NATIONAL HISTORIC PARKS
AND SITES BRANCH

DIRECTION DES LIEUX ET DES
PARCS HISTORIQUES NATIONAUX

MANUSCRIPT REPORT NUMBER
TRAVAIL INÉDIT NUMÉRO 224

# QUEBEC, THE GIBRALTAR OF NORTH AMERICA?

by

GLENN A. STEPPLER

(1976)

PARKS CANADA
DEPARTMENT OF INDIAN
AND NORTHERN AFFAIRS

PARCS CANADA
MINISTÈRE DES AFFAIRES
INDIENNES ET DU NORD

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Abstract

Quebec City was considered a position of vital strategic significance throughout the period of Britain's direct responsibility for Canadian defence. Acting as both an entrepot to the Canadian interior and a last bastion of resistance against the loss of that interior, Quebec was the critical link in communications with Europe. Prior to the War of 1812, in the face of threatened American aggression, the accepted maxim of defence seemed to be a complete withdrawal to Quebec, abandoning everything else.

Although described by some as the Gibraltar of North America, to the engineers responsible for the city's defence Quebec was a position with serious tactical weaknesses. Over a period of sixty years the British Government was repeatedly urged to construct a proper citadel, but the project was continually postponed. Somewhat ironically this citadel was finally built in the 1820's, at a time when British strategists were devising schemes by which all of the interior could be preserved and were no longer solely concerned with the safety of Quebec.

Subsequent uncertainty over the imperial connection with an emergent Canada, coupled with the growing power of the United States, finally resulted in a drastic revision of plans. Although seeming to restore Quebec to an unquestioned strategic pre-eminence this revision finally led not only to a complete withdrawal of all British forces from the Canadian interior but to the abandonment of Quebec as well.

## Introduction

In order to fully comprehend the strategic value of Quebec City it is necessary to understand the evolution of Great Britain's North American defence plans. Only when placed in context does Quebec's significance and the relative importance of the lesser military posts become clear. In the documentation used for this study statements on Quebec's strategic importance were certainly not lacking, but as often as not its pre-eminent position went unmentioned or was little elaborated. The significance of Quebec was a matter taken largely for granted.

# Chapter 1
## The "key of French america"

In September 1759 British Major-General James Wolfe succeeded in breaching the French defences of Quebec. Wolfe died in the attempt but within five days of his victory on the plains outside of the city, the capital of New France capitulated. A terse commentary by Brigadier-General James Murray, one of Wolfe's subordinates, records the first days of the British occupation:

> Sep$^{t}$ 18$^{th}$ - This day/Fruits of the Victory gained by the British Forces over the French army The 13$^{th}$ instant/Quebec the Capital of Canada surrendered upon honourable terms, and L$^{t}$ Col$^{l}$ Murray took Possession of the Gates, with three companies of Grenadiers.
>
> 19$^{th}$ This day I marched into the town or more properly the Ruins of it with the Batt$^{ns}$ of Amherst, Bragg; & otway
>
> 20$^{th}$ The French Garrison having surrendered their arms, embarked on board the Vessels appointed to receive them.
>
> 21$^{st}$....this night it was resolved in a Council of War, consisting of the Admiral and Generals, that we should keep possession of Quebec, and I should remain with the Command.[1]

The British army remained at Quebec for the next one hundred and twelve years. Throughout that period the strategic importance of the Quebec garrison to Britain's position in

continental North America was universally recognized.

Prior to 1759, indeed since the beginning of the Anglo-French wars in the last decade of the seventeenth century, there had been many plans to attack Quebec, but real threats had materialized only twice, and both of these attempts had ended in dismal failure. In 1690 a New England force under Sir William Phips had appeared before Quebec but had retired after an ineffective bombardment. This had been followed in 1711 by an expedition under Rear-Admiral Sir Hovenden Walker and Brigadier-General John Hill, which had ended some three hundred miles from Quebec when several ships were wrecked at Egg Island.

Anglo-French rivalry continued and in 1754 again came to violence in the Ohio valley. Once it was learned that Washington had been driven out of Fort Necessity by the French, Major-General Winslow of Massachusetts immediately proposed an attack on Quebec, the city to be held until the "unjust encroachments" of the French were abandoned.[2] In this final phase of the struggle with New France, British plans repeatedly stressed the importance of capturing Quebec.

At the war's commencement, the principal object avowed by Britain was the security of boundaries in those areas of the North American frontier disputed between herself and France. Such a statement of Britain's intention was persistent, but an exuberant clamour for outright conquest was soon heard on both sides of the Atlantic, in London and especially in Britain's North American colonies. Militarily, however, the frontier battles of the early years of the war amounted to little more than a war of posts, a "Petty Skirmishing Warr" which could produce no decisive results. Whatever victories might be gained by Britain in the interior, it was clear that France's retention of Quebec and the St. Lawrence would enable her to continually reinforce her North American possessions and sustain the

struggle against the British indefinitely.

After a disastrous campaign in 1756, Major-General Lord Loudoun, the Commander-in-Chief in North America, wrote to the Duke of Cumberland expressing his opinion on plans for the next year's campaign. Lord Loudoun was explicit:

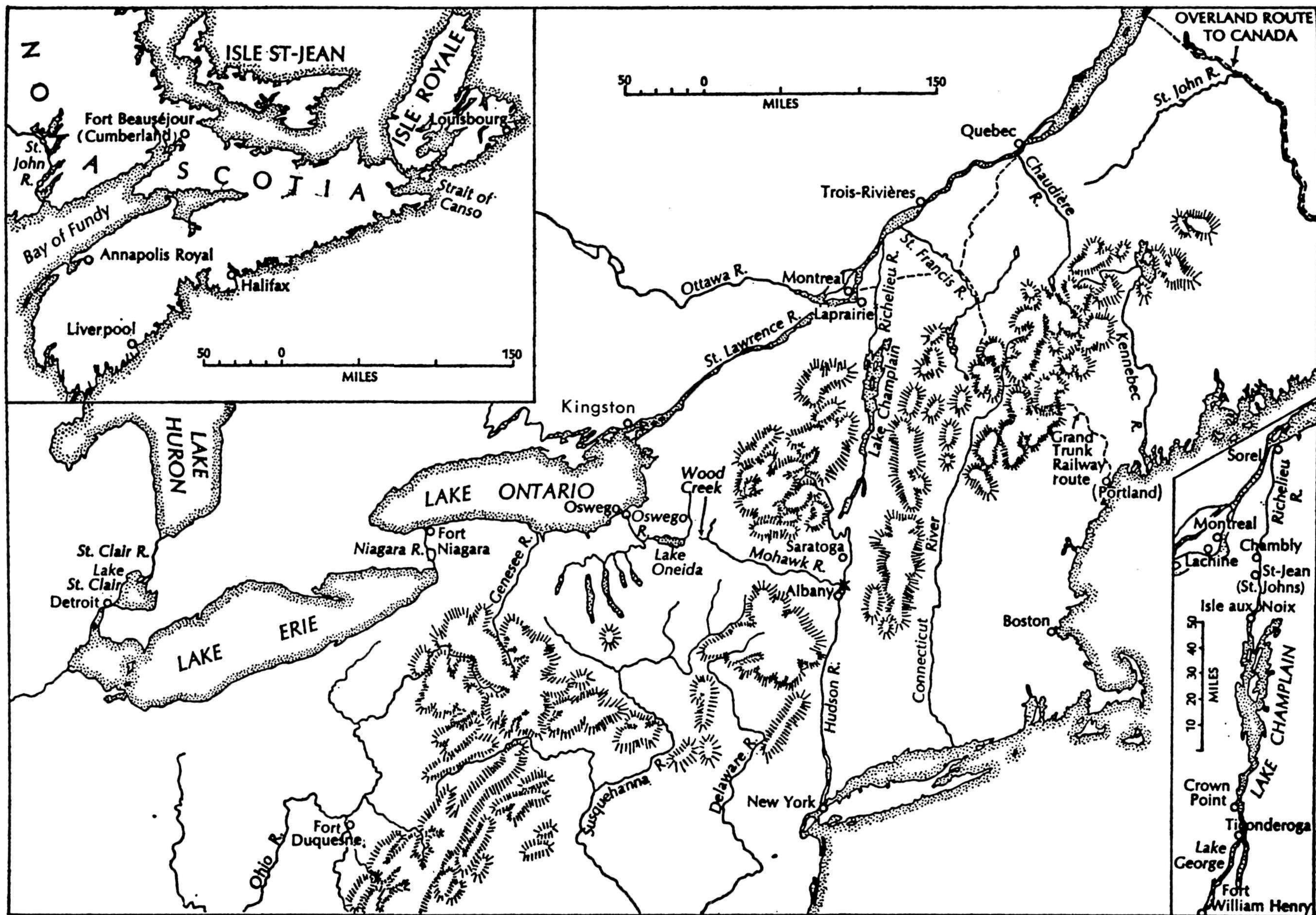
> ....that Quebeck is the Point we should push for, by the River St. Lawrence. I need not explain to you the consequences which would arise from our Success there. But I really see no other Point we are so likely to succeed in as in that, which is the main Point; for where ever we make our Point, we must fight the whole Force of Canada before we arrive at it; as their Power over these People can bring the whole to what ever Place they are wanted. There, if we have a proper Fleet, and that comes in time, we can arrive with our whole Force at once; if we can land and establish our selves, we have nothing but the Siege to make; if we succeed in that I imagine the Business is done, for there we shall I do suppose [meet] all their Regular Forces, which so far as I have yet learnt is Six Battalions from Europe besides their Marine and their People of the Country with their Indians which are very numerous.[3]

The Duke of Cumberland concurred with Loudoun's assessment, noting that the Major-General's ideas had "very much coincided with the Opinion on this side of the water." Cumberland further observed that an attack on Louisbourg, which "would very properly lead on to the main Point of the River St. Lawrence", was already planned.[4] Cumberland wished that the true destination of any expedition to Quebec be kept quiet, but a growing consensus in both the

North American colonies and in Britain was focusing attention on the capture of Quebec as the critical step which would ultimately end the war. The rationale was quite simple. By cutting at the "roots" of French power in North America, the "branches" must eventually fall. Quebec, as the point of entry for French troops and supplies, was the "Vital Part", the "key of french america", the possession of which "would for ever lock out every frenchman" and deliver the interior of North America into British hands.[5] As one observer noted, the benefits would be considerable:

> ....The reduction of Quebec appears to me to be the most considerable, splendid, and useful object we can have in the war. For besides the advantageous Credit of reducing the Capital of New France, the seat of Government, and the great Mart of their Trade, we shall possess a respectable Fortress in the very center of the Enemies Country, commanding the whole course of the river St. Lawrence, and by means of that river all the settled and valuable parts of Canada; we destroy all concurrence and uniformity in their operations; we cut off all succour from the interior forts and settlements; we awe the Savages; and at one stroke we disable their formidable militia; for as their plantations will by this conquest lie at our mercy, we may easily disarm the people, and keep them quiet, by threatening, and (if it should be found necessary) putting in practice, military Execution and what is of equal consideration, whilst we thus command the settled Country, it will be impossible for any Succours from France to find the least subsistence.[6]

1 Invasion routes. (J. Mackay Hitsman, Safeguarding Canada, 1763-1871 /Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1968/, p. 13.) The original was drawn by Major C.C.J. Bond and has been slightly altered.




Invasion routes.

Recognizing the importance of Quebec was only a first step. The next problem was to determine how the city could be attacked. Loudoun did not favour "overland" operations in the interior. In North America, such enterprizes, even those using the lakes, encountered monumental problems of supply and movement, while geographic position had conferred certain advantages on the French defence. Canada's chief strength against an attack by land lay in its remoteness, an extensive barrier of wild frontier separating it from the British colonies to the south. Once this frontier was crossed, an invader still had to negotiate the St. Lawrence river. Montreal was on an island and Quebec was situated on the north shore of this imposing river.

In the first years of the war British expeditions in the interior failed dismally, while even those operations using Lake Champlain and the upper St. Lawrence in the final campaign of 1760 against Montreal, were time consuming, tedious and fatiguing. Despite such difficulties, there were suggestions urging operations along the Kennebec and Chaudière rivers. Captain John Simcoe, father of the first lieutenant-governor of Upper Canada, visualized a "furious assault on Quebec" by an army of 20,000 men. Such a force he said would assemble at the mouth of the Kennebec and strike out for Quebec in the spring. If Quebec were too strong, it would push on up the St. Lawrence to Montreal, and leave the capture of Quebec until the next year.[7] The obvious logistical problems of such a plan were glibly ignored. Though the Kennebec route had strong advocates, it was still largely unknown wilderness and higher authority deemed such schemes impracticable for the movement of large numbers of troops.

Clearly the lakes and rivers of the interior were vitally important and water transport generally was recognized as an absolute necessity in North America. It was noted in one proposed plan of campaign that, "The Great

Difficulty which will attend the Execution of any Plan for an Attack upon Canada arises from the Nature of the Country being such that you cannot carry Stores and Artillery, nay in some places perhaps not even your Troops without Boats and other Vessels."[8]

The interior, however, offered no direct or easy approach to Quebec. The only solution seemed to lie in a naval expedition up the St. Lawrence:

> ....The Road to Quebec up St. Lawrence River we possess by the $y^e$ *Superiority* of our *Marine Navigation*. There is neither Danger nor Difficulty nor do I see how there can be any Opposition to hinder $y^e$ Fleet getting up to $y^e$ Isle of Orleans. And a Superior Army in Possession of that may by proper measures command $y^e$ rest of the way to Quebec. If our Army can once sett down before Quebec it must take it. If Quebec be taken, the Capitulation may at least strip Canada of all the Regulars after which the Inhabitants might be induced to Surrender.[9]

Execution of this plan was not necessarily so straightforward. Could an immediate and direct attack be made on Quebec by simply ascending the St. Lawrence? The French emphasized the navigational problems on the river itself and though the British were not especially impressed by this problem, they were concerned with another--Louisbourg, the French fortress on Cape Breton.

France had expended large sums of money on Louisbourg in an effort to dominate the Gulf of St. Lawrence. With an effective fleet in its harbour, this French fortress could act as both a shield to Quebec and as a threat to the British American seacoast. Yet without such a fleet, it could command nothing beyond the range of its own guns. If French naval strength at Louisbourg was weak, the idea of

bypassing this fortress seemed possible, but there were many "who doe not altogether approve of playing so deep".[10] The prudent approach was surely "to begin with Louisbourgh", as its capture would in large measure cut off supplies reaching the St. Lawrence from Europe, thus making the capture of Quebec that much easier. Furthermore the hazards of venturing up the St. Lawrence, while leaving an enemy garrison and harbour ready to receive fresh reinforcements in the rear, could not be ignored.

William Pitt, the Secretary of State responsible for directing the war against France wanted Louisbourg captured first. Subsequent cabinet discussion, however, ended in a decision to give Loudoun a choice either to attack Quebec directly or to undertake a preliminary operation against Louisbourg, followed by a move up the St. Lawrence. Loudoun's own plan was for one army to partially immobilize the French defence by threatening the Champlain-Richelieu river route, while another ascended the St. Lawrence and seized Quebec. In the actual attempt, Loudoun's plans were thrown awry by the vagaries of weather, while the French successfully countered the British threat by sending a considerable naval force to Louisbourg where it "could also serve for the defence of Quebec if the enemy undertook to attack it".[11] By the middle of June 1757 Loudoun felt the season too advanced and the French naval presence already too strong to attempt anything but an attack on Louisbourg.[12] By the time he was ready to sail from Halifax, however, new intelligence described a superior French naval force and a reinforced garrison, well entrenched.[13] The projected attack on Louisbourg was cancelled.

The French strategy had been successful. Canada was reinforced and the presence of a sizeable naval force at Louisbourg thwarted British designs on both Cape Breton and Quebec. In addition, because Lord Loudoun had concentrated his forces on the eastern seaboard, leaving other fronts

exposed, the destruction of Fort William Henry, on Lake George by the French, in August, caused a panic in British America in which even New York seemed in danger of being attacked. British plans for the next campaign sought to rectify the failures of 1757. Lord Loudoun was replaced by Major-General James Abercromby. Quebec was still to be the principal target, but Pitt planned a three pronged offensive. A concerted effort would be made to reduce Louisbourg and then take Quebec, while two other operations would also be in train, one against Fort Duquesne on the Ohio, the other against Montreal via Lake Champlain.

The campaign of 1758, however, was not a complete success. Although the French attempt to repeat their strategy of the previous year failed, they did reach Louisbourg with a sufficient naval force to be decisive in prolonging the seige, thereby compromising British plans to press on against Quebec.[14] On Lake Champlain Abercromby failed to breach the French defences, while Fort Duquesne on the Ohio was only abandoned by the French in November. At the end of the campaigning season Quebec and the St. Lawrence were still safe but the British victory at Louisbourg had clearly opened the way for the long awaited assault on the capital of New France. Quebec would be the focal point for the campaign of 1759.

In France further attempts by the navy to succour distant possessions in Canada were now viewed with pessimisism. Instead it was decided to concentrate on plans for an invasion of England itself, an ambitious stroke which would surely end the war. British operations would be paralysed everywhere, while France would be in a position to demand redress for any colonial losses. Such calculations, however, did not take into consideration William Pitt's absolute determination to prosecute the war in North America. A British naval blockade of French ports would not only counter invasion plans but would also prevent any significant help reaching New France. In North America, Canada

2 Pierre de Rigaud, marquis de Vaudreuil Cavagnal by Henri Beau. (Public Archives Canada.)

was to be assailed by two major British armies. Major-General Jeffrey Amherst, replacing Abercromby as Commander-in-Chief in North America, would drive towards Montreal reducing Carillon and St. Frédéric. Major-General James Wolfe would ascend the St. Lawrence and beseige Quebec. At Amherst's discretion Fort Niagara might also be attacked, once Oswego was secured.[15]

In Canada itself, the Governor, The Marquis de Vaudreuil, and his military commander, the Marquis de Montcalm, faced a critical supply shortage which was crippling their potential for military action. Their total manpower, particularly in the number of regulars, was very much inferior to that of their opponents. Montcalm insisted that the defence be conducted on contracted lines of communication, all resources being concentrated in an effort to at least save the St. Lawrence valley. Vaudreuil, however, was sensitive to interests in those areas far to the west of the St. Lawrence valley and did not wish to withdraw without a fight. At least two key questions had to be answered: How much of the interior could be successfully defended? Should "western" areas be sacrificed in order to concentrate all means to protect Montreal and Quebec?

Even the defence of areas along the St. Lawrence presented considerable difficulties. The French did not know where the main British thrust would come, on Lake Champlain or at Quebec. In England, Lord Ligonier, who had replaced the Duke of Cumberland as Commander-in- Chief, reasoned that the French must divide their meagre forces to cover both possibilities, resulting in an inadequate defence in both areas.[16] Montcalm and Vaudreuil for their part clearly saw that they must concentrate on one or the other. In mid-May 1759 news that Wolfe's expedition was approaching Quebec, forced Montcalm to make his move. Gambling on the ability of a small force to slow an enemy advance on Montreal, the balance of the French regular forces were moved

to Quebec and the militia called out <u>en masse</u> to defend the capital. The risk was a calculated one. An operation against Montreal, coming from the south, by its very nature had to be more difficult than an ascent of the St. Lawrence to Quebec. Moreover, the critical supply and reinforcement situation made the maintenance of reliable communications with France an absolute necessity and for this reason Quebec had to be held. If Quebec fell and the war continued, it could only be a matter of time before the military resistance of the interior collapsed.

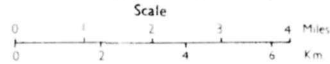
In terms of its natural physical features Quebec possessed great strength, but it was not invulnerable. C.P. Stacey has described the principal topographical features:

> The city occupies a point like the jutting prow of a ship, between the great River St. Lawrence and its much smaller tributary the St. Charles. Along these rivers, on either side of the point, is a narrow shelf of waterfront land; on this stands the Lower Town. Above it, along the whole circuit of both rivers, tower the rocky cliffs of the Upper Town. These, however, are much higher towards the St. Lawrence than towards the St. Charles; for the point is loftiest directly above the larger river, and all across the city and the land to the west of it the ground slopes steadily down towards the north-east.[17]

Quebec was protected by natural obstacles on all sides but one. To the south-west, its land front faced the open country and had to be covered by fortifications. The walls, however were neither well planned nor well built. Derisive comments by French regular officers were all too common and Montclam was by no means alone in feeling that the walls would be breached as soon as they were besieged. Lacking

3 The siege of Quebec 1759-1760. (J.W. Chalmers, W.J. Eccles and H. Fullard, Philip's Historical Atlas of Canada /London: George Philip & Son, 1966/, p. 14.)

