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In the early colonial days of Canada, different conditions were made by policies different from those which prevailed in the Old Land.

The infant colonies were in constant peril.

Consequently, probably the oldest law in Canada was the edict of the first Governor that every male person must be prepared to bear arms in defence of the colony.

That basic principle has been a part of the law of Canada ever since.

Similarly, in the first British colonies -- in what we now call the Maritime Provinces -- the law required every able-bodied man to be ready to bear arms.

In both French Canada and in the British colonies, there were "town companies" with the seigneur or the magistrate as captain, and every male citizen a member.

There is no evidence that the law was popular.