

of time regarding the insecure character of this immense structure, and frequent reports were made to the military authorities respecting it, but still it was occupied as usual, soldiers appearing, outwardly at least, not to vindicate the fears of the cautious; but still no doubt feeling insecure while in the building,* in consequence of the way in which it always quivered when a gale of wind prevailed. Notwithstanding the large quantity of snow which had accumulated on the roof during the past two or three days, and the uneasiness manifested by a few more apprehensive persons, the Queen's Own Rifles paraded there last evening and drilled till after ten o'clock, perfectly unconscious of the great danger in which they stood; and indeed it was only through the interposition of Providence that the roof did not fall in and crush that gallant battalion.

The building was erected several years ago at great expense—the city contributing \$1000 towards the cost of its construction and the government providing the balance. It is very questionable whether the authorities will rebuild the shed.—*Toronto Leader.*

SUDDEN DEATH.—We exceedingly regret to state that Mr. George O'Brien, Instructor of the Chatham Cornet Band, died, in a singularly sudden manner, last Thursday afternoon. On the previous Sunday, whilst playing at the funeral of Mr. Weir, he complained of illness, which continued occasionally during the week, but not so as to alarm his wife. At the moment of his death he was composing a Dead March for the Band, and the last words he uttered were "there are two wrong notes," and he then said he felt drowsy and would like a sleep, but it was a long one—the sleep of death. Mr. O'Brien was a thorough musician, and was for the long period of 24 years Band Sergeant and Master of the 67th Regiment. He then went to the bands of the 20th and 16th regiments, and came to Chatham last year. Deceased was buried on Sunday afternoon, the Band playing a Funeral Dirge composed by himself.—*Chatham Planet.*

BOATS FOR RED RIVER.—It is said that the Government has contracted for seventy boats to be completed by the month of April next. These boats are destined for the North-west territory, and are thirty-three feet in length and calculated to float in very shallow water. They are to be so constructed that they can be carried from one stream to another in case the navigation is impeded by artificial or natural obstacles.

CORRESPONDENCE.

(The Editor does not hold himself responsible for individual expressions of opinion in communications addressed to the VOLUNTEER REVIEW.)

To the Editor of the VOLUNTEER REVIEW.

SIR:—Amongst some Volunteer circles with whom I have come in contact there appears to be considerable discussion as to whether troops are to be sent to Red River in the spring or not, and whether in the event of any being sent, they will consist of regulars or Volunteers, or both? If any Volunteers go who they will be, and whether stated corps will be sent, or a call for Volunteers issued.

Rumours have been in circulation that the Royal Canadian Rifles were to be sent, but I have not yet learned that anything of an official nature has transpired relative to any force being sent. If an expedition is

dispatched I suppose it will be by steamboat to Fort William and thence overland to Fort Garry. Of course nothing is easier than to land a force with any amount of baggage and stores at Fort William, the difficulty being to transport the force with its immense amount of stores ammunition and provisions thence to the seat of trouble.

I am of opinion that the bulk of the Force should be Volunteers, but that a few (according to the total strength sent) companies of regulars (say from the Royal Canadian Rifles) should accompany the expedition; a squad of the commissariat staff corps (regulars) would suffice and would form a nucleus to organize a company from amongst the Volunteers of a strength according to the discretion of the commanding officer (who would perhaps inspire more confidence if a regular also.) The Volunteers selected for the expedition should be from a district where the men are inured to bush life and accustomed to the vicissitudes of a life in the woods; men who can wield the axe, (there would be a vast amount of firewood wanted every night and a goodly quantity of boughs of trees required for bedding, and these would require experienced hands to get the right sort and get it as quickly as possible), men who can make themselves comfortable in the open air at night, who are up to all the mysteries of woodcraft and who could when necessary cope with these semi-barbarous half-breeds in their own strategical mode of bush warfare with more chance of success than if the force were composed of city men, or even regular soldiers, who would be entirely lost in chopping trees, making camps, and long endurance of hard fare, fatigue, wet, cold, heat, hunger, and perhaps now and then thirst, all of which would have to be gone through to no inconsiderable extent. As for drill many of our rural battalions and companies are remarkably well up in both drill and discipline and they would soon acquire the necessary precision and obedience to all orders at the short parades which would take place morning and night on the march. A company or two at a time could have a turn at skirmishing for a half hour or so a day without any delay to the march, or extra fatigue to themselves. Everyone has noticed the great improvement at the close of an annual drill, and if a Battalion is (as I believe many are at any time) fit for service after six days drill with very little discipline, then how much more efficient would they be after six weeks service under the constant vigilance of their officers and with no temptation or chance to neglect their duty. The Volunteers would learn from the regulars precision in drill, thrift with their rations, discipline, and general soldierly conduct and habits. The regulars would learn from the Volunteers how to camp out in the bush, and how to live in the woods. There are experienced guides to be got who have traversed and are well acquainted with the route. The great draw-

back is of course the immense amount of "impediments" required to be taken along with the force not only in the usual amount of baggage and stores required together with a large supply of ammunition, but the whole of the provisions for the army must be carried with it. The affair ought to be a second Abyssinian expedition (on a small scale of course) 'ut in Abyssinia a great quantity of the provisions were drawn from the country itself, whereas, from Fort William to Fort Garry not a mouthful, comparatively speaking, could be depended on. If the Government are desirous of settling that country no better class of settlers can be found than our backwoods Volunteers. Far better than emigrants direct from the old country, or old soldiers, and it is to be hoped that if any Volunteers are sent the Government will offer some inducement to allow some of them to settle there, and as a road into the country is a necessity there could be no better way to construct one than with an expeditionary force who would of themselves leave a good track for a road and at each night's halting place (which would be at about every fifteen miles) there would be a good sized clearing made with a couple of hundred axes ringing for an hour or so.

It is to be hoped some of our enthusiastic backwoods Volunteers will have the chance of going; they sacrifice a good deal more for the service in the country companies than the authorities at Head Quarters are aware of. I have always thought there needed some special clauses in the Militia Act relative to companies whose members reside at a great distance from one another and from their Drill Sheds. Some additional pecuniary grant to enable them to be got together without such a loss of time and money to themselves and their officers. City battalions drilling weekly have frequently no more per company than have some country companies at their weekly parades and what a difference there is between the city clerk or mechanic leaving his daily duty, going home to tea and having no distance to go to his drill, and the country farmer, farmer's son or labourer after his days hard manual labour having a trudge of some miles to his rendezvous. To the former it is but relaxation, to the latter it is an increase to his bodily fatigue; and while on the subject, consider the expense and trouble in warning men living ten and fifteen miles away and in different directions when required for special occasions, such as inspection or annual drill, (and these sometimes are countermanded and have to be done over again), or for a Fenian scare. It is a wonder that corps circumstanced like this are kept up at all.

I have made my letter rather longer than I had intended; my interest in the service has made me long-winded and must be my excuse. I will now conclude by signing myself.

BUSHWHACKER.