# THE SIEGE OF QUEBEC
## 1759 1760




Roads

Dates refer to 1759 unless otherwise stated

even a proper ditch, and without outworks of any kind it was clear that the enemy would have to be kept at a respectable distance and the approaches to the city securely held. Wolfe's army began arriving at Quebec towards the end of June. Three months later the only successful siege in the history of the city came to a conclusion. Its progress illustrated the essential features of Quebec's immediate geographic situation and deserves some consideration in detail.

Montcalm, being particularly concerned over the possibility of a landing on the Beauport shore, to the east of the city, had works thrown up along that line, eventually as far as the Montmorency River. This, along with the preparation of fire boats, floating batteries, gunboats, and batteries in the Lower Town was accomplished in a remarkably short time, yet the omissions in the French defence were surprising. Batteries which would have greatly harassed the British fleet as it sailed past Cap Tourmente and the Island of Orleans were never built. Nor was any attempt made to cover Point Levis, opposite Quebec, on the south shore.[18] At the commencement of the siege, Wolfe's attention was also attracted to the Beauport shore and for some time he persisted in trying to affect a breach in the French defences there hoping to approach the city from the east. When this failed British efforts were directed to the area upriver from Quebec.

Strategically, operations conducted above the city were bound to be far more decisive than an attempt to breach the Beauport lines. The provision situation within the city and the French camp was such that reliance had to be placed on the movement of supplies from a depot established at Batiscan. If Wolfe was able to place his army between the city and this depot, there was a good chance of forcing Montcalm to fight for his line of communications. Wolfe desperately wanted a pitched battle being confident his regulars would

4 Louis-Joseph, Marquis de Montcalm, by Sergent. (Public Archives Canada.)

Sergent del.
et Sculp. 1790.

win and hopeful that the result would end the stalemate. Using the mobility provided by the British fleet, Wolfe was able to land his army at the Anse au Foulon, a risky operation, but one which did bring Montcalm to battle. Wolfe's brigadiers had suggested a landing further up river, above Cap Rouge. The brigadiers' plan was sound in that the landing itself was more certain and would more effectively have cut Quebec's most vital line of communication,[19] but it could not have had the dramatic shock effect of the Anse au Foulon landing. A landing at Cap Rouge would not likely have forced Montcalm into acting with the seemingly imprudent haste he displayed as a result of the sudden appearance of Wolfe's army on the Plains of Abraham.

A completely satisfying explanation of Montcalm's actions and the resulting French defeat on the morning of September 13th will probably remain elusive. It has been argued that Montcalm was forced to attack as Wolfe was in a position, after the landing at the Anse au Foulon, to prevent the entry of food into the city. This, however, does not appear to have been true. A critical situation did not develop immediately. Even several days after the battle on the Plains the British army was still not in a position to block the road communications leading westward out of Quebec, while it was some five days after the battle before the city actually surrendered. On principle, Montcalm's determination to dislodge the British before they could establish themselves was sound though he appears to have been in great haste. A force under de Bougainville, which was further up the river from Quebec, could easily have moved on Wolfe's rear, but Montcalm did not wait, nor does it appear that there was any attempt at co-operation. More than sixty years after the siege Major-General Sir James Carmichael-Smyth writing a report for the Duke of Wellington, suggested that Montcalm should in fact have remained on the defensive and forced Wolfe to either attempt an escalade or commence

a regular seige. Despite the poor condition of Quebec's walls, either operation would have been costly to the small British army, while the French had everything to gain from delay, especially because of the lateness of the season.[20]

Carmichael-Smyth's observations were certainly cogent, but Montcalm could not have been certain that Wolfe would give up before the French supply situation within the city became intolerable and forced him into an attempt to eject the British from the plains. If Montcalm had waited, and then found himself forced to attack, he would have faced a British army entrenched in siege lines, and judging by the course of the September 13th battle, this would have made a french defeat almost certain. The margin between success and failure in the seige, however, was a narrow one and in the final outcome luck played a prominent part. Despite its weaknesses, Quebec was not an easy place to capture, but its defence had to be conducted with skill and resolution.

After the defeat on the Plains of Abraham, the Chevalier de Lēvis, who had assumed the command in the place of Montcalm, came within hours of successfully relieving the city and forcing the British army, still outside on the plains, into full seige operations. Lēvis was very impressed with Quebec's importance. He arrived at Jacques Cartier on 17 September resolved "to do and risk everything in the world to prevent the taking of Quebec, and, if the worst came to the worst, to move all the people out and destroy the city, so the enemy will not be able to spend the winter there."[21] De Lēvis' attempt to prevent the surrender of the city failed, but the collapse of Quebec did not immediately result in the end of French resistance in Canada. After the battle of September 13th Vaudreuil had escaped with the majority of the French and Canadian forces, marching out of the city and around the British left flank.

In Europe, France's designs for an invasion of England in 1759 failed and the French navy was badly beaten. The

invasion scare in Europe however did not prevent a full scale assault on Canada. Wolfe took Quebec, and the victory was hailed as a resounding triumph for British arms. Elsewhere the assault on Canada bogged down. Niagara was captured but the more important operations against Montreal failed to reach their goal. In terms of grand strategy three separate British forces were acting on exterior lines from three sides, against the heart of Canada, stretched along the St. Lawrence valley. To gain the maximum effect it was essential that each force press forward and keep constant pressure on the French forces opposed to them. This, however, was not achieved. Amherst had faced a difficult task in moving against Montreal from the south, but his innumerable delays meant that Wolfe's operations at Quebec received no benefit from his presence on Lake Champlain. Contemporaries were highly critical of Amherst's inaction.

Further to the west, Brigadier General Thomas Gage, charged with mounting an offensive against the French posts on the upper St. Lawrence, thus threatening Montreal from the west, dawdled indecisively. The advantages which could have been gained by the British from exterior lines of operation were not forthcoming in the 1759 campaign. The fall of Fort Niagara did draw off some of Quebec's defenders as Lévis hurried to Montreal to cover the western approaches on the upper St. Lawrence, but throughout the siege of Quebec Wolfe faced a numerically superior French and Canadian army.

The results of the campaign of 1759 left France with a much truncated version of Canada, bounded in the east by the Jacques Cartier river and in the west, on the upper St. Lawrence, by La Presentation and Fort Lévis. The British were in possession of Quebec, Crown Point and Oswego and the coming year seemed certain to bring a renewal of the British offensive, probably from all three sides. Canada's only hope, other than a peace settlement in Europe, was the

timely arrival of sufficient aid from France. Both men and supplies of all types were badly needed and over the winter several individuals pleaded the Canadian case at Versailles. If France were to recover her position she must, it appeared, lay siege to Quebec.

François Le Mercier, who had served in Canada since 1750 was emphatic that France must either fully commit herself to the effort necessary to re-take Quebec or send no help at all and accept the loss of the whole colony. The reinforcements would have to be sent from France before the end of February, to be certain of arriving at Quebec before the British fleet. By May the operations against the city should be well underway, in order to take advantage of the spring floods on the Richelieu which would prevent a British advance from that quarter, at least until June. The recapture of Quebec was the key operation. It would have to be completed in time to send reinforcements up the St. Lawrence to protect the approaches to Montreal.[22]

In the hope that the aid asked for by Le Mercier would be forthcoming, Lévis and Vaudreuil made every preparation to mobilize their remaining resources for a spring offensive against Quebec. The British garrison in the city, left under the command of Brigadier-General Murray, was known to be sickly after a difficult winter with poor shelter and a shortage of proper provisions. Murray's original force of over 7,000 men had been decimated by scurvy. A thousand had perished and another 2,000 men rendered unfit for duty.[23] Lévis' hope was to at least confine Murray and in conjunction with the expected arrival of a fleet from France force the British garrison to surrender. The recapture of Quebec might even convince the British of the futility of further efforts to reduce Canada and result in a general peace settlement.

Towards the end of April Lévis' army of more than 7,000 men with a very inferior artillery train, left Montreal and

5 Brigadier General James Murray, artist unknown. (Public Archives Canada.)

moved down river against Quebec. Both Lévis and Murray placed considerable importance on occupying the heights immediately outside and to the west of the city. Murray explained the situation of Quebec and the importance of these heights to his superior, Major-General Amherst, but at the time he wrote the frozen ground had already frustrated his plans:

> As the Place [Quebec] is not Fortified, and Commanded every where towards the Land, my Garrison which was now melted down to Three Thousand Fighting Men, by the most Inveterate Scurvy, were daily mouldering away, and it was now Impossible for me to Fortify the Heights of Abraham, tho' Fascines and every Requisite Material had been provided long ago, I could not hesitate a moment about giving the Enemy Battle; As every One knows the Place is not tenable against an Army in possession of the Heights--I therefore this Night [April 27th] gave the Necessary Orders, and by Seven o'clock next morning Marched with all the Force I could Muster and formed the Little Army on the Heights...[24]

Murray's reasons for risking a battle outside the city bore a marked resemblance to Montcalm's. The ensuing battle of Ste. Foy was a much closer and more costly engagement for both sides than the previous encounter on the plains. Murray was beaten and sought refuge behind Quebec's walls. Lévis established his siege batteries and despite serious difficulties succeeded in doing alarming damage, concentrating his fire on the Glacière bastion, towards the south end of the city's main wall. The ground beyond the city's walls was rocky and the soil thin, hampering the development of siege lines. British morale was low, but without an adequate siege train, lacking even sufficient powder, Lévis was relying heavily on the arrival of a French fleet to force

the downfall of Quebec.

Lévis came very close to success, but the arrival of a British naval force in mid-May terminated the brief siege abruptly. The French relief force which was sent was quite inadequate and had been far too late in leaving Bordeaux. Trapped at Restigouche in the Bay of Chaleurs it was totally destroyed by the British navy in July of 1760.

The British offensive against Canada was renewed with the arrival of summer. With the enemy poised on three sides, Lévis could only hope for British mistakes which might allow him to attack the British armies separately and defeat the invaders in detail. Badly out-numbered and lacking the mobility necessary to act effectively on interior lines, it was a slim hope. Troops drawn from Murray's Quebec garrison played a leading role in the final British thrust against Montreal. Ascending the St. Lawrence by water allowed Murray considerable mobility and enabled him to force a French retirement without being drawn into a pitched battle. Murray's advance, however, was only secondary to the main blow delivered by Amherst's army, coming from the west by the upper St. Lawrence. To further distract the French a third British column approached Montreal from the south.

The British campaign achieved its goal and the surrender of Montreal in September 1760 concluded the only successful invasion of Canada. Indifference in France had undermined the best efforts to defend Canada, while Britain's naval supremacy had been a decisive factor in the French defeat. On the British side tremendous effort had been put into the conquest of Canada. The importance of Quebec had been fully understood and no effort was spared in capturing it. Attitudes in France, however, were in sharp contrast. At the end of the conflict, Voltaire expressed a popular sentiment when he wrote: "Je suis comme le public, j'aime beaucoup mieux la paix que le Canada, et je crois que la France peut être heureuse sans Québec."[25]

# Chapter 2

## Bastion Against Revolution

The successful conquest of New France not only brought victory to British arms, it also brought new responsibilities. Although there was public debate over whether or not Britain should retain her Canadian conquests, there was little argument among those who drew up the peace treaty. Nevertheless in Quebec itself, there was some doubt. By the end of 1762 Murray wished to commence repairs on the city walls but was "...averse to any expense...till matters are finally determined, when if we keep the place I imagine the old fortifications will be condemned entirely..."[1]

One object of the war had been to obtain security for Britain's thirteen colonies, and once negociations started the British ministers unanimously demanded the cession of Canada.[2] Military considerations weighed heavily. The government accepted the inevitability of renewed conflict with France, and kept Canada. There was however, skepticism and the Earl of Hardwicke expressed serious reservations: "If you don't remove the French inhabitants, they will never become half subjects, and this Country must maintain an army there to keep them in subjection."[3] Hardwicke had not forgotten the experience of trying to control the population of Acadia. The decision to keep Canada also meant the necessity of maintaining a garrison of British regulars. At this stage, uncertain of the loyalty of the French Canadians, the local militia as the traditional means of American colonial defence could not be applied to Canada. Instead British military authorities at Quebec, Trois

Rivières and Montréal set about disarming the local citizenry as soon as possible.

Following the peace of 1763, a considerable force of British regulars continued to be maintained in North America. The role of the Quebec garrison and those troops stationed elsewhere in the former French colonies was clear enough: British troops were to keep the potentially hostile population of Canada "in due subjection". Indeed it was Murray's contention that the new provinces could not be governed without a military force.[4] Quebec city itself was not only looked upon as "key of the Province from the Atlantic", but was also seen as an important post for the magazines of the British occupation forces, its proper defence being considered a matter of internal security. It could be both the first and most important position of defence against an enemy force ascending the St. Lawrence and a last refuge if British forces were driven from the Canadian interior. As a "Capitol point" it was the "Port of Communication with the Mother Country" and would remain the vital link in the line of communications for as long as Canadian defence depended upon British regulars and British supplies.

The final struggle with New France had revealed with clarity the salient strategic features of the Quebec position. It was the great entrepot of Canada, while at the same time a protective citadel to Montreal and the interior. Overland operations in North America being extremely difficult, the British had chosen an ascent of the St. Lawrence as the best method of attack. Experience, however, had shown that the existence of a fortress and harbour at Louisbourg could stall a direct attack coming up the St. Lawrence by demanding prior attention in order to secure a safe line of approach and retirement. Any real protection for Quebec, however, could only be provided by a strong fleet based in or near the Gulf of St. Lawrence. The loss

of such a fortress and fleet did not perforce mean the fall of Canada, for supplies and reinforcements might still arrive at Quebec, albeit with much greater difficulty. The surrender of Quebec itself, however was a more definitive matter. With its loss, any easy communication with Europe was severed and the interior of the country left to its own resources.

A fleet could of course slip past Quebec, and in the opinion of Lieutenant John Marr, R.E., a fortified position at a place such as Deschambault (on the north shore of the St. Lawrence between Quebec and Trois Rivières) was required to command passage along the St. Lawrence. Such a post could further be used to "send Parties out to quell any little Riots or Movements in the Country round about more expeditiously than could be done from that at Quebec or from Montreal."[5] Marr also suggested that if the British forces were defeated at Quebec and driven out of the rest of the province, they could rally at a fortified post at Isle aux Noix on the Richelieu. This post could "serve us as a Retreat; --where we could make a stand and receive Reinforcements from our Southern Colonies over Lake Champlain."[6] Isle aux Noix would also provide a defensive point that would compel an invader from the south, to lay seige to it during his progress northwards. It too was regarded by Marr as one of the "Keys of Canada". Montreal, Marr, reasoned, was too easily avoided by means of the Richelieu to warrant particular attention. An invader could press on against Quebec, leaving Montreal behind him to be reduced "at his Leisure". Montreal would only become a serious concern if "there was in it such a Body of Troops as might endanger his Retreat, in which case he would act imprudently not to begin by getting Possession thereof."[7]

Yet for all its acknowledged strategic value, Quebec was a position with noticeable tactical weaknesses. English engineers surveying Quebec in the years following the conquest

were as displeased with the French defences for the city as Montcalm had been. There was much difficulty in constructing proper fortifications on Quebec's vulnerable landward side. Higher ground outside of the walls, to the southwest of the city, commanded the northern end of the existing ramparts, which could also be enfiladed from the left bank of the St. Charles. Landings were possible to the east of the city along the Beauport shore and the St. Charles River could be forded, its reported depth being less than two feet at low tide. Immediately opposite the city, across the St. Lawrence was yet another site from which an enemy could effectively bombard the Lower Town.

In his plan of defence for the city against Lévis' army, Murray had intended to entrench his forces "upon the heights of Abraham, which entirely command the ramparts of the place at the distance of eight hundred yards", since Quebec itself "could be looked upon in no other light than that of a strong Cantonment."[8] Frost, and in many places snow, prevented the execution of this plan, and the subsequent success achieved by Lévis' breaching batteries showed up the weakness of Quebec's walls in dramatic fashion. In 1762 Murray suggested to his superiors in London that the proper remedy for Quebec's defects was the construction of a citadel on Cape Diamond. It would "...Answer every purpose of the Towns being strongly fortified, may be defended four Months at least by a small Garrison; Awe the Inhabitants, whose Fidelity in case of an Attack, We cannot for some time rely upon; and Secure our Magazines."[9]

Sir Guy Carleton, Murray's successor as Governor of the new province, continued to press the British government for a citadel at Québec but received no encouragement beyond a polite acknowledgement of his suggestions. Carleton envisaged Québec, strengthened by a proper citadel, at one end of a chain of fortified bases stretching from Québec

along the Lake Champlain-Hudson route to New York city. Such a chain of forts would, he felt, link the former French province with the colony of New York thereby facilitating troop movements in wartime between the two colonies.[9] Like Murray he continued to see a Québec citadel as both a visible symbol of the British presence in Canada, a bastion of strength, but also as a refuge, "a Post capable of being defended by their (i.e. the British garrison) numbers, till succour could be sent them from Home, or from the neighbouring colonies."[10]

The concept of a citadel at Québec took on considerable importance in the decade following the Conquest, especially because of the possibility of a renewal of war with France. Periodic reports on the intrigues of French agents were coupled with those on the strained relations between England and Spain. The possibility that a hostile fleet might appear in the St. Lawrence served to underline the fact that the British hold over the new province, particularly in the event of war with France, was considered "very precarious." It was believed that a citadel at Québec would prevent the loss of Britain's control over Canada.[11] It would provide the necessary security for the troops, their arms and magazines, in the midst of "a numerous Military people" whose true loyalties were suspect.[12]

Various plans and estimates for a citadel at Quebec were prepared and sent to London for consideration but more than ten years after Murray's original recommendation no decision had been taken, though the matter was acknowledged to be of "very great Importance."[13] The Treasury Board was in no mood to approve new military expenditures in peacetime for North America. Wartime expenses in the last war with France had made fiscal retrenchment seem more necessary than ever. At a time when even the military governor of Gibraltar was reminded to "Bear one thing in mind, that Guineas from the Treasury are drops of Blood,"[14]

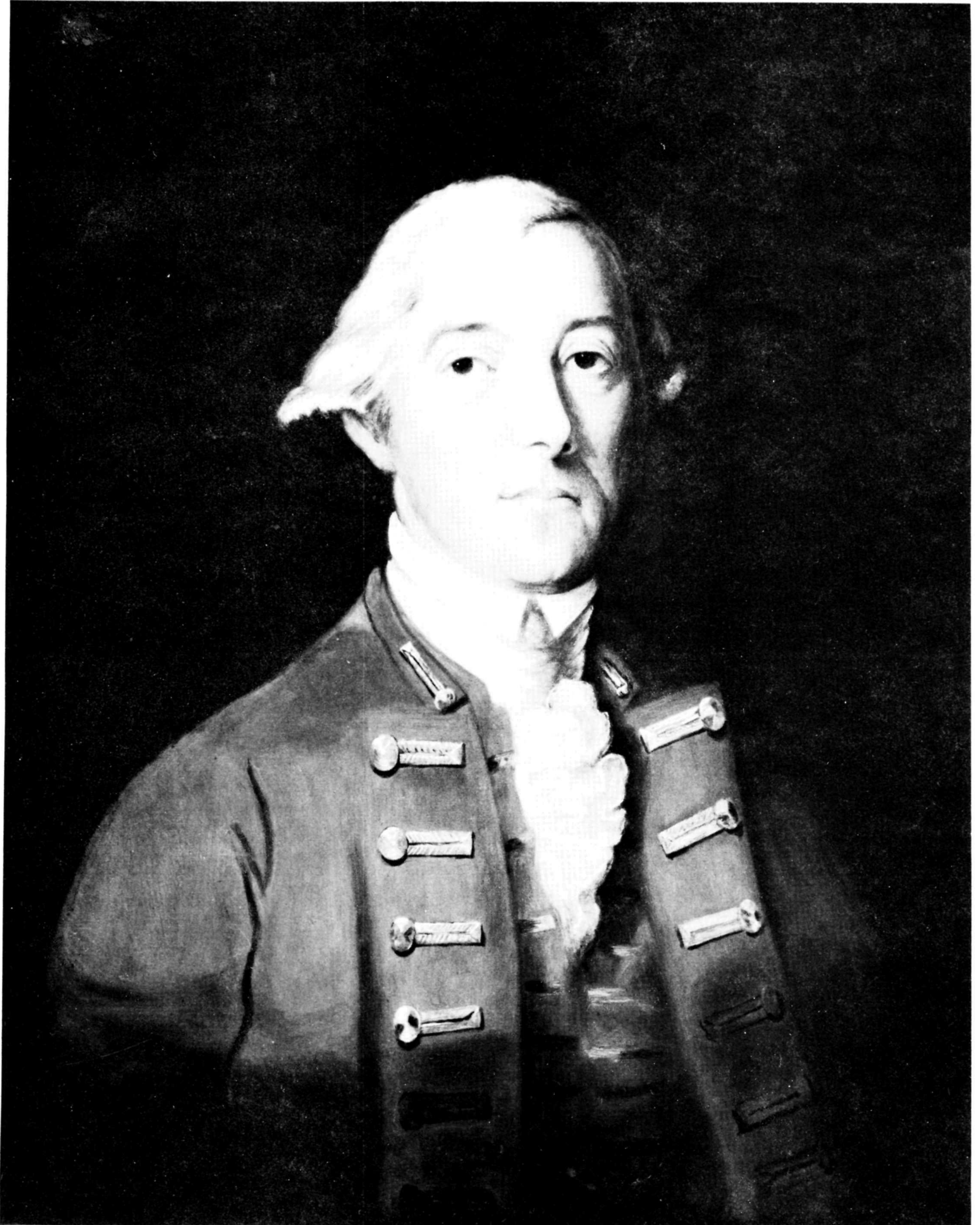
money for Quebec was not forthcoming. The engineer at Halifax remarked to his Quebec counterpart," I believe your Citadel at Cape Diamond will be like mine Here, a Paper one, and nothing else. As to this Place [Halifax] the Government has given up all thoughts of a Citadel..."[15]

A citadel for Quēbec remained a "paper one" for more than fifty years, yet in the period after the Conquest, despite the alarms over possible war with France and Spain, Britain's overall position in North America had an appearance of security. Such appearances, however, soon proved deceptive. Over the same period an increasing tension between Great Britain and her original Thirteen Colonies was rapidly approaching the point of open conflict.

