

of weakness into which our defences have fallen. No man would neglect to insure his warehouse or his barn, because his neighbours declared that they were animated by the most friendly feelings towards him, and had no intention of applying the torch to his property. National defence is national insurance; and we do not think any Government can maintain a character for prudence that neglects to complete the insurance of this country against aggression, although we may not only continue to receive the most pacific assurances from foreign governments, but even give them the fullest credit for sincerity in their professions.

It is desirable that we should ascertain two points—that the premium we are called upon to pay is not too high; and that the insurance, when completed, will be valid. With regard to the first, we are confident that if any reader will picture to himself the horrors which would attend the invasion of our country by a hostile army—and the utmost force of his imagination cannot overcharge the picture—he will confess that no price can be too high to pay for immunity. The remarks we are about to offer on that branch of the public service immediately connected with the defence of the country, and on some of the schemes for improving it, cannot fail to be interesting in themselves: and while they will show what has been effected, it will be highly satisfactory if we find that a system of defence, calculated to secure our country against aggression, can be completed at the cost of but a fraction of our present expenditure, and entailing but a moderate subsequent annual increase.

We do not understand the merit of making a mystery of what we are doing, or of hesitating to name the quarter from which we might most reasonably anticipate an attack; on the contrary, we are of opinion that by showing to the world how easily we may be rendered completely prepared for the contingency of an invasion of Canada, by showing how desperate such an attempt would be, and how many chances there are against its success, we remove one of the strongest inducements to make it,