

portion of the boats, the starting of the expedition from Shebandowan would have been delayed at least a fortnight.

It would be tedious to point out all the dilemmas between the various horns of which Mr. Dawson every now and then places himself in his eagerness to disparage Colonel Wolseley's conduct of the Force, and, as a sequence, the work of the Force itself.

"Soon after the arrival of the first troops," says Mr. Dawson, *i. e.*, it is presumed the first Brigades of H. M. 60th, "28 boats were taken by waggons over the road to the Matawan bridge, thus proving that it was not only practicable but quite easy (!) to send them in that way."

This fact in reality proves nothing. It is quite possible it might have been easy to send the boats before the arrival of the Ontario Rifles. I know it was dry when the second detachment of that corps arrived at Thunder Bay. And dry weather meant both practicability and ease. But from the date of our arrival it rained pretty steadily every other day, and the roads, until corduroyed in parts, chiefly by the work of the Militia regiments, became next to impracticable.

I say very advisedly "chiefly by the work of the Militia," for the way in which Mr. Dawson's men used to jump up from smoking their pipes by the roadside whenever a party approached, became a joke and a by word amongst the officers and men of the Force. I do not hesitate to say that the road would have continued impassible but for the heavy labor performed on it during the first three weeks in July by the two Militia regiments, and in saying so, I am far from implying that the work performed by the 60th did not, throughout the route equal and perhaps exceed our own, inasmuch as Colonel Fielden's Brigades had a large share of the work of making the portages available throughout the route.

And here let me observe that Mr. Dawson will carry with him the assent of every militiaman and officer, where he gives to Col. Fielden the praise so justly the due to that excellent officer.

When Mr. Dawson states that the "main body of the force was maintained in *inactivity* at Thunder Bay," he errs so grossly as almost to incur the imputation of deliberate misrepresentation. The troops were at all events so fully and so serviceably employed that they soon had scarcely clothes fit to wear, and the demands for fatigue parties were so continuous as to be sometimes beyond our power to fulfill.

Mr. Dawson may, perhaps, entertain an estimate of his own as to the value of the labor required to be performed at Prince Arthur's Landing, and which kept all hands pretty hardly worked. It will probably be sufficient to remind your readers that Thunder Bay was in effect the base of operations, and that much care and labor were necessary in dealing with the stores landed there.

Mr. Dawson appears to hint that the Matawan should have been at once constituted the base, but very little knowledge of the circumstances will suffice to show how impolitic such a course would have been, even had it been possible. But Mr. Dawson is far too intent on belittling Col. Wolseley, and with him the labors of the whole force he commanded, to remember that there were military points which demanded consideration as well as the vindication of Mr. Dawson's route and the glorifying of his voyageurs, many of whom as I before remarked, were excellent men—many absolute trash.

And, indeed, Mr. Dawson pays us a great compliment in the 2nd paragraph, page 509, VOLUNTEER REVIEW—a paragraph well worth a somewhat careful study, in view of the fact that there was neither shirking nor complaint on the part of the Militia, although well advised of the really terrible nature of the work on the Kaministiquia.

There is also apparent a little discrepancy between the general tenor of this paragraph and the next, though I have as little desire to depreciate the services of Mr. Dawson's good voyageurs as he professes with regard to the troops.

And now what on earth does Mr. Dawson mean by "four hundred Regular troops carrying treble their number of Canadians, Voyageurs and Volunteers, through the forests of their native country?" Does he mean to imply that the Militia could not have got on without the Regulars?

Thank you, Mr. Dawson, we could out-pull, out-work and out-portage the Regulars at all times, and there was not a time between Shebandowan and Fort Francis, when we were not hindered by the rear brigades of the 60th, except when the leading brigade of the Ontarios gave them a fair 24 hours start to get rid of the crowding, and then we caught them again at the Lake of the Woods. On the Kaministiquia there is little question which worked best Regulars or Militia.

I may here remark that I would not have been led into assertions so strong with regard to the Militia of the Expedition, had not the accounts which have appeared from the pens of Regular officers, so entirely ignored that—the largest—portion of the Expedition.

To continue with Mr. Dawson, Para. 2 in the 2nd column of page 509,—Admitting the magnificent steamers on Lakes Huron and Superior—admitting the good horses and waggons for the land roads (which would have been more serviceable had the road been as good as the waggons), admitting even that the boats were—I really cannot say "in every way,"—but fairly adapted to the service they had to perform, I must take exception to the expression "with voyageurs to man them."

Two voyageurs to a boat's crew of say eight men, certainly does not constitute manning them, nor could the skill of these auxiliaries entitle them in all cases to the

credit even of directing the navigation of the boats. I will only instance the case of my own boat to Fort Francis, in which neither of my voyageurs had the remotest idea of handling a boat under sail. My own men were none of them sailors and had I not been an old seaman myself we should have had a very lively time under sail, especially as the halcyon calmness of weather, which Mr. Dawson delights to predict as the perennial state of the lakes, did, somehow or other, sometimes fail us. And my own boat was not, in this respect, an isolated case.

I think Mr. Dawson quite justified in defending certain Ministers from the violent aspersions of the Blackwood narrator, and there is no question whatever but that he is correct on the harness question, the willful misrepresentation of which by the author of the "Narrative," goes far to indicate its unreliability on other points. Under any circumstances, as Mr. Dawson justly observes, Colonel Wily's word is sufficient to settle the question, though there is abundant evidence besides. The horses were, as Mr. Dawson truly describes, grossly mismanaged, and so mismanaged entirely by Imperial officers, who neither understood the nature of the work, the feed necessary for it, nor the ways of the country teamsters employed. There was not a Volunteer officer of sufficient knowledge of country life, who could not have administered the transport service better than it was administered. There was perpetual clashing between the Chief of the Control Department and the officer in immediate charge of the cattle, who was far more solicitous for his private advantage than for the public service.

I am not at all sure that Mr. Dawson's estimate of Colonel McNeil is so generally concurred in as he supposes, but every officer of the Force will heartily second his commendation of Mr. Graham, who, not only at Shebandowan, but throughout the winter at Fort Garry, earned the goodwill of all with whom he came in contact.

I am not concerned with the other points in which Mr. Dawson impeaches Col. Wolseley's conduct, or the Blackwood Narrative. If Mr. Dawson had not conveyed the false impression that the troops had nothing but a pleasure trip to undergo, he would have been free, for me, to entertain his own opinion of matters. But he has been as selfish in his advocacy of his own department, as all the military writers on the expedition have been in their way, and here let me add that the work written by Capt. Huyshe, Aide-de-Camp to Colonel Wolseley, gives a fair idea as far as it goes of the nature of the work performed by the Force, though, of course, it is all 60th.

I have here simply entered a protest against the style of misrepresentation indulged in by Mr. Dawson, which is all that is required at present.

I am, &c.,

G. W.