The American Revolution, when it finally erupted, could hardly have been a completely unexpected event. During the final struggle with France, British military officers had observed that the Colonists already had certain notions of "independency." When Guy Carleton, then lieutenant-governor of Quebec, wrote in 1767 to Major General Thomas Gage, the Commander-in-Chief in North America, concerning repairs to the decaying forts along the shore of Lake Champlain, Lake George and the Hudson, he not only considered their renovation essential for securing communications in the event of a war with a European power, but was also taking careful note of the recent complexion of affairs in the American colonies.[16] Canada could provide a base for operations against rebellious American colonists and in Carleton's estimation:

> ...should france begin a War in hopes the British Colonies will push matters to extremities, and she adopted the project of supporting them in their independent notions, Canada, probably will then become the Principal scene, where the fate of America may be determined. Affairs in this situation Canada in the hands of france would no longer present

6 Sir Guy Carleton, later Lord Dorchester, copied by M.B. Messer. (_Public Archives Canada._)



> itself as an enemy to the British colonies, but as an Ally, a friend, and a protector of their Independency.[17]

Carleton's evaluation of Canada's potential strategic value in the event of an American rebellion did indeed foreshadow the ill-fated Burgoyne expedition of 1777, but it was not an original assessment. The French had long appreciated the possibilities of an attack along the Lake Champlain-Hudson route, cutting into the "rear" of the American colonies, separating New England from its southern neighbours. At the outbreak of rebellion in 1775, the American rebels moved quickly to counter any such move by the British. By late August 1775 a rebel army was moving down Lake Champlain towards a weakly defended Canadian frontier. Success would not only give them control over Canadian resources but would also forestall any British move against the insurgent colonies via Lake Champlain.

Despite obstinate resistance at St. Jean, the American forces took Montreal by early November. With winter fast approaching the need to press on against Quebec became paramount. Brigadier-General Richard Montgomery, commander of the invasion force, had little choice if the capture of Canada was to be complete:

> Chambly, St. Jean and Montreal had fallen to his troops but Quebec still remained the rock upon which British power rested in North America. Canada could not be brought into the American union...until the redcoats had been been driven from the great fortress on the St. Lawrence.[18]

In early December, Montgomery, with three hundred men, arrived before Quebec, joining forces with another six hundred rebels under Colonel Benedict Arnold, who had penetrated the Canadian frontier by the Kennebec and Chaudière rivers. Although unable to batter a proper breach, the American commanders determined upon an assault, undertaken

in a snow storm during the night of 31 December. With the prospect of a bitter winter ahead of them, and with the enlistment period of many approaching termination, the rebel army needed a quick decision which an assault by coup de main seemed to offer. Two separate columns attacked the Lower Town from opposite sides, one starting from St. Roch, the other from below Cape Diamond. Both columns met with defeat. The Americans allowed their attack to be defeated in detail, while at the same time they had subordinated the more desirable strategy of attacking the city's main defensive strength in the Upper Town to the easier tactical prospects of overrunning the weaker defences of the Lower Town.

The failure of the initial American assault led to a dismal winter siege, or more accurately, a blockade. The American siege batteries, like those of Lévis' some sixteen years earlier, were badly outnumbered by the guns of Quebec. Although the American army was able to establish itself before Quebec's walls, on the city's vulnerable landward side, the snow and ice made siege lines impossible. Carleton remained in the city, refusing to expose his garrison to the uncertainties of a pitched battle. The besiegers were reinforced as both Washington and the American Congress were impressed by the importance of capturing Québec, but Carleton continued to hold out. In May the British fleet arrived with a relief force, finally amounting to some 10,000 men and again, as in 1760, Quebec served as the "Tête du Pont" from which the British forced their way up the St. Lawrence into the interior. The rebel army was able to offer little resistance. Naval power once more proved to be the vital link, which in conjunction with Quebec, had maintained a British foothold in Canada.

During the campaign season of 1776 the Americans were driven from Canada and the following year Lieutenant General John Burgoyne was able to put into execution his "Expedition from Canada", realizing American fears of a counter-invasion from the north. For the moment Canada and Quebec appeared

to be secure. Following Burgoyne's surrender at Saratoga in October 1777, however, the state of affairs changed abruptly. Burgoyne's defeat again renewed the possibility of an invasion of Canada and rebel enthusiasm for such an attempt was soon rekindled. From the final months of 1777 to the end of the war with the American colonies, the governor at Quebec had to concern himself primarily with the question of defence. In June 1778 this responsibility passed from Carleton to his replacement, General Frederick Haldimand, a Swiss soldier with previous experience in Canada.

Haldimand's arrangements for Canadian defence were very much influenced by the progress of the war with the rebellious colonies to his south. In the event that the British were forced to relinquish their hold on the mainland, a secure base from which a recovery could be staged, had to be established. For this reason Haldimand was determined to protect as much of the settled area of the province of Quebec as he could. This would require a considerable strengthening of the frontier, particularly of those posts south of Montreal, the most likely invasion route.[19]

Even before leaving Britain to assume his new position at Quebec, Haldimand had pressed Lord Germain, the Secretary of State for American affairs, on two points of continuing concern and importance. In view of the possibility of a second rebel invasion of Canada, soon coupled with the threat of French action in the same theatre, Haldimand asked for immediate reinforcements and broached the question of a citadel for Quebec City.[20] His situation was not a simple one, nor was it without risk. There was both a need to guard against the possibility of a naval operation on the St. Lawrence by the French and the threat of an overland invasion by the American rebels from the south. These concerns were further complicated by the fact that many considered defending the "upper posts" (those above Montreal, westward to Niagara, Detroit and Michilimackinac) to be a necessity.

Captain Foy, Haldimand's secretary, pointed out to William Knox, undersecretary of the American Department, that it was in fact "upon these [the upper posts] that the Importance of the Possession of Canada, principally depends in regard of its Commerce, and with respect to the Check with that Province must prove upon the other Colonies, both at present and thereafter."[21]

Haldimand's situation had many striking similarities to that faced by Vaudrieul and Montcalm. Admittedly the naval threat to Quebec City was initially only a very distant possibility and never quite so real as that which had threatened the city during the Seven Years War but the need to spread resources in order to cover many widely scattered posts meant a considerable risk. Haldimand faced an almost impossible task in assembling a disposable field force of any size. He was forced to establish his defence priorities with great care, especially with respect to the construction of fortifications.

Fortified positions in Canada were felt necessary for a variety of reasons. In the immediate war they provided some security against French or American agression while also acting as bases for operations against the American colonies. After the revolution, fortifications would again be needed to keep a "check upon them [the Americans] after their return to some dependance upon this country [Great Britain]." They were further deemed necessary as a precaution against "a sudden Insurrection of the People", which could easily cut off detachments in widely scattered posts. Security had to be provided for military stores, while there was also concern "for Effectually suppressing the spirit of disobedience, which, tho' far from being general, yet has visible signs of existence among the Canadians..."[22] Carleton's hopes of creating a loyal and active Canadian militia, indeed of raising Canadian battalions, had not come to fruition. Nor was this really surprizing; for the moment

such plans had foundered on Canadian reluctance to involve themselves in what appeared as a fratricidal conflict among their former enemies. The reasons for maintaining fortifications, such as those at Quebec, had changed little since the Conquest.

Though Carleton may have continued to believe in Canadian neutrality, Haldimand was soon convinced that the local population was ripe for rebellion, especially when the actual appearance of French forces seemed a distinct possibility.[23] Continued uneasiness over internal security was not only reflected in the renewed interest in a Quebec citadel, but could also be seen in Haldimand's confidential request that some consideration be given to the construction of a Government House at Montreal "...so built as to answer every purpose of a Citadel against any Insurrection, or Tumult amongst the Inhabitants which, from the vicinity to the Colonies and other circumstances, is but too much to be apprehended."[24] Throughout his period as governor, Haldimand reiterated his demands for reinforcements; only if he could trust the Canadians to at least be neutral in the event of an attack, did he feel that the province could be defended with fewer troops.

In 1773 royal engineer John Marr had criticized the decaying state of Quebec City's walls and repeated previous recommendations that a citadel be erected. With Haldimand's assumption of the governorship, Marr again tendered what was essentially the same report - the only apparent difference being that swallows had now taken up residence in the deteriorating joints of the walls, an addition to the shrubs and grass previously reported. Haldimand in turn reported Quebec's defences "entirely rotten", other posts in the province being in "a very defenceless state".[25] Lord Germain and the Board of Ordnance had in fact now sanctioned the construction of a citadel, but Haldimand was soon obliged to postpone the project himself. Keeping in mind

the broader strategic requirements for Britain's maintenance of a military position in North America, namely the need for a secure base such as Canada, Haldimand decided that it was vital to protect as much of the settled area of his province as possible. He further concluded that the threat of a naval attack on Quebec was less than that of an invasion and possible insurrection in the interior.

The more orthodox plan of concentrating on the defences of Quebec city was put aside. Haldimand soon determined that the province's resources were not adequate to begin construction of a proper citadel at Quebec, "so as to afford any reasonable hopes that it could assist us during the present rebellion..."[26] Haldimand explained to Germain where the emphasis was to be placed:

> As to the strengthening of Quebec so, as to render it Defensible or the erecting of a Citadel, require [sic] years, the commencing whereof, in our present circumstances, might only serve to intimidate the people, and no ways answer immediate exigencies, my first care shall be to fortify, as strongly as possible, the Avenues into the Province...[27]

Accordingly the efforts of the Engineer Department were directed towards the frontier first, especially to the posts south of Montreal. Haldimand's intention was that these posts would give an early warning and force an invader to reveal his strength. While the reduction of the frontier posts created a delay, which would allow time to assemble a defensive field army at Sorel, the enemy's logistical problems would increase daily. Only when his field army was beaten would Haldimand fall back on Quebec. For the moment the upper posts were on their own, the greatest attention being given those positions along the Lake George-Lake Champlain invasion route.[28] Work on Quebec city's defence was put off until spring, and again in 1779, the summer was s

spent strengthening the advanced posts, Isle aux Noix and St. Jean in particular.

Not until the fall of 1779 did Haldimand feel ready to re-direct most of his working strength to the improvement of the Quebec city defences. Although work on such a major project as a permanent citadel was put off due to the "scarcity of workmen, their enormous wages and the exorbitant price of all materials",[29] work did proceed on a temporary citadel. This proposal, for a temporary stronghold, had at first been rejected by Haldimand's chief engineer, Captain Lieutenant William Twiss. Twiss believed that the work completed in one season would not be "sufficiently commodious, and strong, to answer the purpose" while "...the attempt if not compleated [sic] would raise much discontent in the Minds of the Inhabitants". As an alternative he had proposed a series of log barracks to be erected along the existing fortifications. Twiss considered it important that the presence of the British regulars be felt among the population, especially as this was essential to encourage the town militia. Isolated in a weak citadel, he argued, a garrison could not last long, while a temporary structure would only impede the later progress of a "regular fortress."[30]

Nevertheless, by the end of October 1779, Twiss had drawn up plans for "...such Temporary Works as can be Executed in Our present Circumstances, and Consistently with Other Exigencies of the Service throughout this Extensive Province..." The works were to be "...Meerly [sic] Temporary, and to be composed only of Common Intrenchments and Timber Bomb-Proofs".[31] Materials were assembled during the winter and the following two summers were spent chiefly on the works at Quebec. According to Gother Mann, who succeeded Twiss as Commanding Royal Engineer following the Revolution:

> ...The immediate object was to erect such works as might serve for a Citadel, and be defensible after the Town was taken and to construct them in such a manner that in case of an Attack during that year (1780) the Governor might at least retire there with the Garrison and obtain honourable terms for them as well as advantageous ones for the Inhabitants.[32]

Haldimand complained that progress was delayed by the lack of competent miners and stone quarriers, but by the end of the first summer, the "Strong Ground on Cape Diamond" was occupied by several detached redoubts.[33] Since no rebel invasion materialized, work continued and Twiss added new redoubts and batteries to the site the following year. Most of the works were constructed with timber, but none of them was entirely completed before the end of the Revolution made further work unnecessary.

By the end of October 1781, however, Haldimand's attention was turned away from Quebec and directed again to the frontier. Although work continued at Quebec in 1782, new works were started at Isle aux Noix and particular attention was given to the posts of the "Upper Country" where it was feared the American rebels would soon make an attack. The war, however, was drawing to a close. Haldimand was told to suspend any offensive plans, and though a fear of enemy aggression continued, with Haldimand receiving intelligence from England on French naval preparations for a fleet destined to attack Quebec, the war was almost over.[34]

The experiences of the revolutionary war re-emphasized the importance of Quebec in maintaining a British presence in North America. Carleton's near defeat in 1775, prevented only by his retention of Quebec, made a distinct impression in London. In April 1778, when Lord Germain wrote to Lord Townshend, the Master-general of the Ordnance, concerning

Quebec, he specifically cited the need for a citadel "to enable a small Body of Troops to preserve that Town and keep open the Communication until Succour might be expected to arrive from England."[35] Quebec's value as a refuge was continually stressed, but there were always skeptics when it came to actually financing a citadel. In his letter to Knox, in March 1778, Captail Foy offered a reply to objections which might be raised:

> It would be a capital misfortune, if, from the Expence that would attend fortifying Quebec or from some apparent disadvantage in its Situation, it should be neglected...
>
> Quebec lies under the disadvantage common to Places removed from the Sea, and situated on rivers the breadth of which is not above Cannon Shot reach, it might be invested, or nearly, and then it would be difficult to throw in Succours; but I conceive this ought not to render all plans for its Defence inadmissable, which would be as much as to say because it could not be made Impregnable it should be left exposed to the easiest attempts of an Enemy.[36]

Montgomery's invasion had demonstrated the viability of an attack on Quebec, down the St. Lawrence from the interior. Although Arnold had managed to use the Kennebec - Chaudière route, it could hardly be considered as practical for large armies. With tremendous effort he had achieved the element of surprise but as an immediate assault was not possible, the operation was of little practical value. Nevertheless, the frontier barrier was seen to be vulnerable. Haldimand had directed his attention first to the forts along the Richelieu, but other landward approaches, notably that by the St.Francis and the Chaudière, were also considered for fortifications.

7 General Sir Frederick Haldimand by M.B. Messer, after a painting by Lemuel Francis Abbott. (Public Archives Canada.)

An integral part of Haldimand's defensive strategy had been his selection of Sorel, on the south side of the St. Lawrence, as a rallying point for his field army in the event of a major invasion. The St. Lawrence, Richelieu, Yamaska and St. Francis rivers all joined within a few marches of the area where Haldimand had proposed to establish his fortified camp.[37] Operating from Sorel as a base, a reserve force could easily be moved up to any threatened part of the frontier or indeed down to Quebec. With his major concentration of troops in the Richelieu area, Haldimand was taking a gamble on Quebec. Nevertheless, if an attack from the sea or by Arnold's route seemed unlikely, it could always be argued that the Quebec garrison was available to react to the unexpected.

The loss of Quebec was not the only risk Haldimand was taking. By concentrating on the frontier defences in the Richelieu and the formation of a reserve at Sorel, he was accepting the fact that Montreal itself would have to be abandoned before an advancing enemy. If St. Jean fell, the forces covering Montreal could be cut off, as in 1775, by the enemy moving to block the St. Lawrence east of the city. The military logic of Haldimand's strategy was sound, but it nevertheless took courage to depart from a plan which attempted to physically cover the whole of the populated area of the province. With inferior forces, Haldimand was adopting a central position at Sorel, based on interior lines. Although he was avoiding the military risk of spreading his forces too thinly, trying to cover divergent lines of communication, he was also accepting the political consequences of leaving a most important commercial centre, vital to the fur trade and the maintenance of the western posts, uncovered.

As the French had clearly recognized, the vast extent of frontier to be protected was the basic problem which underlay every consideration involved in defending Canada from a southern agressor. The lengthy lines of communications and the number of posts to be defended was a constant worry. The Canadian lines of communication, running inland along the St. Lawrence valley into the Great Lakes lay directly across the natural avenues of approach from the south. Although apparently willing to make sacrifices with the upper posts, Haldimand was still concerened. The loss of Carleton Island, or of Montreal seemed certain to result in the surrender of Detroit and Niagara. Quebec, however, was the paramount concern. In the face of an acute provision shortage at the end of 1780, Haldimand ordered supplies which had been moved to Montreal and Sorel for shipment to the upper posts in the spring, back to Quebec. In a letter to Lord Germain he explained the difficulties of his situation:

> ...was the defence that I am to make confined solely to that of Quebec, it would not be so difficult, but My Lord, I have a very extensive Province to be secured, which from its Local Circumstances is vulnerable in many Places, and What is Still worse, if any of these places is attacked and carried by the Enemy, the Others fall, of course, from the impossibility of Communication or Sending Supplies of Provisions to them.[38]

The troops available to Haldimand also presented a problem. He considered his German battalions poor material, but they composed half of the forces available in the lower part of the province. Feeling they were unsuitable for the duties of the frontier he was obliged to use many of the Germans in the Quebec garrison and for other static duties. This left only part of his force, the British and provincial troops, for the frontier posts.[39]

As British fortunes on the north american mainland waivered during the course of the war with the rebellious colonies, the possession of Canada and Quebec city took on a heightened importance. In 1782, Haldimand was informed that, should it become necessary for the preservation of Canada, Sir Guy Carleton, then the Commander in Chief in North America, was directed to personally convey reinforcements to Quebec. The problems encountered by Carleton in defending Quebec in 1775-1776 and the continual anxiety over the possibility of invasion after Burgoyne's defeat, had revived plans to construct a citadel at Quebec. They had again been shelved because of the immediate problems of labour and cost. Even those expenditures which were undertaken, were criticised. At the end of the war, Lord Shelburne drew attention to Haldimand's works at Quebec, constructed, he noted, "at so vast an expence."[40] It was clear that the execution of a permanent citadel, the ultimate recognition of Quebec's importance, was still in the future.

