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Owing partly to a belief in the friendly feeling, and the peaceful aspect that so happily exists throughout this great continent, as well as the absence of any symptom or cause for alarm, the idea has gradually and insensibly made itself felt that no great need exists for military preparations, and so I regret to say the Canadian Militia, though not reduced in number, yet, from the shortness of training, from the absence of any permanent or paid Regimental Staff, and from other wants and requirements of which I have given warning notice in three previous reports, has not improved in internal condition if measured by a military standard.

I trust the time may never come, but in the nature of things it may come, when a sudden crash will arouse the fears and awaken to a sense of danger the hearts and minds of those who, busied in the peaceful occupation and gains of their calling in life, cannot expand their ideas to the necessity of protection in that daily work, till too late they may find that the irritation due to losses would not be altogether allayed by the consideration of the fact that they had loudly raised their voices against providing funds sufficient for their security and defence.

The Canadians possess, in a marked degree, qualities to make excellent soldiers, being both hardy and industrious, used to rough life, easily subjected to discipline, and willing to submit to necessary authority; the habit of adapting themselves to the different conditions of life peculiarly fit them for the requirements of a soldier. Accustomed to horses they ride and drive with ease and self-possession, and these habits are proved by the manner in which their Cavalry can be handled, and the facility with which their Field Batteries are manœuvred.

There is no better material for soldiers than Canada can produce, and that there is a military spirit among all classes of the population is proved by the popularity of the Militia and the willingness—I may call it enthusiastic alacrity with which, on many an occasion they have turned out for any prospect of active duty. But yet being purely a volunteer force, unless encouraged by more interest on the part of those whom they may some day have to defend, peace and lukewarmness may tend to rust their arms, and in default of proper training establishments which I have so earnestly advocated, or the absence of any trained and disciplined body of men, or of regular troops to furnish a standard of excellence, a gradual diminution of efficiency, year by year cannot be surprising.

I can imagine no finer troops than could be raised from backwoodsmen and lumbermen who earn a livelihood in our forests. Their hardy and hazardous life in the woods, and in navigating the mighty rivers of this country, enures them to danger and accustoms them to discipline and organization in their work, while the various descriptions of labour on which they are employed calls forth the energy, the intelligence and the resource, which are invaluable in soldiers; their life of mutual dependence on each other for support, as together they encounter the hardships, the