

the strain to which they must of necessity be exposed, in such circumstances, four flat scows and two strong carvel boats were sent up, manned by 18 of the most experienced of the voyageurs and a company of soldiers. After seven days of unceasing toil they had only reached the Kaministaquia Bridge, some twenty miles by the road from Thunder Bay, and from thence to the Matawin Bridge, it was one continuous pull in flat and stony rapids. On arriving at the latter place, the boats, strong as they were, were found to have been sadly torn and scraped in the rapids, and had to be immediately placed in the hands of the builders for repairs. The scows having been built specially with a view to such work, were, of course, but little damaged.

If all the boats should be exposed to wreck in the channel of a river, for which they were never intended, there was reason to apprehend the most serious consequences as to the future progress of the expedition. We were but at the outset of the journey, and it was of the utmost importance that they should reach Shebandowan Lake, where the final embarkation was to take place, in good order. I therefore urged strongly upon the officer commanding the Field Force, the expediency of sending to Collingwood for waggons, where, as the sowing season was over, any number of farmers could be found ready enough to come forward with their teams. This advice was to a certain extent taken, and a limited number of waggons and horses were brought from that place, but the military teams began to fall off, as their drivers said, from starvation, being allowed but military rations. Some 60 of them were in hospital, and there were neither horses nor waggons to spare for the boats. Seeing therefore that there was nothing for it but the river, I sent voyageurs to improve the portages, and endeavoured to organize some system by which the boats might be in as far as possible saved from damage.

As the chief responsibility of getting forward the Expedition was thus thrown on the voyageurs, at a time when the impression was entertained in some quarters that it must be abandoned, I may be permitted, before proceeding further, to offer some remarks in regard to the men, from whom so much was expected, and by whose exertions a very different turn was soon given to the general prospect.

The men forming the voyageur force, had been engaged in various parts of the country, and comprised among their number, boatmen and canoemen, from the St. Maurice, the Saguenay, and the Ottawa. There were Iroquois from Caughnawaga, and Algonquins from the Lake of Two Mountains, Metis from Penetanguishene and Sault St. Marie, raftsmen from the Trent, and pure Indians from various points on Lake Superior. The following list shews the numbers and the localities whence they came :

Ottawa River.....	150 men.
St. Maurice and Saguenay Rivers.....	121 "
Penetanguishene, Manitoulin, and various points on Lake Huron.....	98 "
River Trent .....	114 "
St. Lawrence, Caughnawaga, and St. Regis.....	99 "
Lake Superior, Indians, and Half Breeds.....	117 "
Toronto.....	6 "

705 men.

The management and organization of such an assemblage, was, of course, a matter requiring great care and circumspection. I could not at once turn them over to the military. Two classes, utterly unacquainted with each other's habits and mode of life, had to be brought in contact. The one highly disciplined, but utterly inexperienced in the nature of the work to be undertaken ; the other, rough, ready and inured to hardship, but holding all fixed rules and restraints in abhorrence. On the one hand was the soldier, accustomed to obey orders and cheerfully do whatever might be required of him, without troubling himself as to its object ; on the other, the voyageur, generous and obliging, but in the habit of thinking and acting for himself ; he, at least, would have his views about what he was to do, and how he should do it, and would, without meaning it, be very likely to give offence to those accustomed to unquestioning obedience.