# Chapter Three

## "The Only Hopeful Resource in Case of Invasion"

The Treaty of Paris officially recognized a new North American power which was potentially hostile to the interests of the British government. After 1783 the chief military concern in British North America was the possibility of war with the United States of America. Although the American Congress rejected the idea of a regular standing army of any appreciable size, placing its faith instead in the willing enthusiasm of hastily assembled militiamen, the marked disparity in manpower between the new republic and Britain's remaining possessions in North America was an alarming problem. The further difficulty of obtaining locally all of the material resources necessary in case of war, clearly meant that any successful defence would have to rely heavily on support from the British Isles.

Nevertheless, despite the provisions of the peace treaty, Britain decided to retain her hold on the so-called "western-posts" in the hope of placating her Indian allies. This decision created a situation which made open conflict with the United States a distinct possibility as American settlement pushed its way westward. Against this background, Lord Dorchester, formerly Sir Guy Carleton, once again found himself responsible for Canadian defence as Captain-General and Governor-in-Chief over British North America. Dorchester clearly enunciated the underlying problem of Canadian defence:

> The number of British subjects in North America, compared with the inhabitants of the revolted Provinces, may be considered in the proportion of One to something between Ten and Fifteen. The weakness occasioned by such unequal numbers is increased by a disadvantageous frontier, where the communication, even from its centre, is at all times tedious, and for a great part of the year is impracticable; while from the United States, almost at all seasons, there is an easy approach into the midst of Canada.[1]

The disparity in numbers and the duties of an extended line of posts, particularly when matched with the number of regular troops available in British North America, placed Britain in a delicate position. Accordingly, Dorchester was convinced that every effort must be made not only to cultivate the co-operation of the Canadians, but also to reconcile differences with the American Congress. Anything short of enthusiastic support by the Canadians could be ruinous, and though Dorchester hoped that a new ordinance governing the milita would "afford the means of teaching the people that the defence of this country is their own immediate concern, a truth important for them to learn, and for us to teach,"[2] the actual state of the Canadian militia remained uninspiring. The militia continued to be an uncertain element which could not be counted upon in the event of an attack. An apparently apathetic militia, the result of a generally "languid insensibility to all political importance,"[3] and the awkward situation of covering an extensive frontier created a persistent demand for more reinforcements from the British Isles.

But additional troops were not available. Meanwhile, the possibility of war with France over Dutch affairs and uncertain tension with Spain at the end of the 1780s further aggravated Dorchester's worries about Canadian security.

Following in the wake of the French Revolution, war with France was again an imminent possibility and in February 1793 it finally became a reality. The ensuing struggle with France engrossed Britain's attention for the next 23 years and added a further dimension to Canadian defence problems. Not only were visions of a hostile French fleet appearing in the St. Lawrence revived but also the additional fear existed that another war in North America would certainly find Britain's resources heavily committed in Europe and elsewhere. The acknowledged importance of Quebec had hardly changed since the end of the American Revolution. If anything, its paramount position in any defence scheme was further enhanced. Yet, paradoxically, Quebec's preeminence was also questioned, if it was to be at the expense of the Canadian interior.

In 1788, Dorchester had expressed his concern over the proper disposition of troops in Canada, indicating his priorities:

> The number of posts in the upper country, supposing them in perfect repair, would require all the troops now in the province for their defence; but the entrance by Lake Champlain/to say nothing of other avenues, is too important an object to be neglected, and the town of Quebec, being the great and only arsenal of the province, as well as our only communication by sea, demands a very particular attention.[4]

Subsequently, war with the United States seemed quite probable on account of the "western-posts," particularly after Wayne's Legion began its march against the Indians. Unless Dorchester could receive substantial reinforcements he did not consider it possible to defend such an extensive frontier. In the event of war, with American troops threatening both of the newly created provinces of Upper and Lower Canada, Dorchester felt it might become necessary to with-

8 John Graves Simcoe, copied by J.W.L. Forster. (Public Archives Canada.)

draw all of the regular troops from Upper Canada. Only then would he have a chance to secure the lower province and most particularly Quebec, "the Port of communication with Great Britain."[5]

There was, however, a new voice to be considered in any debate over defence strategy. The Constitutional Act of 1791, in dividing the old province of Quebec into Upper and Lower Canada, had created a lieutenant-governorship for the upper province. Colonel John Graves Simcoe, the first Lieutenant-Governor of Upper Canada, took strong exception to Dorchester's ideas. Simcoe stressed the importance of the upper province in the most emphatic terms, declaring it to be the very "Bulwark of the British Empire in America." His contention was based on both political and strategic considerations. Working from the premise that the Canadians of the lower province were quite ready for any opportunity at a "universal insurrectioin," he saw Upper Canada as the guardian of British interests. In purely military terms, he was confident that the upper province could be successfully defended from a southern aggressor. Not only did he declare that Upper Canada would remain tenable, even after the loss of the lower province, but he also stated that the reverse situation was not true.[6] A sea-borne invasion by the French would not be a difficult undertaking. An enemy fleet could easily slip past Quebec, while a very small number of French troops could lead the whole Canadian population into open revolt. In Simcoe's view it would be a mistake to concentrate the defending forces only at Quebec. Instead they should be equally divided between Quebec and Montreal, both cities being strongly held, that they "might act together, so as to overawe the Canadian peasantry between that place [Montreal] and Quebec."[7] These arrangements, however, would not answer the threat of an American invasion from the south. To meet that possibility Simcoe wanted a force as large as the other two, stationed in Upper Canada.

Simcoe had shown himself to be an energetic and capable, if at times unorthodox, commander during the American revolutionary war. Nevertheless, his perception of military realities in the unsettled backwoods of Upper Canada appears to have been rather fanciful. His fear of enemy infiltration and general insurrection in the lower province ressembled Haldimand's, but his contention that the upper province was the more important, the security of the lower province being very dependent upon it, ran in complete contradiction to the principles on which the old province of Quebec had been defended during the revolutionary war. Nevertheless, the Secretary for the Home Department, Henry Dundas (made Secretary of State for War in 1794), felt Simcoe's overall scheme worthy of consideration and did give him some encouragement.[8]

At the same period in Quebec city, Lord Dorchester was presented with a number of reports on the westward progress of Wayne's American Legion into Indian territory and on the intrigues of French republican spies in Lower Canada - a combination which made aggression from some quarter seem almost certain, especially as the Americans appeared to be very much influenced by the French.[9] Meanwhile, disagreement with Simcoe over the number of regular troops to be stationed in Upper Canada continued, Dorchester insisting on the importance of the lower province.[10] Although the signing of Jay's Treaty in November 1794 finally relaxed the tension between Great Britain and the United States, at least for the moment, providing for British withdrawl from the disputed western posts, the rumours of French spies and invasion fleets persisted. In December 1796, the capture of Ira Allen and a large shipment of arms on a French vessel,

supposedly destined for the Vermont militia, increased the fear of invasion.[11] The following summer rumours of possible revolt and invasion were rife, coming to a head with the trial and execution of David McLane for treason. McLane's plans included the sudden seizure of Quebec city to facilitate a major French invasion of the lower province.

A year later, Lieutenant-General Robert Prescott, Governor-in-Chief and Commander of the Forces, was uneasy, although the situation was reported to have improved considerably. He had little faith in the Canadian militia, explaining that: "Quebec must be taken care of; and at Montreal a considerable Force must necessarily be stationed to awe the Habitants of that Vicinity who have in more than one instance evinced a refractory spirit."[12] He considered his three battalions of regulars and the First Battalion Royal Canadian Volunteers sufficient "to preserve the Internal Tranquality of this Province," though not enough to provide any assistance to Upper Canada should there be difficulties there.[13]

In the fall of 1801, some of the militia were embodied in response to further rumours of an attack from Vermont. The Peace of Amiens, signed the following year, provided a brief interlude of tranquility in the war with France, but was quickly ended by the renewal of hostilities in 1803. This time the threat was not as serious. Napoleon showed little interest in Canada, while the strength of the Royal Navy made an invasion by France seem most unlikely, especially after the defeat of the combined French and Spanish fleets at Trafalgar in 1805. In North America itself, however, the Chesapeake affair of 1807 revived the possibility of war with the United States.

Colonel Isaac Brock, then temporary Commander of the Forces in the Canadas, had little doubt about the manner in which the defence would be conducted. Quebec was of paramount importance but the force of available regulars was

weak in numbers. Brock noted: "The Military force in this Country is very small and were it possible to collect it in time to oppose any Serious attempt upon Quebec, the only tenable post, the number would of itself be insufficient to ensure a vigorous defence." If, however, the militia were fully and properly embodied, they would, when joined with the regulars "create a force if not competent effectually to stop, at any rate equal to harrass and considerably impede the approach of the Enemy towards Quebec, and the gain of time in such a climate as this particularly, is every thing..." If the militia did not support the regulars in a forthright manner, Brock was equally convinced: "it would be hazardous in the extreme for the military to quit Quebec and the enemy in that case would move on unmolested." Like his predecessors, Brock was concerned about the need for "checking any Seditious disposition which the wavering sentiments of a large population in the Montreal District might at any time manifest."[14]

In October of 1807, Lieutenant-General Sir James Craig arrived at Quebec to assume the governor generalship of British North America. In a secret dispatch to Craig, Lord Castlereagh, the Secretary of State for War and the Colonies, observed that in the event of a war the Americans, finding themselves unable to contend with the Royal Navy, would very likely choose to attach Britain's North American provinces. British commitments elsewhere in the war against Napoleon precluded the possibility of any considerable reinforcement and the extended frontiers of Canada would therefore be exposed to American aggression. Nevertheless, it seemed certain that American efforts would concentrate on only two principal objects:

> It appears, however, that there are only two Capital Objects which would fully repay the expence and danger of an expedition; one the seizure of the town and harbour of Halifax in Nova Scotia, which would

> deprive His Majesty's Fleets of the most valuaable Naval Station on the North American Continent; the other, the capture of the Fortress of Quebec which would place them in the Sovereignty of His Majesty's Canadian possessions.[15]

Castlereagh's instructions to Craig were very explicit concerning the defence of the Canadian interior:

> Respecting the defence of the Canadas your first object will be to preserve Quebec to which all other considerations must be subordinate. If the American States shall make a serious effort to get entire possession of these provinces and to enter them in force, it may be impossible to detach from hence so large a Body of regular Troops as would enable you to meet their Army in the Field and entirely to defeat and expel it. It may, however, be a measure beyond the power of the American States to bring at an early period a sufficient force properly appointed which could reduce the Fortress of Quebec if resolutely defended before means of Succour could be sent from England. And in this consideration of the Subject, I am to signify to you His Majesty's pleasure that in the event of Hostilities with the United States you do not omit any exertion by which the situation of Quebec may be strengthened or secured or its defence protracted to the utmost.[16]

Craig's own assessment was in complete accord with his instructions, but his discussions with Lord Castlereagh, prior to leaving England, left him unsure about certain important details. Castlereagh was very concerned about Britain's position in the war against Napoleon. The Russian defeat at Friedland in June 1807 and the subsequent Treaty of Tilsit had left Britain isolated from the rest of Europe. In view of the French victories on the continent, which appeared to be definitive, the question of colonial defence

9 Sir James Henry Craig. (*Public Archives Canada.*)

was put in a different light. Even though it was agreed that Quebec was the most important position to be defended in the Canadas, there was no agreement on how much should be sacrificed to defend Canada:

> Lord Castlereagh seems already aware, of the little probability that exists in the event of an Attack on the Province, of our being able to make any effectual resistance at any other point, except at Quebec itself, but, even at this point, from the conversations that I have had the Honor of having with His Lordship, it has appeared to me, that His Lordship entertains doubts, as to the expediency of risking the loss of the Troops that may be in it, by protracting the defence to the last moment, and under the general circumstances of the relative Situation of England, with that of Her Enemies, it is certainly worthy of consideration - as, however, in the ordinary course of events, it is the Duty of a Governor, to defend the Post, committed to his charge, to the last extremity, or at least, to carry it to a greater length, than may be expedient, where, the safety of the Troops becomes the primary object, I should be glad if this Subject were mentioned to me, in my Instructions in such Terms, as may hereafter serve for my justification, should such, ever become necessary for me."[17]

Craig's instructions do not appear to have ever been made as explicit as he wished, but the situation he feared never developed.

In December 1807 Craig wrote to Francis Gore, the Lieutenant-Governor of Upper Canada, carefully outlining his own version of a defence strategy based on the pre-eminence of Quebec city. Craig considered Quebec his "first and principal Consideration," the security of which was vital to both the upper and lower province. Explaining to Gore that Quebec was the only "door" by which a force from Britain

could re-enter the country and recover the interior, he pointed out that it was "vain for us to flatter ourselves with the hopes of making any effectual defence of the open country, unless powerfully assisted from home." Britain's critical situation in the war with France offered little chance that British troops could be sent to the Canadas in sufficient numbers to hold the frontier and this Craig said, placed the importance of Quebec "in its truest light."[18]

While it was now understood that the Lieutenant-Governor of Upper Canada was to follow the wishes of the Governor-General in matters of general policy and on all points of defence in wartime, Craig did not presume to instruct Gore on the exact manner in which the upper province was to be defended. Although Craig warned against dissipating resources in trying to cover too many points at once, he was most concerned with circumstances where a joint effort might be required. Craig's instructions on this matter were based on the assumption that an American invasion of the Canadas would be very similar to that conducted by Montgomery in 1775. An American attack concentrated against the lower province, would ultimately end in a seige at Quebec, leaving the upper province relatively unmolested by the enemy. Although Craig would endeavour to impede the eneny's progress across the frontier, he could not hope to stop a full scale invasion and was certain that "in the end we shall be obliged to shut ourselves up in this Place [Quebec]". Gore would then be expected to move into the lower province with all the forces he could spare in order to harass the enemy's lines of communication. If the enemy were too strong at Montreal, barring his progress in that direction, Gore could move south-east and cut the enemy's communications running south towards Lake Champlain. The principal objective for the defenders would always be to gain time and delay the progress of the enemy as much as possible.[19]

Lieutenant-Governor Gore, unlike his predecessor Simcoe, was convinced that a defence of Upper Canada against anything but a "partial or sudden incursion" was not possible. This, however, was kept in the strictest confidence for fear of the effect it might have on the militia. Whatever operations were to take place, Gore promised to "never lose sight of Quebec." If the enemy were to invest the capital city, Gore would act as Craig directed and would in fact reserve as much as possible the militia of the eastern districts of his province for that very purpose.[20]

During the following spring and summer of 1808 Craig was concerned with the possibility of a direct French attack on Quebec. Canada obviously offered an excellent base from which the French emperor could execute his "future plan of co-ercing [sic] America."[21] Craig did not entirely rule out the possibility of Bonaparte's forces appearing before Quebec, although he did feel they would be more likely to attempt an attack far to the south, on Spain's American possessions. By mid-July however Craig was writing "I must confess myself strongly impressed with the necessity of holding this Spot [Quebec], and therefore of strengthening it to the utmost. sooner [sic] or later we shall have the French here, and be assured that they will find friends enough."[22]

No attack materialized and though the governor pushed ahead with improvements to Quebec's defences, he was also re-considering the merits of a defence plan which was based solely on the retention of Quebec. Writing to Lord Castlereagh in February 1809, Craig began by noting that the recent expansion of the timber trade had increased the value of the Canadas to Great Britain. In this light he went on to consider a proper defence plan. Although he did not question the importance of Quebec, "the first object in every point of view," he did point out that while Quebec

provided a point of re-entry into the province, it was in itself no security against the loss of the whole interior.[23] It would, of course, be much better if Britain could maintain her possession of the Canadas, and not be forced to simply give up the interior, ultimately being faced with the need to recover it. The crucial element to be considered was the militia. Craig felt that if a recovery became necessary, the militia would be of little use. Assembling, organizing and arming a militia disillusioned by the loss of most of Canada would be impracticable. Bringing the militia "into activity" could only be accomplished following the enemy's retreat, when the militia was no longer needed. If on the other hand a vigorous defence of the frontiers was made initially, with the clear intention of preserving the interior, the support of the militia would not only be absolutely necessary but would also be more likely. Certainly a further reinforcement of regulars would be required to bolster and encourage the militiamen, but not as many troops as would be needed to recover the colony when little aid could be expected from the militia. For the British government the problem was both one of the availability of further reinforcements of regulars for the Canadas and also of determining the importance to be attached to the preservation of the Canadian interior.

Craig himself had no illusions about the difficulties of defending the Canadian frontier. He reported that the posts along the Richelieu river were in a state of complete neglect. Since assuming command he had employed his resources on the all important task of strengthening Quebec. Furthermore, he was not able to spare the troops necessary to garrison the frontier posts even if they were to be put into proper order. Despite the opening of several new roads, the traditional Lake Champlain route was still the anticipated line of approach for a large army invading

Canada from the south. Nevertheless, the works at Isle aux Noix and St. Johns (St. Jean) had been allowed to fall into ruin after the Revolutionary War, repairs being postponed pending decisions on the development of improved systems for their defence. By 1791 it was reported that complete reconstruction would be preferable to attempting repairs. Apart from maintenance work on certain of the buildings, the ruinous state of these works remained unchanged at the outbreak of war in 1812.[24]

At Quebec itself the temporary citadel begun by Twiss during the Revolutionary war had been left uncompleted and had soon deterioriated. Although the new Commanding Royal Engineer, Gother Mann, had been instructed in 1785 to replace the timber used in Twiss's works with masonry, the project was postponed and finally abandoned. In 1791 Mann had reported, that since 1786 "the business has in some degree been dormant at least there has not as yet been any work performed here, nor indeed has it been in my power until [sic] now to bring forward the necessary information and plans whereon any decided opinion could be grounded."[25] By the early years of the nineteenth century there had still been no final decision, Mann reflecting that the neglect had also in part stemmed from the desire for a simpler yet more comprehensive plan for permanent works on Cape Diamond. Like his predecessors, Mann had made many plans, including a proposal for a citadel on Cape Diamond. After his return to Europe, Mann had in fact been hastily recalled from service with the Duke of York's army in Flanders in 1794, for the express purpose of executing a part of his plans for the Quebec defences. Once he arrived in Canada, however, no further instructions were issued to him and again the matter of Quebec was dropped. The "very limited authorities" which Mann had received while in the Canadas did not allow him to make the improvements he desired.[26] Nevertheless this could

not be considered surprising in view of the British Government's deepening commitments in the war with France.

By 1805, however, the problem of Quebec's defences was again under active consideration in London. The need to improve the fortifications was generally admitted, but once more there was disagreement and further delays when Mann's proposals were subjected to the scrutiny of a committee of other engineers.[27] When the Chesapeake crisis broke in 1807 the very material defects in Quebec's defences were no closer to correction. Brock declared Quebec to be "in no condition of making much defence against an active enemy."[28] Although Thomas Dunn, President of the executive council and acting governor, was surprised at Brock's assessment, Sir James Craig reiterated Brock's comments to Lord Castlereagh the following year:

> It may not be inexpedient, that in justice to myself as well as for your Lordship's information, I should begin by observing that as a Fortress I found this place extremely deficient under almost every point of view in which as such it was to be considered, expecially as connected with its relative importance to the ultimate security of this part of His Majesty's Dominions. - The situation is in itself unfavourable; the ground rising in front of the works so as to afford a very dangerous command of them, while on both flanks on the opposite sides of the two Rivers, but particularly on the further bank of the St. Charles, positions present themselves from which they could be swept in flank and even in reverse - The Works in themselves for the most part are in a ruinous state - the masonry of the Walls however good it may originally have been is from the nature of the materials employed now rotten;

> No ditch or any counterscarp, by which the foot of the Wall can be protected, and no outworks except in front of Cape Diamond, where even those that appear to me the most material are in a state of ruin.[29]

Brock had in fact already undertaken certain improvements before Craig's arrival at Quebec. Work was begun on completing the line wall around the upper town, barring passage from the lower town, and on a cavalier, also known as Brock's Battery, erected on the high ground of Cape Diamond a distance to the rear of the gorge of the Glacière Bastion. Craig, however, found himself in an awkward situation, as a long period of strained relations with the United States followed the Chesapeake Affair. While the war with France had remained a distant, principally European conflict, Quebec had seemed relatively safe, given British naval supremacy. After the Chesapeake crisis, however, Quebec's security appeared to be directly threatened by a hostile power which was not only close at hand, but also quite able to attack regardless of the question of naval strength. Although the Royal Navy might hinder an American invasion of Canada by close harassment of the American seaboard, this could never be a certain guarantee for Canadian defence.

