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since when The Chronicle printed its terrible exposure of the dismantled and worthless condition of Quebec's defences, and when it frankly intimated that this terrible state of affairs was well known to many of our military men, but that they were obliged to keep their mouths shut owing to the system of official intimidation practised at Ottawa from which they suffer. This is a pretty condition of things, surely, and it is certainly time to change it with a vengeance. As it is, we believe that, if war were to break out to-morrow between England and the United States, which is not at all beyond the range of possibility, we would be caught utterly unprepared, though upwards of thirty millions have been spent, squandered would be the better word, upon our militia within the last twenty years. We could not put one single battalion of men in the field properly clothed, properly equipped and, last but not least, properly armed, to cope with a modern enemy. This is a desperate state of affairs to contemplate, but it is doubly aggravated by the reflection that the same evidences of criminal neglect, incapacity and dry rot prevail in every arm and branch of the Service, and that, unless radical measures are taken before long and a clean sweep made of pompous incompetents who control the Department and their pets all over, we shall be exposed to have the large vote of money which the Government proposes to ask from Parliament to put our defences in an efficient state frittered away again to no good purpose. As already stated, our cartridge factory, like everything else, has suffered and is suffering from the unfitnes for their responsible positions of these jacks-in-office at Ottawa. They have no more idea of prompt action, of taking time by the forelock, than they have of the hieroglyphics of the ancient Egyptians or Chaldeans. You could no more get a hustle on them than you could upon so many snails, even if an armed foe were upon our soil, and their dilatoriness and red-tapesism, and not any fault in our cartridge factory itself or its staff, are directly responsible for the false reports and the wrong impression about it which have gone abroad to our injury and against which, in the name of truth and justice, we must emphatically protest. As an establishment, it is perfectly adequate to do all the work required of it. Its equipment is sufficient for the purpose, and all the orders that have been received have been promptly and satisfactorily filled. But the trouble lies in the fact that, owing to the accursed spirit of indifference, laziness or want of ordinary business tact which prevails in the Department at Ottawa, these orders are kept back or not sent in till the very last moment, till the very eve almost of the occasions when the ammunition is wanted. The result is as may be imagined. They are not miracle workers at the cartridge factory. It takes a certain amount of time to manufacture quantities of ammunition, and it is therefore not surprising that the filling of orders so received should be sometimes behind and give a color of foundation for the injurious reports that are being circulated with regard to it. But for these the real blame lies at Ottawa and not at Quebec, and the sooner this truth is proclaimed and known the better it will be for our military defences and the Dominion. Take, for instance, the new rifle with which our militia are to be armed, and which is said to be now fully decided upon. Now, if these militia heads at Ottawa had any gumption whatever, they would give the order at once to get the ammunition ready

for it, but the probability is that it will be six months after the weapon is in the hands of our volunteers that they will wake up to the necessity of providing it, and then if it is not manufactured like greased lightning and ready on the spot it will be in order to throw the entire blame on the cartridge factory. The fact, as already said, is that the Militia Department is a close corporation, a rotten borough, which must be broken up, an Augean stable, which must be thoroughly cleaned out, before any good can be expected from it. We are living in dangerous and critical times, and, like the Duke of Cambridge at the head of the British army, all the worthless old fossils connected with our military system should be retired without further delay and removed as nuisances out of the way. Their usefulness is gone.

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