anxiously looking to the capital for sundry changes and modifications in the Militia Bill; a little discretion and wisdom cannot but fail to set matters right, in the event of which the approaching summer will witness a great impetus to volunteering. From personal interviews with the officers of the various regiments, I am still more convinced that at the back of much expressed discontent there is a deal of satisfaction at the turn for good that affairs promise.

The complaint very general is that the French companies get very readily every concession while the English speaking companies have to beg, supplicate and wait till no end of time for their requirements. This may be the cause or the feeling may arise from jealousy and rivalry, but such it is expressed, and it would be as well to show that no such distinction occurs, as things should be. There is no reason why Montreal should not have a Volunteer Force commensurate with its wealth and importance. We have a good stiff of officers, and Lieut. Col. Smith, his aid, Col. Bacon, and others, have shown their interest in the efficiency and promotion of the Force in various ways, and would do more were they not clogged by restrictions and formalities. The Military School is becoming more and more strict, which is as it should be, and certificates are only granted to those who really merit them, thereby giving to the Force only men who are capable of acting as officers and not as it was once, mere strutting dandies, who on parade even could not divest their tiny hands of the exquisitely tight fitting lavender kid.

There is little local news of interest. The Mount Royal Rifles have received the pay due to them and discontent is changed to open satisfaction. The keeper of an house of ill fame, who is not but once was a member of the corps, (kicked out as incorrigible) appeared before the Recorder in the Hochelaguan uniform. He certainly presented a very grotesque appearance. The question is, where did he get the clothes? I have my self often seen military top coats and trousers worn with impunity by mechanics and others at their daily avocations, an offence that should be severely punished as it is getting too common a practice.

H.R.H. keeps somewhat secluded at present, doubtless taking that rest he so much needs. There never was a season of balls, parties, &c., like this. Business, tho' dull, life is gay, and prevents time hanging heavy on one.

B.

ENGLAND'S DUTY IN THE RED RIVER DIFFICULTY.

(From the London "Standard.")

As far as we can see, the British Government has only one course to pursue with the insurgent "Winnipeggers," as derisive Americans call them, and that is to wait quietly till summer arrives, and then restore the Imperial authority, if necessary, by an expedition as powerful as that which overthrew King Theodore. The case of the in-

surgers is no doubt very remarkable, and in one respect exceptional, but they are plauding it in a way to which no Government that intends to continue existing can possibly submit. They are appealing to a foreign power to assist them in repelling a legal jurisdiction set over them by Parliament, and in the meantime resisting that jurisdiction by force of arms. Technically they have no case at all. The few thousand settlers in revolt on the Red River do not form a colony in the modern sense of that term, that is, a dependent State owing allegiance to Her Majesty in the last resort, but wielding many of the powers of sovereignty, but are simply a body of squatters within Her Majesty's dominions, who have been allowed to do very much as they pleased but who are none the less bound to obey the authority set over them, provided only that the authority is British. They seem to see this themselves, for in the Declaration of Independence, issued on the 8th of December, at Fort Garry, "President" John Bruce declares on behalf of the Provisional Government, that the settlers have been transferred without their consent to "a foreign power," and intimates that they are rebelling against that, but the assertion is absolutely without foundation. The Canadian Dominion is as much a part of Her Majesty's realm as the county of Cornwall, and the settlers have as much legal right to resist their annexation to Canada as the people of Cornwall would have to resist the fusion of their oddly divided county into Ross and Sutherland shires. In driving out Mr. McDougall, if he were legally appointed,—a fact of which there is some doubt,—they are resisting the Queen's representative; and resistance of that kind cannot be tolerated if the Empire is to hold together. It is one thing to allow a Colony, organised by Parliament with a view to its ultimate independence, to go free after a regular vote and negotiation, and quite another to permit a handful of settlers to kick out the Royal flag and transfer the territories they happen to roam over to a foreign power. The Winnipeggers claim the North West, of which they do not occupy a thousandth part, and are said to intend to appeal to President Grant that they and "their" possessions may be included within the Union. It is quite impossible for any Government to put up with coercion of that kind, and great as the difficulties in the way of action are, they must be faced, and faced by Great Britain. It is her authority which is resisted, and not that of Canada, for the settlers have not formed themselves into a Colony willing to accept a British Government. They might have waited a few years for the fusion ordered by Parliament; but not into a state claiming independence, and intending to request admittance to the Union. The difficulty of exerting British power at that distance and in such a locality is very great, but it must be faced as similar difficulties were faced in Abyssinia, or we must be content to allow that British authority can be safely defied whenever it is inconvenient to exert it,—that is we must surrender the first idea of empire. It is greatly to be regretted that a force cannot be despatched to the Red River at once, but that is, we presume, impossible. We cannot proceed by the natural route through Minnesota, the republic forbidding transit for troops across its territory, and action by the Canadian route involves the march of 1000 men, with arms, ammunition, and baggage—that is practically of 2000 men and 1500 horses—through an impervious forest in which every pound of forage must be carried, and every step of the road must be cut with the axe, a work which in winter may

be pronounced impossible. The men would die of cold and want of provisions, or arrive too exhausted to be of service. There is nothing to do but wait; but the weather once favorable, that road must be made at any expense, and the Red River brought back to its allegiance, if necessary, by force. The danger of American complications, though no doubt considerable, must be faced as courageously as may be, full consciousness that it is serious, but a full resolve also not to suffer it to enfeeble an Imperial policy. If we are to remain in North America at all, we must act in our own dominions without this incessant reference to the ideas of statesmen who never deflect their own policy out of any deference to us. There is neither dignity nor safety in this perpetual apprehension of a power which knows perfectly well that war with Great Britain would be the gravest event in its history, and if not insulted or assailed, will at least choose a great occasion for so great a struggle. The Union does not want the Red River at the price of a seven years' war.

But we may be asked, although these settlers by Lake Winnipeg are legally in the wrong, may they not have a moral justification for their action? This is only to ask again the old question of the limit to the right of insurrection. Has every community, however small, the right to destroy an organization, however great, because it thinks that by such destruction it may benefit itself? May the people of the Orkneys morally claim a right to set up for themselves? We dare say the few thousands of people represented at Fort Garry would be a good deal happier if their possessions formed a State of the Union, and if they governed themselves in the rough way they like, and if they were exempt from any fear of Canadian taxation, and if they were left in full enjoyment of their practical monopoly in the waste land. We do not know that they would be, but we are quite willing to assume that they know their own business best. But then the happiness of Red River settlers is surely not the ultimate end of the world's politics, or even of those of North America; and it is as certain as anything of that kind can be that the world and the continent would both be injured by the independence of the Red River. The world would be injured because its freest and most civilised State would be proclaimed powerless to hold her own—a failure in organization and ideal: and North America would lose its greatest prospect, the rise of two great and friendly, but different political civilisations. The plan of the Canadian Dominion is a very great and very wise one, and we cannot admit the right of a few thousand settlers, whether half-breeds or whole breeds, to mar it, either for the sake of their own political dignity or their own personal comfort. We regret greatly that they should suffer; we would make any concession compatible with the general policy, and are not without respect for the kind of self-esteem bred by political isolation and the habit of independence; but those feelings, though they would induce us to spare after subjugation would not induce us to avoid subduing. The British Parliament and the immense majority of persons in British America have agreed to found there a grand State, and any group of individuals who cannot approve the plan must either endure it patiently or depart. They cannot be allowed to stand in the way either of the Imperial career, or of the destiny which the whole Empire deems the most fortunate for the vast territory, in which their settlement is but a pretentious village.