Quebec City's defences had to be improved, but Craig felt that his instructions did not adequately cover the predicament which had developed. In 1807 he had arrived at Quebec having been instructed in the event of war to "not omit any Exertion by which the Situation of Quebec may be strengthened or secured or its defence protracted to the utmost." If war did not occur, he was "nevertheless [to] take the most immediate measures for having the Works completed which are necessary for inclosing the Body of the Place and constructing the Casemates connected with them." He was further instructed to seek prior approval from the British government before constructing a citadel or

occupying the heights immediately beyond the city.[30] After the passage of the Embargo Act by the American Congress in December 1807, the situation settled into a "protracted suspense". Craig could not be certain whether or not there would actually be open hostiles and therefore which option of his instructions should be operative. He did not know how much work and expense on the Quebec defences could be justified.

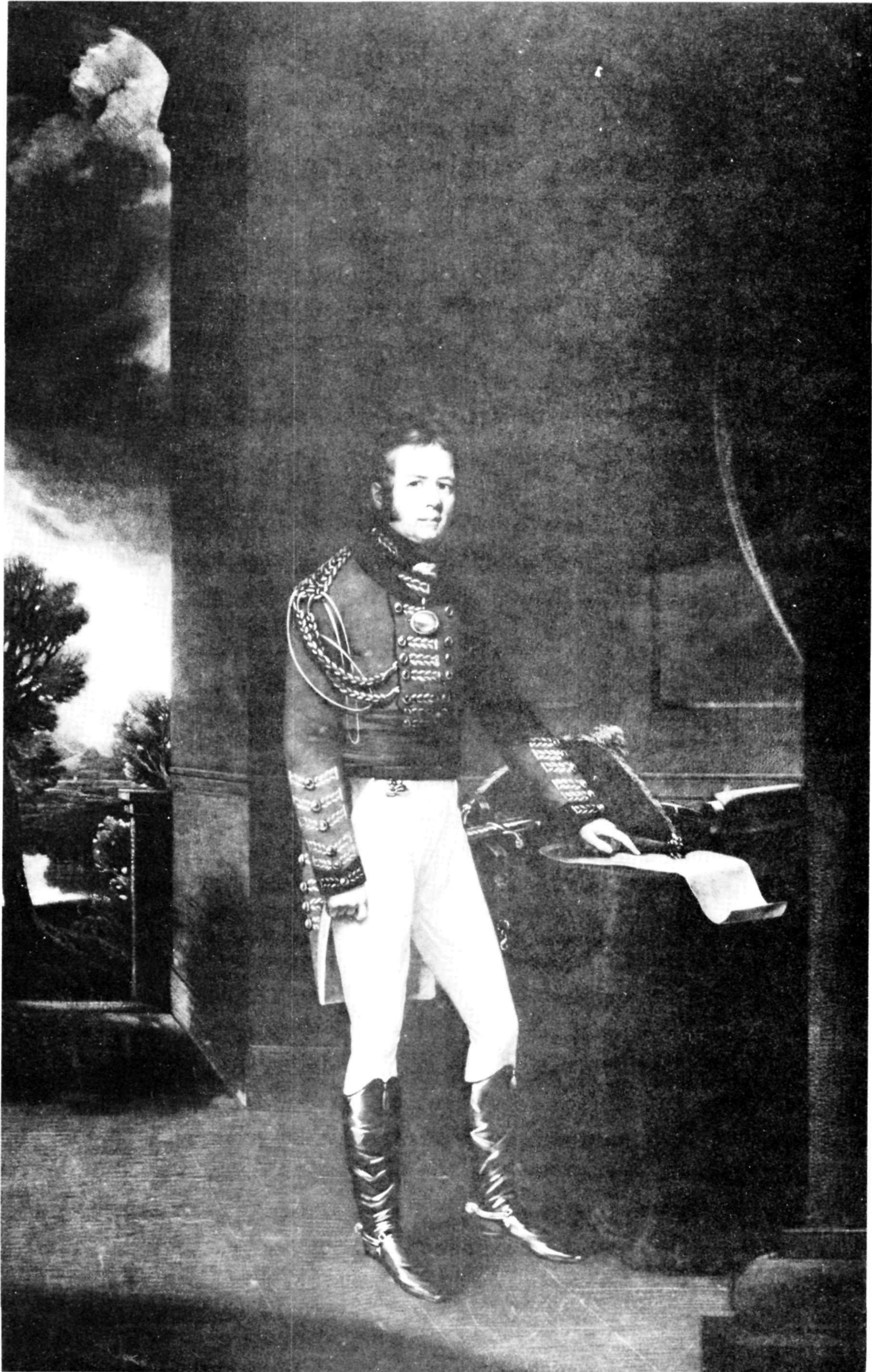
Craig chose to consider the situation to be similar to actual hostilities. He was convinced that he could not simply just wait, and disliking the idea of wasteful expenditures on temporary works he embarked on a plan to improve the permanent defences, commencing with those that were most important to the immediate security of the existing works. He did not consider that mere completion of the line wall around Upper Town would suffice.[31] Consequently, in 1808 the Engineer Department undertook a considerable programme of work. Not only were a ravelin and counterguard added to the "old works in front of Port Louis Gate," but construction of additional powder magazines, storehouses, barrack accomodations and dockyard facilities were also undertaken. Particularly important, however, was the establishment of a line of "Strong Towers Arched and Bomb Proof, to occupy the Commanding Positions on the Heights of Abraham."[32] Denying these positions to an enemy besieging the town had been stressed repeatedly by Mann, and Craig decided to take action, regardless of apparent instructions to the contrary. Although he pleaded a certain ambiguity in his instructions, resulting from the current climate of anglo-American relations, he appears to have been determined from the outset to avoid any "fatal loss of time" which referrals back to London would inevitably cause. He was convinced of the necessity of covering the heights and could see only too clearly that the lengthy re-examinations of Mann's proposals, producing a variety of opinion, had only

resulted in inaction. Craig pushed ahead with his own plans for the towers to avoid the same futile result. The British Government was not informed until after construction had already started.[33]

It would appear that the idea to use towers, in place of the redoubts and entrenched camp envisaged by Mann, originated with Craig himself.[34] As Craig explained to Castlereagh, the "principal object" was to occupy these positions "at the least expense of men."[35] By 1812 four towers had been completed, stretching across the plains of Abraham from the bluffs overlooking the St. Lawrence to those looking down on the St. Charles. The design of all four was based on the English martello tower and three other towers were also planned but never built. Of these three, the one at Point Lévis was to prevent bombardment from that quarter, while another across the St. Charles from Quebec was to cover ground from which the town's principal works might be enfiladed. A third tower was proposed for a position in advance of the old Cape Diamond outworks to command the beach and cliff of the Anse des Mines.[36]

In view of the lethargy which had characterized the handling of previous proposals to improve the city's defence, the towers were a significant addition. Those which were built were completed and armed by the beginning of the War of 1812, but their true value was never tested under actual siege conditions. Designed to cover a single avenue of attack, they would have been subject to severe fire and though they should have caused some delay to a besieger's plans, there was skepticism about the real need to cover these positions. The committee of engineers who reviewed Mann's plans in 1805 felt it unnecessary to occupy the heights, which they claimed were too distant for a besieger to actually use in reducing the town's works. Moreover, the garrison allotted for the defence of such advanced works would be liable to great loss.[37]

10 Sir George Prevost by S.W. Reynolds. (*Public Archives Canada.*)



The towers and other improvements begun by Craig were clearly not a final solution to Quebec's defence problems. In 1805, the committee of engineers reporting on Quebec had in fact proposed that the real defence of the city should rest principally, if not solely, on the construction of a citadel on the high ground of Cape Diamond. Such a citadel had always been considered necessary to complete the defences of the city, but Craig found himself in a predicament similar to that faced by Haldimand during the revolution. A permanent citadel was needed but he had no desire to be caught by an invading army while in the midst of a major construction project:

> With regard to a Citadel on Cape Diamond as has always been proposed, there is no doubt that such a work is necessary to complete the defence of the place - It is, however, much beyond our present means, and would at any rate require more time to finish than can be bestowed on any work undertaken with a view to the present state of affairs.[38]

The citadel project was laid aside and those works approved of and begun by Craig were continued by his successor, Sir George Prevost.

The conception of Quebec's strategic role on the verge of the War of 1812 was described by the new governor-general in a report written in May 1812 to the Earl of Liverpool, Secretary of State for War and the Colonies. Prevost's assessment followed closely the line of reasoning set out by his predecesors. His choice of words suggests that he must have had some of Craig's correspondence on such matters before him as he wrote:

> Quebec is the only permanent Fortress in the Canadas: It is the Key to the whole, and must be maintained. To the final defence of this position, every other military operation ought to become subservient, and the retreat of the Troops upon

Quebec must be the primary consideration....

In framing a general out-line of co-operation for defence with the forces in Upper Canada, Commensurate with our deficiency in Strength, I have considered the preservation of it being of the utmost consequence to the Canadas, as the door of entry for that force the The King's Government might find it expedient to send for the recovery of both or either of these Provinces, although the pressure of the moment in the present extended range of Warfare, might not allow the sending of that Force which would defend both, therefore considering Quebec in this view, its importance can at once be appreciated.

If the Americans are determined to attack Canada, it would be in vain the General should flatter himself with the hopes of making an effectual defence of the open Country, unless powerfully assisted from Home: All predatory or ill concerted attacks undertaken presumptuously and without sufficient means can be resisted and repulsed, still this must be done with caution, that the resources for a future exertion the defence of Quebec, may be unexhausted.[39]

It was most important that the defenders use every means to delay the enemy's advance and protract a siege at Quebec into winter. This had been the reasoning behind Mann's desire to occupy the heights and the construction of Craig's towers. The arrival of winter would neutralize the efforts of the besieger and bring some relief to the garrison. By concentrating every effort at Quebec a sufficiently resolute defence might be possible, while spring would hopefully bring fresh reinforcements from overseas. Prevost expressed the same doubts about Quebec's fortifications as Brock and Craig. They were "not such as could justify a hope of its being able to withstand a vigorous and well

conducted Seige."[40] Nevertheless, as Gother Mann had pointed out, much would have to depend on Quebec, "which from its communication with the Sea and other advantages of situation, make it the Key both of Commerce and defence, and the only hopeful resource in case of Invasion."[41]

# Chapter Four

## A Scheme to Fortify the Canadas

At the outset of war with the United States in 1812 the basic premise of Canadian defence rested not only on the acceptance of Quebec as the key strategic position (and the only "defencible" one) but also on the distinct probability of being forced to withdraw to that position. The very extent of the frontier, with its narrow ribbon of settlement stretching along the St. Lawrence and the lower Great Lakes, invited attack and was surely too vulnerable to admit much hope of a successful defence. Upper Canada would very likely have to be abandonned. Indeed Major General Brock commanding in that province was informed by Sir George Prevost that his troops should be ready to act on the flank of the enemy should an invasion of the lower province take place. Such instructions were very much in line with the strategy previously considered by Sir James Craig.

Throughout the two and a half years of war, Prevost adhered closely to the idea of Quebec and the lower province being his strategic priorities. A sizeable garrison was constantly maintained at Quebec and troops were moved westward into the upper province only when they could be replaced by fresh reinforcements of British regulars arriving in the St. Lawrence. Prevost would not entrust the defence of Lower Canada solely to his provincial corps and the militia. His conduct of the defence was strategically sound, the more so as the scale of operations possible in Upper Canada was curtailed by logistical problems. Nevertheless, criticism was not to be averted. Brock advocated strong measures to hold the upper province and Sir Gordon

Drummond suggested that reinforcements were sent to Upper Canada in 1814 with an undue parsimony.

In the final result, however, both upper and lower Canada were preserved, the successful defence of the upper province seeming to refute previous contentions that it was impractical. Following the war there was little doubt on either side that there would be another conflict, and it appeared that British success might only be repeated if careful preparations were made beforehand. Much of the success of 1812-14 was owed to what Sir James Lucas Yeo described as the "perverse stupidity" of the Americans.[1] American efforts had been concentrated far to the west of the lower province and the vulnerable communications along the upper St. Lawrence. A repetition of this strategy by the enemy could not be counted upon. In the years following the war British officers, with much justification, fully expected that the Americans would quickly cut the link to Upper Canada after the commencement of hostilities. Finding adequate protection for the vulnerable communications with the upper province became central to the problem of Canadian defence in the post war years.

Recommendations on defence were made by Prevost's replacement Sir Gordon Drummond and again by his successor Sir John Cope Sherbrooke, but little was accomplished. The latter, writing to the Secretary of State for War and the Colonies, Lord Bathurst, in 1816 touched on the major points as he reviewed the needs of both Upper and Lower Canada. He wanted Quebec to be put into "a complete State of Strength", but he also noted the need for permanent works at Kingston and stressed the importance of providing Montreal with proper defences. Like Prevost and Drummond he also urged the improvement of water communications between Montreal and Kingston and especially the development of an alternative route to the St. Lawrence.[2]

After the final cessation of hostilities in Europe, however, the Treasury, pursuing a programme of post-war re-

trenchment, attempted to curb any further construction of military works in Canada. Drummond was told to suspend the military works then being undertaken in the upper province and was further to submit all improvements deemed necessary for the existing works in the Canadas to London for approval. He was informed that the government was considering the problem of Canadian defence, but to avoid any interference with future projects, wished nothing to be done until a decision had been reached on a general plan of defence.[3] Drummond complied, giving the appropriate instructions to the Commanding Royal Engineer, Lieutenant Colonel Nicolls, but also stated his intention to gradually proceed with improvements at Kingston. The British government however, impressed by the importance of the communications between Upper and Lower Canada, did grant permission for the necessary surveys to complete estimates for canal construction.[4]

Even before he had been told to cease construction on all works of defence, Nicolls had been dissatisfied with the lack of progress in making any improvement in Canada's defences. In December 1815 he wrote to the Inspector-General of Fortifications, Lieutenant-General Gother Mann:

> It will strike you, Sir, who are so well acquainted with this Country, how little there is doing relative to defence, in the Montreal District and at Quebec, the Casemated Cavalier in the Glaciere Bastion, which is proposed to form a secure Barrack for 600 Men within the Citadel, and to bring a commanding fire on the Heights of Abraham, being almost the only service carrying on under this Head; this is far from according with my ideas on the subject, Completing the Citadel and Fortifications of Quebec and strengthening the Frontier of Lower Canada, appearing to me objects of the highest importance.[5]

Nicolls further observed that the situation was probably the result of Drummond having been "in daily expectation of a successor during the summer, and being still anxious to return to Europe." Drummond apparently considered himself in a temporary position and was unwilling to sanction projects of extended effort and expence.

In England, Mann urged the immediate necessity of proceeding to strengthen the Canadian defences and in particular to press ahead with those works "upon which there can be no question of their propriety". He pointed specifically to Quebec and Kingston. The former he described as the "Key to the whole Country", the latter was "the Key to the navigation of the Lakes".[6] Despite such opinions, the Lords of the Treasury, having reviewed the various proposals on Canadian defence, informed Lord Bathurst in October 1816 that although they were fully aware of the importance of the proposals made, there was one over-riding consideration which was inescapable:

> ....adverting to the expence which would be necessarily incurred in the execution of these works and the imperfect information which the Papers afford in respect of some of them and also to the circumstances that none of them appear to be of such urgent and immediate necessity that they may not be dispensed with at least for the present, my Lords do not think it would be expedient now to undertake these Works when it is necessary that every practicable reduction should be effected in the Public Expenditure.[7]

The Treasury's decision did not prove irreversible and a further memorandum on Canadian defence prepared two years later by Lieutenant Colonel John Harvey, a veteran of the war in Upper Canada, appears to have formed the basis for recommendations made to London by the then Governor-in-Chief, the Duke of Richmond. These suggestions were in turn

11 Duke of Richmond by J. Hoppner. (*Public Archives Canada.*)

further developed by the Duke of Wellington and became the accepted plan for Canadian defence for the next quarter century.[8]

Harvey's plan drew attention to the development of the Ottawa-Rideau route as an alternative to the upper St. Lawrence, an idea which had been under consideration before the cessation of hostilities. To secure this route both Kingston and Montreal, the two terminals, would be heavily fortified, while Quebec would be strengthened to ensure access up the St. Lawrence to Montreal. To the west of Kingston some fortifications, such as a new fortress for the Niagara, would be necessary to demonstrate by concrete measures Britain's intention to defend those areas, encouraging the much needed support of the local militia.[9]

The Duke of Richmond, in elaborating this plan claimed the "primary objects" to be the preservation of Quebec, Kingston and Montreal, the first two being the "Keys" of their respective provinces and the last being an important depot and vital link in the communications with Upper Canada. Richmond described the improvement of the Ottawa-Rideau route as "perhaps [the] most important point", while also urging works at Kingston and the necessity of maintaining a presence on the Niagara. He was still very concerned over the safety of Quebec city, as it was clear that its reduction would be the ultimate object of an American invasion. To prevent this, Richmond wished to improve not only the city's immediate defences, but also to strengthen the approaches from Lake Champlain, thereby delaying any advance on Montreal, the most suitable base from which an attack could be made on Quebec itself. For this reason, the defences of Isle aux Noix on the Richelieu would be improved since it was considered as "one of the most important points to preserve and as the principal outwork to Quebec". Stores kept in Montreal were to be removed to a fortified position on St. Helen's Island.[10]

The Duke of Wellington when approached on these matters expressed general approval of Richmond's assessment.[11] Wellington then detailed plans for the development of an inland system of communication, using water and rail connections to obviate the need to maintain naval supremacy on Lake Ontario. Maintaining superiority on the lakes had been essential during the war of 1812 but had led to ruinous expenditures on naval construction. The final year of the war had strained to the limit Britain's capacity to keep a superior naval force on Lake Ontario, while Lake Erie had been lost in 1813.[12] After the war it was soon pointed out that the Americans would almost certainly win any future contest of naval construction. It reduced to a simple matter of logistics. Extensive importation of materials from Britain was necessary to outfit a fleet, while American resources were not only closer at hand but also improving constantly.

A diminishing emphasis on naval supremacy on the inland lakes, an apparent volte face from the war years, gained increasing acceptance in Britain after the war. In reality it was only a natural progression. Wellington himself was an example. In 1814 he had stressed the idea that all military operations were absolutely dependant on control of the lakes. By 1819, to avoid a seemingly hopeless naval race in a future war, he was urging the development of overland communications back from the lakes, to allow British forces to operate west of Kingston regardless of who controlled Lake Ontario. Although the British base at Kingston was not closed for nearly twenty years after the Rush-Bagot Agreement of 1817 (limiting naval strength on the Great Lakes) Sir Henry Hardinge could note by 1825 that those who still insisted on maintaining a naval supremacy were "opposed by 9/10 at Court of those who have had the means of considering the question".[13]

Wellington made it clear that the completion of an Ottawa-Rideau communication was the very "foundation" of his defence plans. If this line of communication could not be "carried into execution, or some other distinct from the St. Lawrence discovered," he was certain, "the defence of these distant provinces will become so difficult as to be almost impossible".[14] His proposed system of defence was based principally on developing lines of communication which would be removed from the frontier and would enable the defenders to concentrate rapidly in relative security. There were also he stated:

> ....some capital points on which it is necessary to complete, or to establish works, such as Quebec, Halifax, Montreal, Kingston, on Lake Ontario, and a fort on the Niagara frontier, and others, to render still more difficult the approach to those above mentioned such as the works proposed on the river Richelieu or Chambly to protract an enemy's advance upon Quebec.[15]

Wellington's version of the defence plans for Canada, as outlined in March 1819 to Lord Bathurst, the Secretary of State for War and the Colonies, were accepted and became the basis for government policy.

