

equal to those of soldiers of the line.— And to say that such men upon the field would not prove more effective than men just taken from the plough or the workshop is too absurd for consideration. But what we contend for is, that no matter how effective may be our volunteers, they, though aided by such troops as Great Britain may maintain in the provinces, or be enabled to dispatch to our assistance, must ever prove an inadequate force to contend with a power capable of putting hundreds of thousands in the field. Against such a numerous foe what would be 20,000 or 30,000 volunteers and as many troops of the line? The odds are so tremendous as to render the result too painfully certain. With this startling and momentous fact constantly forcing itself on the mind, all earnest men who love their country and estimate at their proper value the privileges they possess are incessantly asking themselves the question—How is it possible to prepare these provinces so that in the terrible event of war they would be enabled to come out of the contest with success? And the answer which suggests itself to almost every one is that some scheme must be devised to render the whole force of the country in some measure efficient and available. But to show how this is to be done as far as I am aware no method has been publicly propounded. The population of the provinces is comparatively small, and consequently the greater necessity of having the inhabitants prepared to resist aggression to the best advantage. On the other hand the resources are extremely limited, consequently the difficulty of maintaining adequate preparation. This is the dilemma in which we are placed. We want to be defended, and we want to avoid expense as far as is consistent with our safety. Not only do we want to avoid direct outlay, but we require to economise time, and hence the impossibility of pushing the volunteer movement beyond a limited extent, since the necessary drill to which volunteer companies are subjected consumes more time than is at the disposal of the bulk of the inhabitants. We know that the preparations, to be of service, must be extensive, and we likewise know that our pecuniary resources are small. We want to develop the greatest amount of resisting force at the least possible outlay. In a word, we want to be safe without becoming bankrupt. Can this be effected? I, for my part, think it can.

It is an acknowledged fact, that in proportion as the inhabitants of a country are accustomed to the use of arms the difficulty of conquest is increased: and it would not be hard to prove that the most effective weapon for purposes of defence, especially in a country like ours (possessing many natural advantages, which would afford cover and protection for the defender,) is the rifle. During the American revolution this was fully exemplified, as well as during the war of 1812. Secreted in the forest and behind such barricades as a wooded country always supplies, the men who from their childhood had, through necessity, become habituated to the use of the rifle, proved in many instances more than a match for the thoroughly trained regular soldier. And when these provinces were invaded in 1812 it was owing to the same circumstances that the Canadian back-woodsman rendered such essential service. These two instances show that for defensive purposes the rifle has proved a most effective weapon, and a thorough acquaintance with its use has made even untrained men—while simply acting on the defensive, in some respects as effective as those who have been subjected to all the minutiae of drill. Now, if a knowledge of the use of the old-fashioned muzzle loading rifle has proved so advantageous to the defender, may we not safely predict that such knowledge of the present improved breech-loading weapon will secure to him at least equal advantages. Indeed, it requires but a moment's consideration to convince us that he would be rendered three-fold more effective against the invader, even though that invader were armed with the same weapon. Acting on the defensive, partial protection at least against the bullets of the foe can generally be secured, and one man thus protected, with a rifle capable of firing six or seven shots in a minute, would be equal to three or four men though similarly armed, who had to expose themselves to dislodge him from his position. I think it may be laid down as a principle, that the more perfect the rifle is rendered, the greater will be the difficulty of conquering a people who know how to handle it. When I first read of that terrible weapon known as "Gale's patent," and the equally terrible Snider gun, capable of discharging 15 or 16 shots a minute, it became clear to me that this country might look with confidence to the future, and be rendered safe