

OBSERVATIONS

ON THE

ARMED STRENGTH OF CANADA.

“ There was a sort of local force called the Urban Militia “ much neglected indeed, and more a name than a reality, “ yet the advantage of such an institution was considerable, men were to be had in abundance and as the “ greatest difficulty in a sudden crisis is to prepare the “ framework of order, it was no small resource to find a “ plan of service ready, the principle of which was under- “ stood by the people.” (Napier “ Peninsular war,” Vol. I, page 44, quotation from “ Historia de la guerra contra Napoleone”).

A new phase has now developed in the military organization of Nations.

The defence of vital interests of peoples is no more entrusted only to standing armies; whole populations in our days, arm themselves to protect their rights.

Standing armies have become rather, Military Schools of Nations; means of imparting instruction to the able bodied men of countries; armies in which recruits serve for a more or less prolonged period returning afterwards to their civil avocations, trained soldiers ready to rejoin their corps when the Commonwealth is imperiled.

Prussia gave the lead in the adoption of this system and since her marvelous success in 1866 and in 1870, other nations of Europe have been striving to follow her example, so far as was consistent with their national character, institutions and prejudices.

Canada though a young country and relatively safe from the enterprises of ambitious neighbours, acknowledged in a manner, the value of national armies even before they had been tested on European battle fields and in 1868, a law was enacted by the Canadian Parliament,