Along with the renewal of interest in Canadian defence generated by Richmond and reinforced by Wellington, work began at last on several new military projects. At Isle aux Noix work commenced about 1819 on a new permanent masonry fort soon known as Fort Lennox.[16] Its construction was prompted as a counter measure to a new American fort begun at Rouse's Point in 1816. Bomb-proof storehouses were started on St. Helen's Island and work also began on canals to improve the navigation along the Ottawa river. During this same period of activity, work finally began on the long desired citadel for Quebec city.

Throughout the War of 1812, Quebec had served as military headquarters for the Canadas, being the principal residence of Sir George Prevost, the Governor-in-Chief and Commander of the Forces, and of the chief functionaries of the army's administration.[17] As a port, Quebec had been the major terminus for troop and supply convoys arriving from overseas, and the chief depot from which the material of war was moved along the St. Lawrence to Montreal and the interior.[18] Although a garrison averaging 2,000 men was maintained during the war, this key position remained tactically weak. In 1815 Captain Frederick de Gangreben, an engineer officer of the King's German Legion, described a situation which had been essentially true since the days of the Conquest:

> Quebec is called by people who talk without thinking a second Gibraltar - but where are the works that form this second Gibraltar? where is the position that is converted into such a Gibraltar? - Quebec can be made very strong, if the proper military position is fortified and the old works and some hundred houses are thrown down - but before this will be done, it is a ridicule on fortification. Should Quebec, in its present state, ever be attacked, we shall then see that it had only the honor to have been termed a fortress.[19]

Quebec's strategic value was immediately striking to a trained military eye. Lieutenant-General Sir George Murray, though he had been in Canada for less than a month quickly grasped the basic problem of Canadian defence when he noted in March 1815, "as to the security of the British Power in these Provinces, it appears to me that the roots of that Power are at the sea; and that in strengthening it we should proceed from the base upwards, and not begin at the other extremity".[20] The "base" from which British power in the

Canadas grew, as referred to by Murray, was Quebec and following the cessation of hostilities agitation for a proper citadel was resumed.

In 1816 Sherbrooke had detailed the now familiar deficiences of the Quebec defences to Lord Bathurst - works which were seen in reverse and in enfilade, points still susceptible to a coup de main, insufficient cover for the garrison and no citadel. Definite action, however, does not seem to have taken place until the construction of a citadel was urged again two years later by Sherbrooke's successor, the Duke of Richmond.[21] Richmond's recommendation was subsequently passed on to the Duke of Wellington, then the Master General of the Ordnance, and in March 1819 Wellington informed Lord Bathurst that he would "likewise recommend the construction of the citadel as proposed".[22] Lieutenant-Colonel E.W. Durnford, then the Commanding Royal Engineer in the Canadas, completed plans for the new citadel that same year. In May 1820 actual construction began.[23]

For a work which had been so often postponed pending final approval from England, it was an ironic twist that when construction did at last begin on the Quebec citadel it was apparently without the consent of the Board of Ordnance. The wartime conditions which had prevailed for some twenty years had brought the construction of colonial military works, such as those in the Canadas, solely under the control of the Treasury acting through its subordinate the Commissariat as sub-treasurer. The Commanders-in-Chief in the colonies had apparently ordered such construction as was necessary, having the Commissariat defray the expenses from the Army Extraordinaries. When peace finally came in 1815 the direction of such things in the colonies continued on the same course. The Board of Ordnance, the very department which should have superintended this work, was bypassed despite the fact that it was Ordnance's engineers who were used on such projects.[24] In 1822 the Duke of Wellington explained the situation:

> The mode in which I understand this business has been conducted hitherto is this: the governor or commander-in-chief in the colony, after consulting with the officers of engineers, or other persons as he may think proper, transmits to the Treasury an account of the necessity of any particular works or building, such, for instance, as the citadel of Quebec, with plans, and an estimate of the probable expense of constructing it, and the Treasury give their concurrence for its construction. Without their concurrence it is understood that no works or building can be undertaken by a governor abroad which will cost more than 500 l. These works are in general planned, estimated, and executed by the officers of engineers stationed in the colony, and paid by the Ordnance department; but they are not necessarily constructed by these officers, and, at all events, they do not at present act under the Ordnance department in any matter relating to these works and buildings. For instance, I believe that to this moment this department have no knowledge whatever of the citadel of Quebec.[25]

Since 1821 Wellington had been pressing for reforms which in a few years resulted in a revitalized Ordnance department, ready with a much expanded authority to tackle the problems of defence in Britain's colonies.[26]

After its first pronouncements following the general cessation of hostilities in Europe and North America, the Treasury had continued to insist that only such military projects as were deemed absolutely necessary should be undertaken in the Canadas and that any other works should await the completion of a comprehensive scheme of defence.[27] Finally in 1825, with important works already underway at Quebec and Isle aux Noix a special commission of three engineer officers headed by Sir James Carmichael Smyth

was appointed by Wellington and the Board of Ordnance, and sent to British North America to make a general report on the defences. The instructions given to the commission made detailed reference to Wellington's assessment of 1819, again laying heavy stress on the development of lines of communication within the Canadas. The commission's report was to establish a firm groundwork for the future direction of the Ordnance Department, it being considered, "...desirable that this department [Ordnance] should be informed how far the execution of this system [Wellington's] has been found practicable, and has been perservered in since the month of March 1819; what has been the progress made, and what the difficulties which impede the progress, or prevent the execution of the plan altogether."[28]

The commissioners left England in April 1825 and five months later handed in their report, having in that time not only crossed the Atlantic twice but also inspected both the Canadas and the maritime provinces. The appraisal done by the Carmichael-Smyth Commission followed the principal tenets of Wellington's proposals of 1819, amplifying each point in much greater detail and providing an assessment based on actual observation. Having estimated the length of frontier to be defended at some 900 miles, the commissioners were nonetheless confident that with "judicious previous arrangement" American aggression could be successfully opposed. They saw no reason to fear the loss of British North America in any future war with the United States.[29]

The Americans, it was explained, had really only three possible lines of operation. The principal avenue of attack the commissioners felt was still the traditional Lake Champlain - Richelieu river route, now greatly facilitated by a new canal opened in 1819, connecting the Hudson river with Lake Champlain. The other choices, against the Niagara frontier and across Lake Ontario to Kingston, were also much abetted by the recent construction of the Erie canal west-

ward to the Niagara and a proposed branch extension to Oswego on Lake Ontario.

Although the commissioners disallowed the possibility of a major invasion east of the Richelieu river, the Richelieu itself was seen as the weakest and most vulnerable of the frontiers likely to be attacked by the Americans. The commission did not accept what appeared to be the prevailing opinion in Canada, namely that Iles aux Noix was both an important and a strong position. The new Fort Lennox was reported to be two-thirds complete, but the value of the position was much diminished as it could now be easily turned by road on either flank. Nonetheless the commissioners did feel that Fort Lennox, in combination with the new works which they were proposing for the much decayed posts at St. Johns and Chambly, would suffice to deter any enemy from advancing down the Richelieu and on to Quebec. The enemy would have to undertake three separate sieges, deal with the problem of there being no navigable water communication between St. Johns and Chambly and then still find any conveyance needed to descend the St. Lawrence to Quebec. Moreover, it was felt most unlikely that an enemy would be so imprudent as to leave Montreal unsubdued in his rear. To further impede an invasion therefore, it was recommended that action be taken to deny the enemy use of any harbours from which he could cross over to Montreal island. A fortified post at the mouth of the Châteauguay river in particular was suggested, and the whole was to be sustained by a new citadel constructed at Montreal:

> A Citadel on Montreal Hill, in addition to the previous Sieges and the difficulties of the passage of the River would render (with whatever advantages of numbers the Enemy might begin the Contest) the conquest of the Island of Montreal in one campaign almost morally impossible - It

is also to be observed that an Enemy would hardly be so rash as to attempt to advance upon Quebec without having reduced Montreal.[30]

It was clear that the ultimate objective of an American invasion of the Canadas had to be Quebec. The Commission, however, was not pleased with the state of the capital city's defences. The only respectable part they felt, was on Cape Diamond where the citadel was under construction. The line wall still needed improvement, the ditches and martello towers needed repairs and generally better maintenance. The towers could act as supports to an entrenched camp on the plains, but the line of such entrenchments would have to be carried down to the St. Charles and the extreme right flank secured. Construction of a tower on the left bank of the St. Charles to protect the lines from enfilade was urged by the commissioners.

An attack upon Kingston from Lake Ontario was seen as the second most likely line of operation open to the Americans. It was now more vulnerable due to the opening of the Erie canal and its proposed link with Lake Ontario at Oswego. Sackett's Harbour was still understood to be the principal American station on Lake Ontario, as it had been during the 1812-1814 war, and it was felt certain that some safe communication between it and Oswego would be developed in wartime. The commissioners reported three operations possible on Lake Ontario, the most important of which was an attack on Kingston to destroy the military works and particularly the naval dockyard. An attack on York and co-operation in an invasion of the Niagara peninsula were also possibilities but a descent of the St. Lawrence to Montreal, such as Amherst had accomplished in 1760 and the Americans had attempted in 1813 did not seem likely. Amherst had shot the rapids unopposed, but the American general Wilkinson had given up the attempt, disheartened by the reported strength of the British works at Coteau du lac

and a defeat at Chrysler's Farm.[31]

The defensive works recommended for Upper Canada by the Commission included the upgrading of Fort Henry at Kingston along with other new works in the vicinity. Modest construction was suggested for York, Chatham, Amberstburg and on the Ouse. On the Niagara frontier a major fortress comparable to that for Montreal, was urged to sustain that area, demonstrating a British presence and acting as a rallying point for the local militia. This fortress was to replace the various posts scattered along the Niagara river and would block the third possible line of American operations against Canada.

In accordance with Wellington's instructions, the commissioners also analyzed the communication routes within the Canadas in some detail. The improvement of the water route between Montreal and the mouth of the Rideau seemed well in hand. Construction along the Rideau itself would be the next step and it appeared that this cost would have to be borne by the British government alone. A canal connecting the Bay of Quintê with Lake Simcoe seemed of secondary military importance and the government would likely object to its expence, even though it might be more likely to eventually pay for itself. Attention was also given to the future development of a permanent communication link between Quebec and Fredricton, New Brunswick. In this instance, as neither canal nor a horse-drawn railroad were practical, a good military road was suggested. Overall the commissioners found the use of rail lines in Canada too expensive. Canals were superior both in point of utility and economy.[32]

In general strategic terms the commissioners favoured consolidation at a few key positions rather than the simple re-construction of the many widely-scattered posts which were already in existence and which were mostly in decay. The principal positions were Quebec, Montreal, Kingston and

the new fortress on the Niagara. Even before the arrival of the Commission, Lord Bathurst had corresponded with the Governor-in-Chief, Lord Dalhousie, on the possibility of concentrating the regular forces at Quebec, Montreal and Kingston. Dalhousie felt this possible when viewed in the light of the then friendly attitude of the United States, but at the same time saw it greatly weakening loyalty in many parts of Upper Canada. Nevertheless, steps were taken to reduce the number of smaller posts being retained by the Government.[33]

Rounding out their report, the commissioners also made suggestions for limited offensive operations which they felt would materially contribute to the security of British North America in wartime. A British army pushed forward to a position just north of Albany, at the junction of the Mohawk and Hudson rivers, would effectually prevent an invasion of Canada. This was the central node from which the various possible enemy lines of operation emanated. If this was too hazardous there were three points at which the Erie Canal might be attacked and disrupted, curtailing its utility for several campaigns at least. Other than the advance from the head of Lake Champlain to a position above Albany, the commissioners saw no opportunity for operations by land which would effect the United States significantly. Instead they directed their attention to a blockade of the eastern American seacoast which they were confident would compell the American government to submit, since its principal source of revenue was custom duties. The Americans were in fact sensitive to coastal defence requirements but the commissioners felt it would still be easy enough to sieze and hold such positions as Long Island and Staten Island. The commissioners concluded:

> We think such a measure (i.e. the blockade of New York), if conducted with secrecy and promptitude could not fail of success, and would

12 Duke of Wellington, from a painting by John Lilley.
(Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection, Providence, R.I.)

> be a more effectual blow than any operation which could be undertaken from Canada; where from local circumstances, it would appear, we submit with deference to Your Grace, we can only act upon the defensive.[34]

The total cost of the various projects proposed for the Canadas by the Carmichael-Smyth Commission, including the Ottawa-Rideau canal work, was estimated at £1,380,000, with an additional £266,000 for Nova Scotia. These sums were not likely to be approved by the Treasury or by Parliament. Sir James Carmichael-Smyth, however, soon pointed out that the new military works which his commission had recommended might be broken down into three classes, by any one of three criteria - relative strategic importance, magnitude or expence. The first class, the "bulwarks of Canada", upon which "all arrangements for the defence of these Provinces [the Canadas] must very materially depend", included the new fortresses proposed for Montreal island and the Niagara frontier, and also the re-construction of the fort at Kingston. A second class, including works at York, Chatham and on the Ouse "although very desirable, are not of the vital consequence with the three fortresses of Montreal, Kingston and at Niagara." The remaining works, such as those at Chambly and St. Johns in Lower Canada and Amherstburg in the upper province were "more calculated to delay and impede an Enemy ... than to prevent...conquest."[35]

In December 1825 the Duke of Wellington passed the Carmichael-Smyth report on to Lord Bathurst, drawing attention to certain salient features. He emphasized the need for secure communications between Upper and Lower Canada and between the latter and the maritime provinces. These would facilitate the concentration of military forces and generally improve the defence arrangements. Although Wellington was emphatic that "the system of defence of these

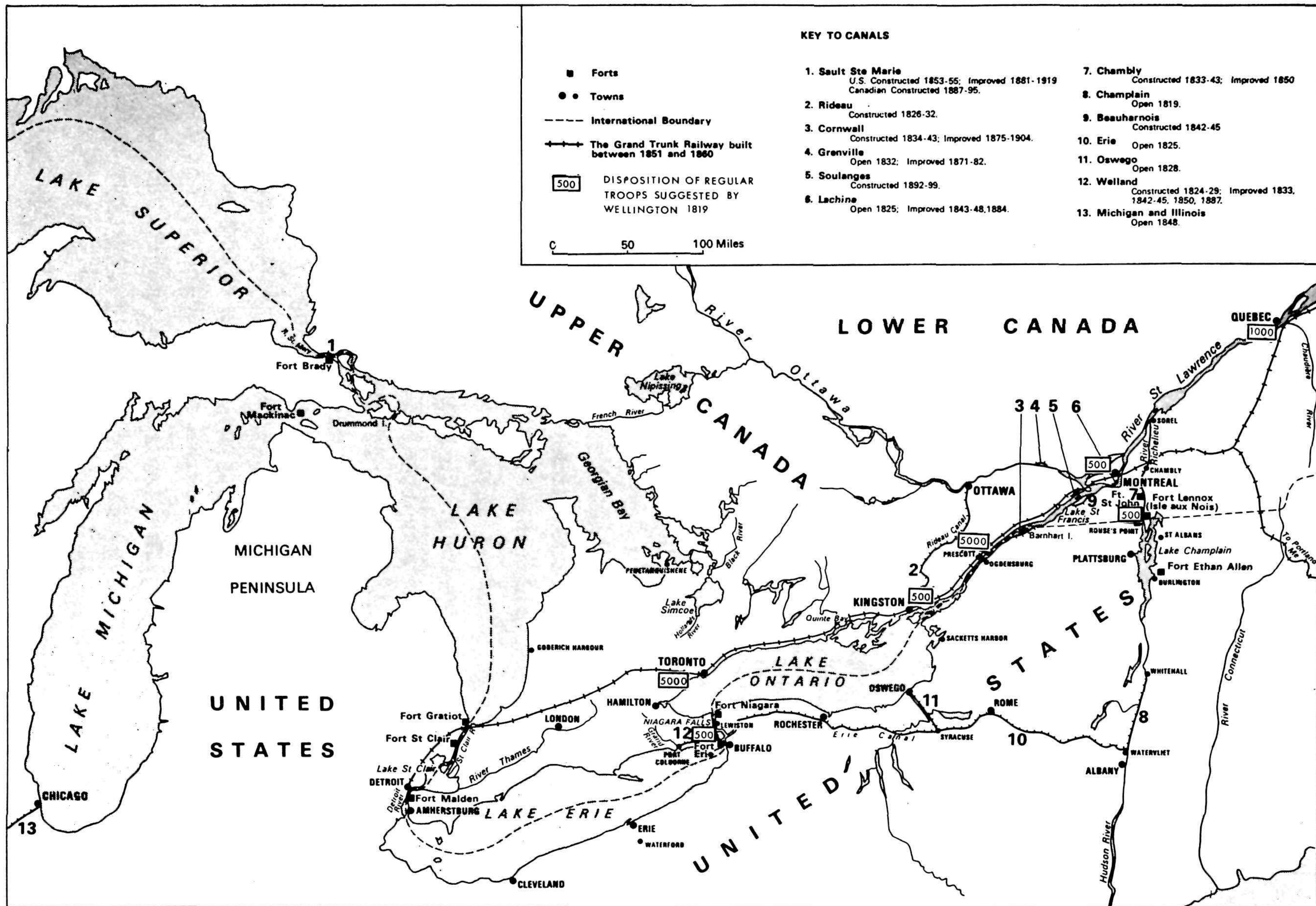
dominions is founded principally on the means of communications to be established", he also drew attention to the importance of the military works being proposed. There were the "capital points", Quebec, Halifax, Montreal, Kingston and the proposed Niagara fortress, and the lesser works such as those on the Richelieu. Other positions in Upper Canada would cover the various naval stations. In summation he was confident of the future, but only if the appropriate measures were acted upon:

> As, on the one hand, I do not entertain the smallest doubt that, if the communications and works proposed by the Committee are carried into execution, his Majesty's dominions in North America ought to be, and will be, effectually defended and secured against any attempt to be made upon them hereafter by the United States, however formidable their power, and this without any material demand upon the military resources of the country; so, on the other, I am convinved, that if these, or some measures of this description, are not adopted, and if measures are not taken at an early period to manifest the determination of the King's government to hold this dominion, at all events we cannot expect the inhabitants, upon whose loyal and gallant exertions we must in the end depend for their defence, will do otherwise than look for the security of their lives and properties to a seasonable submission to the United States.
>
> Even by the greatest exertion of the military resources of his Majesty's government in war, these dominions could not be successfully and effectually defended without the addition of the greatest part of the measures proposed; but if they are all adopted, and attention is paid to the militia laws in these countries, and care taken to keep alive a

> military spirit among the population, the defence of these dominions ought not to be a more severe burthen upon the military resources of the empire in war than such defence as was made proved to be during the late war.[36]

The Carmichael-Smyth Commission's report was undoubtedly the most important document on Canadian defence yet produced. It was the first attempt to set down an organized and comprehensive outline for defensive measures. Quebec's importance was unquestioned and was in fact being re-emphasized by the construction of a citadel - but major fortresses of comparable cost were also being proposed for Montreal, Kingston and the Niagara. If accepted, the commission's suggestions would commit the British Government to a programme of considerable expenditure in peacetime, for the defence of a distant colonial possession. Britain's most revered military authority, the Duke of Wellington, had given his endorsement; the next step was to approach the Treasury and Parliament.

13 The Great Lakes and River St. Lawrence Frontier. (Kenneth Bourne, Britain and the Balance of Power in North America 1815-1908 [Berkeley: Univ. of Cal. Press, 1967], p. 5.) With some alteration from the original.




