

PREFACE

THE remarkable progress made by Canada during the past eight or ten years in the development of her natural resources, in the extension of her domestic industries and in the expansion of her internal and foreign commerce, has been accompanied by a development of wholesome national military spirit and by an expansion of the defensive force of the Dominion just as noteworthy and unquestionably just as essential to the continued prosperity and happiness of the inhabitants of the Dominion as a people.

¶The sound, sober military spirit which permeates the loyal and patriotic population of Canada is unquestionably one of the most valuable assets of this great country. History proves beyond all cavil that the continued possession of a sterling military spirit is absolutely essential to the preservation of the liberty, the material prosperity, the higher standards of moral and religious life, and the true happiness of nations. Ancient empires like Assyria, Babylonia, Egypt, Phoenicia and Lydia, only succumbed when the virile military spirit which had established their prosperity and glory was extinguished. When the Lydians, during a momentary revival of national military spirit, endeavored to throw off the Persian yoke, Cyrus (559-531 B.C.) decided that the subjugation of the proud race should be crushing and final. He did not lay the rebellious country waste nor put its people to the sword. The Lydians were fabulously rich, so much so that the name of their king Croesus to this day stands as a synonym for vast wealth. Cyrus, who combined the wisdom of a philosopher with the skill and courage of a mighty conqueror, decided that the national wealth of the Lydians coupled with the obliteration of the military spirit prevailing among them should be made to work the nation's death. They were deprived of their arms and all trophies and monuments recalling past military glories. They were forbidden to practice military evolutions or anything resembling them, and were actually compelled to live in the idle enjoyment of the wealth they possessed, in order that the race might become demoralized and effeminate. This policy soon accomplished its purpose.

¶Thanks to the oft-recurring outbreaks of unfriendliness among sections of the people of the neighbouring but not always neighbourly republic, and to the deep-rooted determination of the Canadian people, begotten of their royalist stock, to preserve inviolate at all costs the territory of Canada as the home of British parliamentary institutions and the ark of true freedom in North America, there has always been more or less military spirit in this country, and the existence of the Canadian Militia, even during the periods of most pronounced neglect, has done not a little to foster and nourish it.

¶The South African War stimulated the military spirit in Canada as it had not been for years; and in demonstrating the mighty scope which existed for co-operation between the Mother Country and her daughter nations in defence of the Empire, at once raised the Canadian Militia from the level of a mere auxiliary of the regular army, liable to be called upon to furnish men, and perhaps a few selected officers, in cases of local emergency, to the status of a powerful and necessary unit of the Imperial defensive force.

¶The Canadian people and the Canadian Militia have manfully assumed the increased responsibility, and the intervening few years have seen an incompletely organized, a poorly supported, and an oft-neglected militia transformed into an effective army with a carefully selected and trained staff, with modern armaments and equipment, and with its own arsenals, magazines and departments.