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## Notes and Comments

The year opened well for the militia force. Thanks to the Cleveland war bluster, the public has been thoroughly awakened to the necessity existing for the strengthening of the frontier defences, and thanks, moreover, to the energy and determination of the Hon. Mr. Dickey, the late Minister of Militia and Defence, the government, in the speech from the Throne, has pledged itself to the long desired and oft demanded policy of militia reform. His Excellency informed the Dominion's legislators at the opening of parliament: "Your attention will be asked to measures intended to provide for the better arming of our militia and the strengthening of Canadian defences."

It is difficult to understand the objections urged to the adoption of this more active militia policy by friends of Canada in England. The Dominion government was not carried away by any spirit of jingoism, in asking parliament to devote some attention to the question of national defence at the present juncture. That the announcement of this policy is intended in any way as a threat to our powerful neighbor to the south of us, is too absurd to raise a smile. Canada has no designs on the independence of the United States. Apart altogether from the military difficulties in the way, Can-

adians, in common with all other British subjects, are devoted lovers of that liberty which they enjoy to such a pre-eminent degree, and, whatever designs for enslaving neighboring and kindred people may be nurtured by certain nations that boast of liberty more than they practice it, the people of the Dominion foster no ambition to compel their neighbors to change their political allegiance, however much they may feel convinced that such a change would be to their advantage, individually and collectively.

The determination of the government to re-arm and to some extent strengthen the frontier defences, is no sudden impulse of the moment. We have it on indisputable authority that the government had determined upon this policy long before President Cleveland perpetrated his recent champion spread-eagle joke. And we feel that we shall not be accused of empty egotism if we claim for THE CANADIAN MILITARY GAZETTE a part of the credit for having led the government to arrive at this important decision. Ever since this journal came under its present management, three years ago, it has persistently urged upon the government the absolute necessity of re-arming the militia, and of making some provision for a system of frontier defence. The last two predecessors of Mr. Dickey as Minister of Militia will be able to bear witness to the truth of this, even if they did not like it at the time. Mr. Patterson evidently felt the power of these criticisms, to judge from his rather ill-tempered remarks at the banquet tendered to him by the officers of the Montreal Brigade upon his retirement, but he practically admitted that he was unable to carry out the reforms which he admitted to be necessary. Mr. Dickey succeeded where Mr. Patterson failed, because he was undeniably more in earnest in his efforts on behalf of the militia, and he had more determination.

At the time the last named gentleman was appointed Minister of Militia, we remarked, "Mr. Dickey has the chance of a life time. Let him insist now upon the re-arming and re-equipment of the militia with the best rifle, the best field guns, and the best equipment in the market, and he will not only earn

the lasting gratitude and confidence of the militia, the very elite of Canadian citizenship, but he will at some future time, if he does not now, receive the grateful thanks of the whole country." We quote this merely to show that the present commendable policy of the government is not a mere result of a sudden war scare. The militia force, through its recognized journal and through the influence of many of its members, has for years been working to induce the government to do something to place the force on a more efficient footing. That this long prolonged and often disappointing agitation has at last had a favorable result is certainly a subject for hearty congratulation. Members and friends of the force must now see to it that the ameliorations to be carried out shall be as thorough as the occasion requires.

We can almost forgive the next to criminal delay which has occurred in taking this highly important step, when we think of the extra favorable conditions under which the new militia policy will be presented for the approval of parliament. President Cleveland and the host of rabid tail twisters applauding him, probably did not nurse their war howl with the view of aiding the work of militia reform in Canada, but all of this savagely unneighborly talk across the lines will have the effect of strengthening the hands of the government in this great national undertaking.

We cannot refrain here from commenting upon the inspiring spectacle presented to the world by the calm, loyal attitude of the Canadian people, from one end of this great Dominion to the other, while the late war excitement was at its height. While the bottom was literally dropping out of Wall Street for fear of the war threatened by the President of the American Republic, while loud-mouthed apostles of unreasoning spread-eagleism were threatening the conquest of Canada and the enslaving of her loyal people, and while United States army officers were explaining for the edification of the great unwashed how Canada could be "licked" in short order, Canadians, conscious of the injustice of their country's would-be-invaders' cause, confident in the military power and resources of the