Map 1. THE GREAT LAKES AND RIVER ST LAWRENCE FRONTIER

# Chapter Five

## Retrenchment and Reassessment

Although it was intended to ask Parliament for some Ŀ50,000 towards new works at Kingston and Halifax in 1826, it was not until two years later that the Ordnance made its request for the money necessary to begin construction on the new fortifications proposed by the Carmichael-Smyth Commission. When finally made in 1828, the Ordnance's request was for only Ŀ30,644. By 1828 work had already begun on the Rideau Canal - the central project of Wellington's defence scheme for the Canadas. The Royal Engineer who was to superintend its construction, Lieutenant Colonel John By, arrived in Canada in 1826 and the following year work began in earnest. When the Clerk to the Ordnance, Sir Henry Hardinge, presented evidence to a Select Committee of the House of Commons in the spring of 1828, prior to going to the House, the estimated cost of the Rideau had risen more than three times over the original Ŀ169,000 which had appeared in the Carmichael-Smyth Commission's report.[1]

The Ordnance divided the proposed fortifications into three classes, similar to those suggested by Carmichael-Smyth. The first class covered those works considered absolutely necessary for the defence of the Canadas, being as Wellington declared, "necessary without delay."[2] The second class were considered less important, though desireable in the future. Those in the third were postponed "being in the estimation of the master-general not requisite for several years."[3] The projected estimates had already increased. The Ŀ250,000 deemed necessary for the Montreal citadel in 1825 was now set more precisely at Ŀ315,122. In an attempt to soothe fears over future committments,

Hardinge explained the Ordnance's position:

> The first class in round Nos. will amount to 900,000.
>
> The 2nd and 3rd classes are indefinitely postponed- indeed I may say the 3rd is entirely abandoned - but when I say this it is not that Works necessary in themselves have been abandoned in consequence of the Expence, but that it never was contemplated to carry these Works forward at the present day - Engineering Officers were directed to make their Report as complete as possible - to omit nothing - in order that the Department might avoid the charge of first recommending Works on a small scale, and then having compromised the Government and the Parliament to force them to go on -
>
> I therefore am anxious to state that the first class of Works comprizes all those which the Government considers the most important and that the plan confines itself to an outlay of 900,000 to be spread over 6 years in such proportions as may be most convenient. - If these works are completed, the best military authorities consider the Defence of the Canadas and Nova Scotia secure at a cheap rate against any invader -[4]

When presented to Parliament the proposed Ordnance expenditures for British North America came under severe criticism. The critics not only doubted the real military value of the proposed works, declaring that the crucial element in defence was the attitude of the local inhabitants, but also quickly broadened their attack to include a questioning of the whole colonial connection. They claimed that parliament was actually being committed to costs in the realm of £3,000,000 while the true question was not the immediate pecuniary one, but rather the "consequences

hereafter." Canada, it was pointed out, "...was a country which could not be permanently attached to an Eupopean state." Separation from Great Britain was "...in the very nature of things...". Even in a commercial sense Canada seemed of little value to the mother country, one member summing it up quite simply, "We could procure timber better and cheaper from Norway." Money spent on Canada would inevitably be wasted.[5]

It was therefore not enough to merely explain to Parliament the military utility and good sense of the fortifications proposed. Carmichael-Smyth might indeed argue that the construction of permanent works in peace time would prevent the hasty erection of expensive, yet temporary, substitutes in wartime and that his overall scheme would allow a reduction in the garrison of regulars necessary in the Canadas. In the face of bitter criticism about the true value of the colonies themselves, however, the proponents of the new defence "system" could only offer weak reference to the honour and "sacred duties" of the mother country.[6] They could not claim to predict the future and even on the military question there were differences of opinion which could only leave lingering doubts. Wellington himself, now first Lord of the Treasury, had chosen emphatic terms to tell the select committee that he took exception to certain important details of the classification being presented by the Ordnance. Specifically he objected to the Niagara fortress being relegated to the second class of works while Montreal took precedence over it, being retained in the first category.[7] Either fortress was projected to cost more than the Quebec citadel, but which one should be the priority? How could Parliament act with certainty when the experts themselves were obviously divided?

To ease Parliament's fears of future expenses, Sir George Murray claimed that Parliament should not think of the new fortifications as a system at all, feeling no obligation to complete everything if once it had made a committment to build a part.[8] This, however, did not answer the basic military question on Canada's actual defensibility from southern aggression. Experts like Wellington and Hardinge seemed convinced it was defencible - but only if all of the measures they deemed necessary were taken. Although Carmichael-Smyth had argued that there were only three viable approaches to Canada, how could one be completely at ease in thinking that such an extensive frontier as Canada's could again be successfully defended from an American attack? A defending army might indeed be better supported now in Upper Canada than previously. The population had increased considerably, the agricultural base was much expanded and communications were improved, but American developments had more than kept apace, offering improved means for aggression.

From the start Parliament and the Treasury shuddered at the estimated cost of Carmichael-Smyth's proposed defensive works for British North America. Subsequent attempts in Parliament to circumvent the advocates of retrenchment by obtaining a series of partial grants ultimately failed. The original estimates and the actual expenditures on those projects undertaken rose sharply while questionable circumstances involved with the construction of the Rideau Canal in particular soured support for all such undertakings. The independent manner in which Colonel John By managed to commit public funds, without the prior approval of Parliament, to construction of the Rideau on a scale much larger than intended by his superiors initiated a reaction from the Treasury and the House of Commons against the colonial activities of the Ordnance.[9] By 1834 the cost of the Ottawa-Rideau canal project was over £1,000,000, that

of the Rideau alone standing at more than £822,000. The need for retrenchment and proper control over colonial expenditures seemed more pressing than ever and a gradual choking off of funds after 1830 stalled progress on the Ordnance's Canadian projects. Subsequent departmental schemes to finance construction by using revenues derived from the Ordnance's own colonial properties ran into difficulty and eventual failure.[10] Not until the late 1840's were even a part of the fixed fortifications considered necessary complete, and even then many of the works supposedly finished were not considered fully satisfactory.

Kingston was an example. Generally considered as an important strategic location, Kingston had been described as the "key to Upper Canada," its function in the defence of the upper province being compared to Quebec's role in the defence of both the Canadas. The need for permanent improvements had been pointed out repeatedly since the close of the 1812 war, but nothing was done. Following the recommendations of the Carmichael-Smyth commission, an engineer was sent in 1826 to draw up detailed plans for the Kingston defences. The estimated cost increased as additional works were suggested and the Treasury, wanting further information, requested that a committee of engineers then being sent to inspect the Rideau canal, study the possibilities of reducing the projected cost at Kingston. Instead they recommended further alterations and additions. In 1829 this plan, with some modification of the works for Point Henry, was approved by the government. It called for a complex system of mutually supporting works, the cost being estimated at £273,000 or more than £71,000 over the original estimate done by Carmichael-Smyth.

The Treasury again objected and not until 1832 was an agreement made to proceed with a modified version, the works to be built gradually as funds became available. Due to the cost of the Rideau a number of essential outworks to the

fortifications had to be eliminated. Fort Henry itself was completed in 1836 and a sea battery was added in 1841-1842, but apart from the construction of four martello towers a few years later, at the time of the Oregon Crisis, this was all of the approved plan that was actually built. Fort Henry alone was not considered a fully satisfactory work: it was only one of six similar casemated redoubts originally approved in the plan of 1829.[11]

Against the background of the Carmichael-Smyth report and the subsequent efforts of the Ordnance to implement its recommendations, work on the Quebec citadel progressed gradually. When the Smyth Commission visited the citadel in 1825 £60,374 of the original estimate of £70,000 had already been expended, while the project was only about one third complete. At that time Durnford estimated another £150,000 to finish the citadel, although the actual total expenditure, as of 1831, was £236,540. The harshness of the Canadian climate and the non-arrival of certain materials from England caused delays, but following the Commission's visit the yearly expenditures were increased to push the main work to a conclusion by 1831.[12] The finished citadel clearly impressed the casual visitor and was one of the few works in which the engineers themselves were completely satisfied. In a description of Quebec published in 1834, Alfred Hawkins described the citadel and, as he saw it, its importance:

> The fortress on Cape Diamond, or Citadel of Quebec, is a formidable combination of powerful works; and while it is admitted that there is no similar military work on this continent, it has been considered second to few of the most celebrated fortresses of Europe. It has frequently been called the Gibralter of America; and it is, indeed, worthy of the great nation, whose fame and enduring renown are reflected in this chef d'oeuvre

> of nature and of art-constructed at the expense of Great Britain for our defence - at once a monument of her own power, and a pledge of protection to one of the most valuable, although remote, possessions of the British Crown![13]

It did indeed seem to many that the new citadel rivalled some of the most renowned works in the Netherlands, providing not only a secure defensive position, but also accommodation for some 800 officers and men. As well it served as an important depot for arms and munitions. In 1828 Quebec held the largest supply of powder of any of Great Britain's "foreign stations", followed in order by Malta, Gibraltar, Montreal, Corfu, Kingston (U.C.) and Halifax.[14]

The building of the citadel was clearly the crowning recognition of Quebec's strategic importance, but its construction must be placed in context. The project was finally undertaken after some sixty years of intermittent requests, at a time when military planners were placing a much stronger emphasis on the defence of the inhabited interior of the Canadas. British strategists, learning from if not in some degree encouraged by the experiences of the War of 1812, had moved from a pessimistic acceptance of defeat in the interior, with its consequent reliance on a withdrawal to Quebec, to a more encompassing committment expressed in expensive works to improve and secure the vital lines of communication with the upper province. In this they were moved by a feeling of obligation to Upper Canada, particularly because of the recent influx of new settlers into that province. Quebec's traditional position was not diminished, but it was clearly not the sole concern. Impressive new works were also wanted at Montreal and Kingston, the terminals of the Ottawa-Rideau water route, and on the Niagara frontier.

Despite the ultimate failure to construct the works envisaged in the Carmichael-Smyth report of 1825, work was at least initiated on a continuing basis at Quebec, Kingston and Halifax and for a while defence could be viewed with some hope. In 1833 the Second Secretary of the Admiralty suggested that the Kingston Naval establishment be reduced, explaining that the completion of the Rideau had:

> ...greatly improved our defensive position, by securing an inland Communication between Quebec and Kingston; while the Completion of the Works around Quebec and the progress of the Fortifications at Kingston which form part of the line of Forts recommended by the Duke of Wellington, go far to place the future defence of the Canadas on a basis, which the highest Military Authority has pronounced to be impregnable.[15]

Four years later rebellion broke out in the Canadas, and though the initial uprisings were handled with comparative ease, a period of "patriot" filibustering along the American border ensued. Tension increased as rebels who had fled to the United States precipitated several border incidents in their attempts to invade Canadian soil. At the same time a separate crisis arose over the long disputed Maine-New Brunswick border. In response to the filibusters the number of British regulars was substantially increased and the Kingston naval base re-opened. Such actions, however, though intended to meet local problems on the frontier, were soon escalated into questions of imperial policy on Canadian defence particularly when the possibility of aggression by the American government was considered. The prospect of an American invasion was never far from the surface and the situation brought on a renewal of the debate over fortifications in the Canadas.

In 1839 Lord Seaton (Sir John Colborne), the Commander of the Forces in the Canadas, presented a scheme to London for strengthening posts on exposed frontier areas. Permanent works for Amherstburg, Niagara and St. John's (St.Jean) were suggested at a total cost of £240,000. Seaton's plan found favour, but the question of completing any more of the works proposed by Carmichael-Smyth in 1825 was deferred as "the necessity of their erection is not so certain and the varying circumstances of the country may eventually render it inexpedient or unnecessary to undertake them."[16] Lord Seaton was principally concerned with the filibusters, but his successor, Sir Richard Jackson, saw the real threat as coming from the American government's own designs in Canada. Jackson, who was most impressed by the need to protect Montreal, wrote a memorandum on the subject in March 1840. Undoubtedly that city would become the principal target of an American invasion since it was vital in the maintenance of communications between the Canadas. Carmichael-Smyth's suggestions for defending Montreal were good, but Jackson realized that the expense had put them out of the realm of possibility. His own alternatives found support from Lord John Russell, then the Secretary of State for War and the Colonies, but the Ordnance would not recommend anything until they had detailed plans and estimates.

Jackson's response was a much lengthier memorandum reviewing the whole problem of Canadian defence. Focussing on the difficulty of receiving aid from Britain during the winter months, he noted that the enemy could, during that season, drive the garrisons back from those points necessary to forward operations upon the resumption of navigation in the spring. To prevent this proper works were needed at those points, but at present the frontier was virtually uncovered except at Kingston, Isle aux Noix and Quebec. Neither of the two principal fortresses were completely finished, while Isle aux Noix had very definite limitations. Regardless of Fort Henry, Kingston harbour was still

unprotected, though that harbour would be essential for establishing a naval superiority on Lake Ontario - again a necessity as there had been no further development of inland water communications. Quebec district (Rivière de Loup to the mouth of the Yamaska), however, seemed to Jackson to be almost imprevious to an enemy force intending a siege of Quebec city. The necessary materials would have to be transported with the besieging army and Jackson observed that Arnold's march during the revolutionary war had been but a bold incursion, dependent on Montgomery's success at Montreal. Jackson was therefore convinced that Montreal must be taken first, before the enemy could pass the St. Lawrence below Montreal to besiege Quebec. What was known of American plans seemed to confirm this assessment.

The British defence would have to be "passive and local". Without the works recommended in 1825 by Carmichael-Smyth the defence of Canada must depend on the number and efficiency of the force in the field, but Jackson warned that dependence on the superiority of the British regulars should not lead to the neglect of permanent defensive works. He stressed the importance of making the defensive arrangements as close to the measures recommended by the Duke of Wellington as possible. He realized that the failure to implement further the Carmichael-Smyth recommendations was due to their cost. The latest estimate based on these recommendations put the Montreal area requirements alone at £1,330,000, of which the Montreal citadel was estimated at £485,000. Nonetheless it was with some apprehension that he was suggesting less expensive alternatives. In any case it was clear that Canada could not be considered secure without works of some kind.[17]

Sir Hussey Vivian, the Master General of the Ordnance, however, was not convinced that a parent state was obliged to spend large sums on colonial fortifications and further felt that the Carmichael-Smyth recommendations, even if implemented fully, would still leave many vulnerable spots. He wanted the Ordnance to confine itself to works at Quebec and Kingston with those additions for St. John's, Niagara and Amherstburg which had been proposed by Lord Seaton. Wellington when asked for his opinion reiterated his belief in the recommendations of the Carmichael-Smyth commission, emphasizing the importance of inland water communications. Now over seventy years of age, Wellington seemed rather unaware of the actual costs: he declared that the defence of the Canadas was a point of honour for Great Britain. Either Britain should leave immediately or she should make proper arrangements for Canadian defence.[18]

Wellington's views were supported by the Commander-in-Chief, Lord Hill, but it was clear that there would be no attempt to complete the Carmichael-Smyth scheme. New work did begin at St. John's but in 1842 the new Master General of the Ordnance, Sir George Murray, wanted the emphasis clearly put on the vital points - Quebec, Montreal and Kingston. He was insistent that Montreal's defences must not be delayed and by the end of that year work at St. John's was stopped and the Ordnance directed to concentrate its efforts at the three key points chosen by Murray. The crisis with the Americans, however, was receding. Economy measures again came to the forefront forcing further revisions.[19]

The number of British regulars in the Canadas was reduced but Jackson's concern was unabated. The next crisis was not long in coming. In 1844, with American presidential candidate James Polk talking belligerently about the disputed Oregon Territory, Jackson appointed a commission to study the military and naval situation within Canada. At the same time despite the situation in North America, in England the

Government's disinclination to expend funds on extensive fortifications found strong expression. The Wellingtonian schemes of the 1820's were no longer seriously considered; rather Britain's political connections with Canada were increasingly the supreme factor in any decisions concerning defence. Lord Stanley, the Secretary of State for War and the Colonies, was concerned about Canadian defence. Although he saw the apparent hopelessness of contending on the lakes for naval supremacy, he was most hesitant to incur the expense of providing for a purely military defence of Canada as set out in the Carmichael-Smyth Report. The Prime Minister, Sir Robert Peel, was emphatic: the cost of such fortifications, was "not only useless but money thrown away so far as Canadian feeling is concerned."[20]

The series of reports done by Jackson's commissioners did not strike a particularly optimistic note. Captain Boxer of the Royal Navy and the Commanding Royal Engineer, Colonel Holloway, described in detail the best manner in which an outnumbered force of British regulars covering the area south of Montreal, could best fight a withdrawal to places of refuge by the St. Lawrence. After the fall of Montreal, once forced into fortified positions on St. Helen's island and a proposed tête du pont at Longueuil, the troops could only sit and wait for reinforcements from Great Britain. They might even be forced back to Sorel and Quebec. On the optimistic side Boxer and Holloway did state that they felt Montreal could be successfully defended by "active Officers Commanding both Services" if the Rideau-Ottawa communications were secure and there was proper co-operation. It was clear, however, that heavy reliance would be placed on reinforcements from overseas, the estimate being 18 or 20 days from embarkation in England to arrival at the head of Lake Ontario. There were no recommendations for the construction of major permanent works; instead the concern was to deal with the situation as it existed, making use of

what resources there were, supplementing these with modest field works and blockhouses.[21]

The Governor-general, Sir Charles Metcalfe, had his own ideas. In a letter written to Lord Stanley on 4 July 1845, he outlined a grandiose scheme calling for some 50,000 British regulars to defend the Canadas. Control of the Lakes would be essential and Metcalfe further recommended that Canada and New Brunswick would best be defended by occupying the whole territory of the United States to the east of Lake Ontario. He realized that the cost of defence would be enormous but he assumed that Britain would spare no effort. If hostilities broke out the 50,000 regulars would best defend Canada by limited offensive operations, but Metcalfe further suggested a large scale invasion of the United States from the north with an additional force of 50,000 to 100,000 men. The traditional idea of raids on the American eastern seaboard was rejected although Metcalfe admitted the threat of such action would keep the Americans in continual alarm everywhere. The objective of all these operations would be to obtain an "honourable peace" as quickly as possible.[22]

In terms of existing military and political realities, implementation of Metcalfe's scheme could not be taken seriously. He wrote of armies which simply did not exist. The total strength of the British army was only 118,000 men, of which 79,000 were maintained within the British Isles and India. Nor had he considered the possibility of a co-inciding European war, although in the summer and autumn of 1844, the British government had been more concerned about the possibility of war with France over an incident in the Pacific, than it had been with conflict over the Oregon territory. Moreover, Metcalfe's suggested plan of action ran completely contrary to the ideas developed since the close of the War of 1812. It was accepted that any war in North America would be strictly defensive in character. Although major offensive operations on land were not to be

considered, it was acknowledged that the most beneficial results could be achieved by a blockade and harrassment of the American eastern seaboard. This would help to neutralize American operations against Canada, while eventually tipping the balance in favour of Great Britain.

Lord Stanley believed that all efforts should be concentrated on the defensive and that such preparations should be centred on Quebec, Montreal and Kingston. The Master General of the Ordnance agreed, warning against the dissipation of limited resources. Murray did not like the idea of Montreal's defences being too near the southern frontier, and further urged that Quebec be properly protected to ensure the safe arrival of reinforcements, either from the British Isles or from Halifax.[23] All authorities were agreed on the critical importance of the Canadian militia's active support and on re-establishing a strong naval position on the lakes, as the fortification schemes and extended inland water routes proposed in the 1820's would not be acted upon. In June 1845 Sir Richard Jackson died very suddenly and Lord Cathcart was appointed to replace him, soon becoming Governor-General as well when Metcalfe was forced by illness to return to Britain. In December of that year, having reviewed the reports of Colonel Holloway and Captain Boxer, Cathcart set down his own views on the requirements of Canadian defence. He stressed the importance of getting control of the lakes at the earliest possible moment. Under the existing circumstances, this was the only way Canada could be successfully defended and in the case of Lake Ontario this had to be achieved "at all hazards". Limited offensives along the frontier would be necessary to retard American operations against Canada, giving time for reinforcements to arrive from Great Britain. Cathcart urged the government to follow Boxer's recommendations on increasing British naval strength to contest the inland lakes. Without an adequate naval

force he could only view the defence of the upper province's exposed frontiers with extreme pessimism.[24]

In March the following year, Cathcart expressed his dissatisfaction with the works upon which Canadian defence had to rely. With the exception of Kingston, he declared that the country was no better prepared for war in 1846 than it had been in 1812. Montreal was still unprotected and though Cathcart stated that he was not an advocate for the construction of fortifications on a large and expensive scale, he did insist on the necessity of improving the works on St. Helen's island and on a tête de pont for Longueil. Nor would he hear suggestions, such as he attributed to Murray, that the areas south of Montreal be only lightly held. He did not intend making any serious resistance against a superior enemy force on the frontier itself, but did mean to keep communications with the eastern townships open as long as possible. This area was now a major source of supply for the Commissariat.[25]

Lord Cathcart was already disappointed with the British government's lack of action, but his dissatisfaction made little impression in London. A proposal to spend £500,000 on canal improvements and defensive works in Canada was pared down to £133,000, to be spent on military works only. Some £47,000 of this amount was already designated for immediate improvements at Kingston while the remainder would go to purchase additional land in front of the defences at Quebec, on new works at St. Helen's, and if any remained, it would be spent on further improvements at Kingston.[26]

In the end the dispute over the Oregon Territory was resolved by arbitration. It was significant, however, that very little was actually done during the crisis to improve the defences of British North America. The garrisons in both Canada and the Maritimes went without any substantial increases; the naval force on the lakes was not put on an effective footing, and only a very small amount of money was

spent on Canadian fortifications. Renewed alarm over the continued vulnerability of Kingston resulted in the hasty construction of four martello towers, seemingly more of a political gesture than a substantial addition to Kingston's defences. As soon as the tension decreased, following resolution of the boundary in June 1846, the military projects started during the crisis were modified. Construction of the towers at Kingston and of lesser works at Quebec were continued to completion, but by the end of 1846 it was decided that all proposed works not yet started would be deferred. The towers at Kingston were not armed.

