

among the people of the States; but it would be found totally impotent to control or reverse the long-held desire to have the stars and stripes floating over the whole continent. At the close of their civil war a United States newspaper had at the top of the column containing the announcement of the surrender of the Southern forces these words: "No pent up Utica contracts our powers; the whole continent is ours." This, I believe, is the motto, virtually, of the nation. The motive to secure this condition lies at the foundation of all their conduct towards Great Britain. It is the main-spring of action of all their statecraft. It requires no close scanning to detect it all along the century of their national life. It is seen, notably, in Webster's double dealing and in the purchase of Alaska; and almost innumerable instances might be given. It is a common belief in all parts of the States that Canada could be easily conquered, that many Canadians are in favour of union with the States. In their supreme egotism they cannot believe that Canada could hold her own, or that any other Anglo-Saxon nation could co-exist with theirs on this continent.

There seems to be only one way of averting an ultimate conflict between England and the States with respect to Canada, as I pointed out some years ago as a possible event in the future (for which I was laughed at), and which is concisely stated by Principal Grant in his communication, namely, to obtain "a moral union of the English-speaking race, commercial union based on free trade, a common tribunal and a common citizenship, if not more."

WM. CANNIFF.

OUR DEFENCES.

SIR,—There are persons to whom the recent articles in *THE WEEK* regarding the possibility of war between Great Britain and the United States may be a surprise, and some by whom, as you say, you will be roundly abused for speaking of such a possibility. (But why should it be an offence on your part to refer to such a matter while American papers are lauded to the skies for their declamations on the same subject—such utterances, moreover, not by any means confined to the moderate language which you use?) On the other hand there are many of your readers to whom what has appeared in your columns is nothing new, and who are fully convinced of the folly of our people—or some of them—trying to persuade themselves that no such war is possible—that we will never have an attack made upon us. Others there are who believe, or fear, that if attacked, Canada would be indefensible, and that we should not attempt a defence, an opinion not concurred in by military experts. Canada has certain weak points—no doubt thoroughly well known to our neighbours—but she has also certain elements of strength, of which I believe our neighbours to be ignorant. But the subject is much too large to discuss in all its bearings, even if it were desirable to do so.

But there is one thing suggested by your correspondent, whom you quote at length in *THE WEEK* of the 15th inst., which may, perhaps, be advantageously referred to, as it is much misunderstood by ourselves, even by those who ought to know better, and seldom gets the credit to which it is fairly entitled. I mean our Militia Force, upon which, in case of invasion, certain duties, well understood in higher military quarters, will devolve, and which duties I am convinced they will be well able to perform if they are encouraged—I had almost said permitted—to keep up to such a reasonable standard of effectiveness as is practicable for a corps constituted as they are. The capabilities of a Canadian militia corps are very considerable. For example, I have seen at a time when each company was allowed fifty per cent more men than at present, a rural regiment appear on parade at the County Town, ten companies strong, and every one filled up to the last man, and with good steady men at that. Another rural corps I have seen at one time a half-trained mob, and the very same corps, not long afterwards, under more favourable circumstances, was brought to Toronto as a model rural corps to be "shown off" at a review, and made a most creditable appearance. Your correspondent is quite correct in saying that the Canadian is a born soldier. Many officers of militia will corroborate that statement. The Canadians are a thoroughly military people, and may be relied upon to do as they did in 1812, put a force in the field far away beyond a due proportion to the actual number of the population. That this is true is evi-

denced by the actual present state of the active militia, imperfect as it is, when it is considered that this force has been kept up for thirty or forty years in the face of continued discouragements sufficient to have utterly extinguished it, if it had not been kept alive by the inborn instincts of the people. Such instincts may, no doubt, be accounted for by the fact that Canada was to a great extent settled by discharged soldiers, and their spirit lives in their descendants.

The best means of using this element of strength is a matter which is worthy of the most earnest attention of our statesmen, and where a defect exists a remedy for it should be sought. On a former occasion I ventured to point out such a defect, in the public press, and to suggest a remedy which I thought to be at least worthy of consideration, and which at the time attracted some attention. Whenever the militia regiments are called upon to furnish men there is not likely to be any difficulty or hesitation about it, but the trouble will be with regard to officers, and consequent delay in organization. Most militia regiments are weak in officers, and it is always difficult to keep up the full establishment. The demands upon the purse and time, especially the latter, of militia officers are so great as to exclude many capable officers from the service, while those who are able to continue in it, are overtaxed with expenses and duties. There are, and probably always will be, a large number of trained officers in the country, but, except those actually holding commissions, they are not in touch with the force, and cannot be made available as promptly as occasion may require. The remedy for this fault in our system seems to me to be a large increase in the officers actually commissioned, thus not only enabling the expense to be borne and the work to be done by a greater number than at present, and thus lighten the all too severe burden which these unremunerated gentlemen bear for their country, but also to provide ready at hand the necessary organization for an emergency. The question is, how is this to be done? The suggested method is simple. Let all "battalions" of militia be constituted as "regiments," and consist of two or more battalions, of say six half companies, with a Lieut.-Col. commanding the regiment, a Major, Adjutant, Surgeon, Quartermaster, and Sergeant-Major to each battalion, and two officers and as many non-commissioned officers to each half company. The three Infantry regiments of Toronto could easily keep up fifteen such battalions, which would mean eighteen field officers, fifteen adjutants, fifteen surgeons, fifteen quartermasters, and one hundred and eighty company officers, with a due proportion of sergeants. Upon such an establishment a strong brigade could be most expeditiously organized. If the force should be called out, the first battalion of each regiment could be immediately filled up to full strength and sent forward, to be speedily followed by a second, and so on as might be called for, one depot battalion always remaining at headquarters.

The expense of such a corps would be very little greater than it is under existing circumstances, as there would be but one band for the regiment, and no greater actual strength, excepting in officers and sergeants, would be maintained than at present. It would not be necessary for the battalions to parade separately; they could parade as one battalion or more as might be ordered.

If a regiment now consisting of ten companies should be divided as proposed into five battalions, A and B companies would be identical with the right and left wings of the first battalion and could form on parade either as Nos. 1 and 2 companies of the whole regiment in one battalion, or, in their separate organization, as the first battalion of six half companies. And so with the remaining companies. It would be unnecessary for all officers to attend all parades; their tours of duty, whether in attendance on parade or in their many other more prosaic but equally necessary duties, might be a matter of regimental arrangement. I cannot but think that such a plan would enable a large number of officers to be kept in the service who are now practically lost to it.

The efficiency of the force, as your correspondent points out, is dependent upon their being armed with the best modern weapons and supported by an efficient system of supply depots and transport. These are very serious questions and surely receive more attention at headquarters than your correspondent, though evidently well informed, believes.

A RETIRED OFFICER