

31ST. BATTALION.

To the Editor of the VOLUNTEER REVIEW.

DEAR SIR:—Knowing that you have always taken an active part towards the welfare of the much neglected Volunteer, I would now explain some of the grievances, as patience ceases no longer to be a virtue. First, could you explain how it is that we have seldom or never noticed in the columns of your REVIEW, any remarks whatsoever relative to the 31st Batt. of Grey; is it our geographical position, situated on the frontier of Lake Huron, or is it that you were not aware of such battalion being in existence; or is it because you never heard any encouraging words from our District Brigade Major; it certainly must be some or either of them; nevertheless, I would now beg to state that such is the case, that we have one of the finest Battalions and second to none in the service so far as the material (but as to uniform, by gosh, it would shame Mickey Free at Talevera.) I would also beg to state that the Battalion is now and always was in splendid working order and always ready to turn out at a hour's warning, and was one of the first battalions who offered their services to establish the authority of our Government in the Red River affair, and would say if up there that Col. Dennis need no longer play squaw. Situated as we are on the frontier our Battalion is composed of hardy young farmers, used to a frontier life, strong and rugged, and, generally speaking, a fine specimen of Volunteer soldier. It appears, therefore, strange that we would be so neglected by the Department in the shape of uniform, as for instance, after getting back from the front in 1866, some of the companies, No. 3 and No. 6, got infantry uniforms instead of rifle, in the shape of a flannel smock and pants to correspond with a forage cap, though then the Department was owing them full uniforms, but as they stated there were none in store, such we have still, although the Department is owing us a large clothing account, the same flannel smocks we still wear although dirty and worn out with pants to correspond—pants that you could shoot straws through—no great-coat, no shako, still the men, docile as they are, turn out when required, although the mercury may be 100 in the shade, or 20 degrees below zero, still the flannel smock is to be seen which was one time red but now faded to a groggrum gray.

We often fancy from the description given occasionally of the fine soldierly appearance of some city and inland battalion that there is some great partiality shown, (our chaps say often that if they were let out they would take the uniform from them, especially the greatcoats), and as they justly remark, that it's all for a show. Staff officers have, of course, in order to show off, to keep up the appearance of those near hand, properly uniformed. At our last inspection the men had to wear their civilian overcoats and

caps, so our drill ended when the snow was on the ground. Col. Durie wondered and made promises, but that was all so far. We cannot drill nor have target practice for the want of greatcoats as the cold of this northern climate is too severe for the men in flannel smocks and shoddy pants; two years ago there came rushing along by express on Her Majesty's Service, a huge box large enough to contain the fossil remains of the petrified giant lately found, we sopers were tickled as we expected it contained an outfit for the whole of the battalion, but lo and behold! when opened it contained great-coat straps for the whole battalion; we still keep them as a *souvenir* to ornament our armoury—but nary a great coat. Now, as we see what they look like, we will trade them back to the Department for greatcoats. Twelve months past the 1st of this month, No. 2 Company appointed their officers whom Col. Pollard recommended, and up to this time they have not been gazetted; Durham Co., No. 4, was also placed in the same position so that the supposed officers did not turn out for annual drill. The economy of the Deputy Adjutant General of this District is beyond comprehension. It would not be routine to gazette six or seven gentlemen because one has not made his returns to Brigade Major of a few old belts and a few water bottles, on which to congratulate the Militia Department or the Dominion, I can't say. Happy Departments! happy Dominion! now as the pants we were supplied with three years past were shoddy or something worse, we have used one leg to mend the other so that if we have to go to Ottawa to protect you, don't be scared, for if we pants are not there you will find the legs.

I would further state that at the last sitting of our County Council they unanimously voted a sufficient sum of money to Colonel Pollard to make up for the deficiencies of the men's pay which amounted to \$2.25 per man, and which our government acted so niggardly about. This is not the first or second time our County Council have shown their appreciation towards their Battalion the 31st, but have always responded when an appeal was made.

Yours respectfully,

VOLUNTEER.

[The VOLUNTEER REVIEW will be happy at all times to notice any circumstance connected with the gallant 31st Battalion of Grey. The reason why this has not been done hitherto is the fact that no one connected with the regiment corresponded with the REVIEW. With respect to the evils "Volunteer" complains of they are to be traced directly to the House of Commons, who will not vote sufficient supplies, and it would be well if the men of that battalion remonstrated with their county representative on the subject. The other grievance is a question of discipline which the Adjutant General's Department can ratify, and which the

commanding officer of the 31st must take into his own special care.

The columns of the REVIEW will be open at all times to "Volunteer" and his comrades as long as their communications are within the bounds of discipline and reason. —ED. VOL. REV.]

THE RED RIVER DIFFICULTY—TRANSPORT OF TROOPS.

To the Editor of the VOLUNTEER REVIEW,

The Canadian and United States newspapers have been lately occupied with the means of communication between Canada and its Red River Territory, and the possibility of transporting troops in the spring by a safe and practicable route through Canadian waters. It is to be hoped that there will be no necessity for such troops and that before the spring arrives some means may be found of settling the matter amicably, but as the authorities ought to be prepared for the worst, a little foresight sometimes saves expense, annoyance, and possibly valuable lives. I wish to suggest for their consideration an addition to their present means of transport *via* Fort William, Lake Superior.

Dr. Livingstone in one of his memorable expeditions into the interior of Africa had a steamboat 60ft. long, 9ft. 6in. beam, constructed in Liverpool, the heaviest part of which was not more than 4cwt. This boat could be fitted together and steam got up in a very few hours, she was found of great service. Since that time many vessels, some much larger have been constructed and taken into the interior of India, Egypt, and South America, and placed in what might be thought impracticable positions if it had not been for the method adopted in their construction.

I would suggest the construction of two or more such boats to run on the navigable waters between Fort William and Red River. The boats to be built of iron or steel in ten sections or compartments, each section to be water tight and forming when combined the hull of the boat; the average weight of each section would not be more than 8 cwt., each section would be 7ft. long, the mid-ship part 8ft. 6in. wide. The engines would also be light and of the simplest construction, the boilers, two in number, being in four pieces, each part not being more than 7 cwt. A boat constructed as stated could be put together and steam got up and ready for sailing in twelve hours, or she could be taken to pieces and put together again within twenty-four hours.

The following would be the particulars, viz:—Length 70ft., breadth of beam 8ft. 6in., depth of hold 3ft. 10in., draught of water 2ft. 6in. Two screws, each 2ft. 3in. in diameter, 4ft. pitch, speed 11 miles per hour, weight of hull $4\frac{1}{2}$ tons, weight of engines, boiler and machinery $3\frac{1}{2}$ tons, power of traction 250 tons at 4 miles per hour.