The crisis had also pointed out the possibility of conflict in areas far removed from the established settlements of the St. Lawrence valley. During the dispute two young officers had been sent westward to study communications and make a military appraisal of the Oregon country, while a small garrison of British regulars had actually been sent to the Red River colony via Hudson Bay. Considering that the defence problems of the St. Lawrence colonies themselves were far from solved, the prospect of distant actions to the west of the Great Lakes or on the western coast of North America could hardly have been greeted with any optimism. Although Quebec had received her citadel a combination of military, political, and financial considerations had compromised the great fortification schemes of the 1820's. Much to the chagrin of military men like Wellington, the political side of the issue, namely the relationship between Britain and her North American colonies, had become the dominant factor in decisions on Canadian defence.

# Chapter 6

## An Imperial Fortress?

Within a few years of the resolution of the Oregon crisis the British Government was moving deliberately in a direction which would end in the complete withdrawal of all British regular forces from Canada. The impetus for a new direction in policy was principally the result of a continuing desire for economy. Increasingly in the decades following the Napoleonic wars a very vocal group of Englishmen claimed colonial possessions to be a waste of effort and money. Proponents of a "free-trade" without the restrictions of the older mercantilist theories saw imperial defence costs as particularly wasteful, and during the 1830's awareness of the actual expenditure on colonial garrisons grew. In 1834-35, 4/5 of the total cost of overseas possessions was for garrisons. Although conservative opinion resisted change, the next decade brought final victory to the radical free-traders.[1]

The adoption of a commercial policy of laissez-faire in the 1840's was declared to have changed relationships with the colonies. In 1851 free-trader Richard Cobden stated that the continuance of colonial garrisons was "down-right insanity."[2] It was now widely accepted that colonial independence in some form was inevitable. Withdrawal from distant possessions was further induced by British fears of involvement in a European conflict. Suspicion of French intentions in the 1840's and the knowledge of Britain's military weakness made a strong case for concentrating the forces then scattered throughout the Empire, for the defence of the British Isles themselves. The current preoccupation

with the communication possibilities of steam navigation seemed to offer a means by which these troops could again be dispatched, with remarkable speed, to deal with any colonial problem.

The advent of responsible government in Canada during this period provided an additional argument for withdrawal, the logic of which was hard to refute. With the assumption of power by Lord John Russell's Whig ministry in 1846, a new governor-general, Lord Elgin, was sent to Canada with instructions to make responsible government a reality. Elgin's success enabled London to argue that the corollary to responsible government, with its new freedom of action, was the assumption of new responsibilities, in particular that of providing for one's own defence. Elgin, and many Canadians, felt that Canada had a special claim to British protection, as it was the connection with Great Britain which exposed Canada to possible American aggression, but in March 1851 Lord Grey, the Secretary of State for War and the Colonies, informed the governor-general that there was to be a change in Britain's military policy. Grey considered it time that the British government be relieved of much of the burden of Canadian defence. The number of regulars was to be reduced and the remaining force concentrated at two or three posts of importance, probably only Kingston and Quebec.

Elgin was in agreement with a policy of garrison reduction and seemed confident of British success in an American war. If war came, he was certain "...it will be played out by Her Majesty's fleets off New York and Boston, and by my old friends the West Indian Regiments in Florida and South Carolina, as well as here by regulars and Militia".[3] In accordance with Grey's wishes some reductions were made, the process being accelerated by the outbreak of the Crimean War and Britain's need to concen-

trate a greater number of men in Europe. The garrison in Canada was reduced to only one regular line regiment with two companies of artillery and the Royal Canadian Rifles. Full implementation of Grey's policy, however, would take some time. A number of obstacles intervened, while the Canadians proved most reluctant to accept the financial burden of self-defence. Immediately following the cessation of hostilities in Europe reinforcements were again sent to Canada in a hastey response to a disagreement with the United States. By 1860, however, despite the occasional alarm, relations had much improved and the period of tension seemed over.

The outbreak of the American Civil War made an abrupt change for the worse. Britain soon found herself in an uncomfortable dilemma, her declared neutrality caught between the two warring sides, her statesmen deeply concerned that the situation would sooner or later involve their nation in another North American war. Shortly after the commencement of hostilities in the United States, a reinforcement of three infantry regiments and one battery of field artillery was sent to Canada, increasing its small garrison to 5,100 regulars. In December 1861 the tension was brought to a climax with great alarm over the "Trent" Affair. Reinforcements were rushed out by steamship from Great Britain and during the winter some 6,800 men were moved into Canada by sleigh from Saint John, New Brunswick. Between April 1861 and April 1862 the garrison of British regulars in Canada increased more than ten times reaching a total of almost 12,000 men.

In Canada itself British troops were ordered to be placed on a war footing while Sir William Fenwick Williams, the Lieutenant-General Commanding in North America, paid a quick visit to vulnerable points in Upper Canada and also made plans to meet an attack on Montreal. If war broke out Williams could only hope to retain the most important points,

14 "Commissioners appointed to report on subject of the defence of Canada" - the Gordon Commission of 1862 by Notman. (<u>National Army Museum, Great Britain.</u>)

Notman Photo
Captain Royal Navy
Chief of the Staff
Lynedoch Gardiner
Colonel R.A.
Commissioners

stalling the American advance as much as possible. He was instructed to hold Montreal and Quebec and, if possible, Kingston. Most of the troops were deployed in the Montreal area and plans were even considered for an attack on Rousse's Point to forestall the Americans. In Upper Canada the troops were concentrated at Kingston, Toronto, Hamilton, Guelph and London, poised for a counter-attack in case of an American invasion. In England an attack and occupation of much of Maine was contemplated as a way to protect Canada, drawing off a large number of American troops and securing the overland winter line of communication with Canada. By such means Britain could also acquire the Grand Trunk Railroad link from Portland to Montreal and Quebec. While there was general pessimism over the defence of Canada, the prospects for naval action against American shipping and coastal ports were viewed optimistically.[4]

The real crisis of the "Trent" Affair was passing even as the British reinforcements were making their way to Canada, but the whole question of Canadian defence was now thrown into sharp relief. The number of regulars was gradually reduced after the "Trent" incident but the prospect of an invasion of Canada in the near future continued to be very real and the situation demanded a careful reassessment not only of the immediate military situation in Canada but also of Britain's stance in North America generally. Under both heads Quebec City became an important factor.

In February 1862 a commission of professionals under Colonel J.W. Gordon, R.E., was appointed to study the defence of Canada and make recommendations. Sir John Fox Burgoyne, the Inspector-General of Fortifications, drew up memoranda for the guidance of the commissioners. He touched on the points of immediate military concern but also stressed the idea that the question of defence was not purely of a military nature. It also required an assessment

of the "...many social and political considerations mixed with it particularly as regards the measures that are to be taken up by the mother country and the colony respectively." If the colony was not worth defending, "there will be justification for abandoning it to its fate".[5]

Four "leading elements" had to be considered: 1) the military forces available; 2) naval power on the lakes; 3) fortifications, and; 4) the lines of communication. The absolute essential was the troops themselves and Burgoyne made it clear that the "main basis of defensive power must necessarily consist of the local forces - militia and volunteers in large numbers..." Naval power on the lakes was critical but also posed one of the greatest difficulties. The use of temporary works was to be fully considered but the commissioners were told to keep their recommendations on new permanent fortifications to an absolute minimum. The British government was not willing to undertake them and the Canadians were unable to afford them:

> It would be very easy to show, in a military memoir on the defence of the country, how forts and fortresses might be multiplied to admirable effect, and how they would indisputably add largely to the improved defensive capabilities of Canada, but they are out of the question.[6]

The principal lines of communication were decidedly vulnerable to enemy action. The chief concern was over the rail and water routes. There seemed virtually no hope that the St. Lawrence could be maintained once war started, nor were the rail connections much better. The overland communication from Saint John, New Brunswick, to Canada was too close to the American border, although a railroad furtherback from the frontier had been "urgently pressed". Unlike

many others, Burgoyne saw little likelihood of a major American invasion during the winter as the climatic conditions were simply too severe.

Burgoyne supposed that there were three major lines of operation against Canada - on the lower St. Lawrence towards Quebec, on Montreal from Lake Champlain and from the upper lakes along the St. Lawrence. The first two were vital blows at the communication with England but Burgoyne felt there was little chance of a direct attack on Quebec, "unless with an overwhelming superiority of force and means". Such an attack would have to be made through difficult terrain far from any "effectual" resources and would meet the defenders, supported by a British fleet, at the point most easily reinforced. The attack to be most dreaded was that against Montreal from Lake Champlain. This would be aimed at the very heart of Canada's resources and would have to be met with determined effort, for which purpose ground for suitable entrenchments should be selected beforehand. The disadvantages under which the defenders must labour were many but Burgoyne was confident that the civil war would only weaken the United States and eventually alter the situation much in Canada's favour.

Despite the counsel of Burgoyne, the commissioners recommended permanent works requiring an "approximate" expenditure of L1,116,000. Working from the premise that the United States had now come of age and was properly a "military power", they explained the absolute necessity of the works they proposed. Canada had no natural barriers, was far less isolated from attack than she had been in 1812, and while permanent works were required to offset the decided numerical superiority of the enemy, the present works, except at Quebec and Kingston, were not adapted to modern warfare, all of them needing complete reconstruction. The commissioners recommended permanent works for each of the five military districts into which Canada was now

divided - London, Toronto, Kingston, Montreal and Quebec, with a minimum of 150,000 men required for their defence. Of this number 65,000 would be considered as effectives with another 65,000 in reserve and a further 20,000 to replace casualties. British regulars would form only the nucleus of the force, the majority of whom would be Canadian militiamen and volunteers. Nevertheless it would be most important to establish a secure overland line of communication from the maritimes to Canada for use during the winter, so that year round communication with the mother country could be ensured.

The enemy would probably attempt to cause a dispersion of the defending forces along the full extent of the frontier, but the commissioners were convinced that the main attack would be against Montreal by Lake Champlain. The defending forces should be concentrated at strategic points "from whence they could be thrown in masses upon the enemy, or where they could await the development of his plans." Naval supremacy on the lakes was indispensible and the commissioners elaborated in some detail. Existing lines of navigation would have to be improved and if a flotilla was to be established on Lake Huron, a canal would have to be built from Ottawa to Georgian Bay.

The strategic significance of Quebec was pointed out clearly. It was essential to have a secure base of operations which was in communication with the mother country. The statement made by the commissioners on this subject was hardly original but the years of the Civil War, with the constantly growing spectre of American military power, highlighted the significance of Quebec:

> The security of Quebec is of the utmost importance. As long as Canada remains a portion of the British Empire, it must be looked upon as the key of the country.

> Royal reinforcements will always make this stronghold their first halting-place in their advance to the support of Canada, and the last to retire to in case of defeat.[7]

The Commission's description of the existing state of Quebec's works was all too familiar:

> At present they consist of an enceinte round the upper town, formed on the west side by four bastioned fronts of very low profile, and in a very bad state of repair; to the north and east by an exposed wall running along the ridge overlooking the valleys of the St. Charles and the St. Lawrence. At the south angle, the enceinte is closed by the citadel on Cape Diamond...
>
> Besides these works, four towers are placed about 1,000 yards in advance of the west fronts of the town, at intervals of about 450 yards, and extending across the Plains of Abraham from the cliffs overhanging the St. Lawrence to the ridge above the valley of the St. Charles.
>
> The works on the west side of the town can be taken in reverse along their whole length from the opposite bank of the St. Charles River.
>
> The state of the works at the citadel is more satisfactory than that of the town works; but here, also, towards the west the escarp is much exposed, and the south-west angle of Diamond Bastion is very weak, the guns in that bastion being completely exposed to fire from the south side of the St. Lawrence.

> A thorough revision of the armanent is required; and expense magazines, shell rooms, and traverses, are very much needed.[8]

Improvement of the fortifications at Quebec headed the Commission's list of work to be done and included a general revamping of the citadel, renovations and re-arming of the town's defences, as well as an entrenched position on the plains about one mile from the city. A new permanent enclosed work at Point Lévis on the south shore was also suggested. The total cost of the improvements was estimated at £200,000.

Writing at a period of growing reliance on seapower, the commissioners also noted the role which the navy could play in defending Quebec during the summer months. They assumed British naval supremacy would preclude an enemy approach from the sea and, while also preventing a passage of the St. Lawrence, a fleet could harass any enemy movement down river from Montreal to Quebec. In the face of a strong fleet on the St. Lawrence an investment of Quebec would be hazardous. In winter the enemy would be unable to undertake regular siege operations.

The commissioner's report was thorough and detailed, outlining the measures necessary to defend each sector of the Canadian frontier. It was reminiscent of the old plans of the 1820's and like them was too expensive, calling for large expenditures by the mother country. The British government may have been willing to spend £10,000,000 on Britain's own defences, the result of the French invasion scare of 1859, but responsible ministers were most hesitant to implement any part of the Commission's recommendations for Canada - especially when the Canadians soon displayed a marked disinterest in their own defence once the "Trent" Affair began to cool.

In London, Canadians were held in low regard, but after the decisive victories of the Union armies in the summer of 1863 there was a new alarm. The British Government was convinced the Union would be victorious and might well turn on Canada after the final defeat of the Confederacy. Even the Canadian Government now showed some practical concern for the danger of invasion. A defence plan acceptable to the British Government was still needed and a further survey of the situation was carried out by Lieutenant-Colonel W.F.D. Jervois of the Royal Engineers.

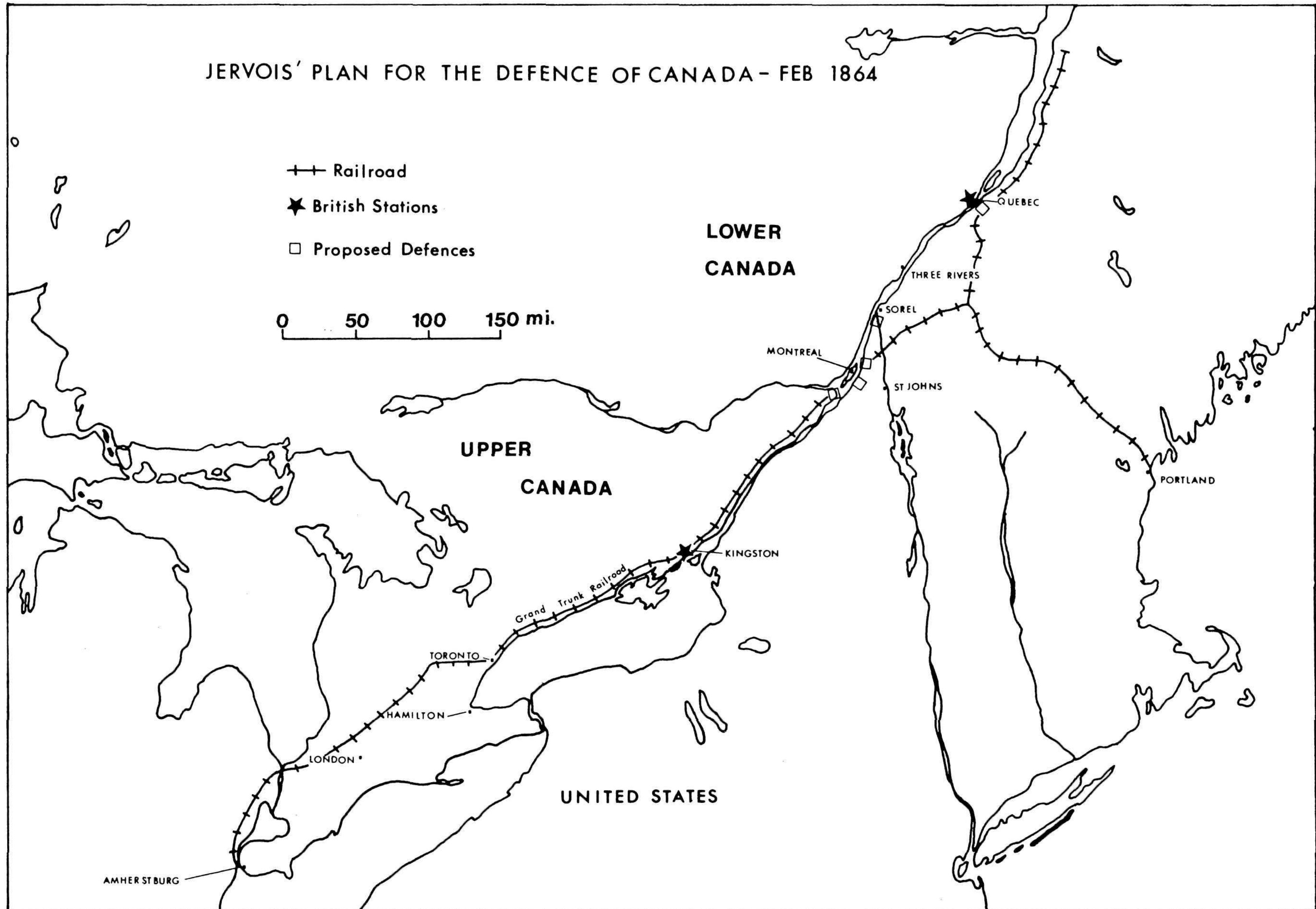
During the fall of 1863 Jervois spent about two months in North America, almost half of this time in Canada. He also visited the important naval station at Bermuda. The report he presented was quite different from that done by the Commission of 1862. It was not optimistic. Assessing the present "military and political condition" of the United States, he felt that an invasion was quite possible and though Canadians seemed to be loyal, he felt that the issue of a Canadian contribution to defence costs should be pressed by the British Government. He suggested that Canadians had done little to date because no specific system of defence had ever been proposed to them. To remedy this, Jervois proposed his own "system". It was sound strategy but could hardly have had much appeal to Canadians. In the words of William E. Gladstone, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, it was "...for Canada, as a whole, no plan of defence at all..."[9]

Noting the extreme vulnerability of the westernmost districts of Canada, the size of the defending forces presently available if war broke out, and the overwhelming numerical superiority of the enemy, Jervois concluded that the western areas could not be held and should be abandoned. Even retention of Kingston was questionable as its defence was dependent on a strong naval force on Lake Ontario. This could only be achieved by enlarging the

Rideau and Ottawa canals to allow the entrance of armour-plated vessels. The whole of the regulars and volunteers in Canada should therefore be concentrated at Montreal, doubtless the object of the enemy's first "grand attack". Together with Quebec, Montreal was one of the two "vital points" of Canada and Jervois' suggestions centred on the best method of preserving these two cities.[10] Quebec would be the ultimate objective of the army as it was the vital link with Britain and though it was often suggested to strengthen Quebec while doing nothing at Montreal, Jervois urged that every effort should be made to hold both cities. In essence his plan was to create a strong system of defence using Montreal and Quebec as anchor points, with the Royal Navy covering the St. Lawrence River communication between them. Works were absolutely essential for the defenders to compensate for their numerical inferiority and even Quebec was in need of improvements to withstand the effects of modern rifled artillery. Jervois seemed to feel that a successful defence of Canada's "vital points" was possible with the proper preparations but his conclusion was notably pessimistic in character:

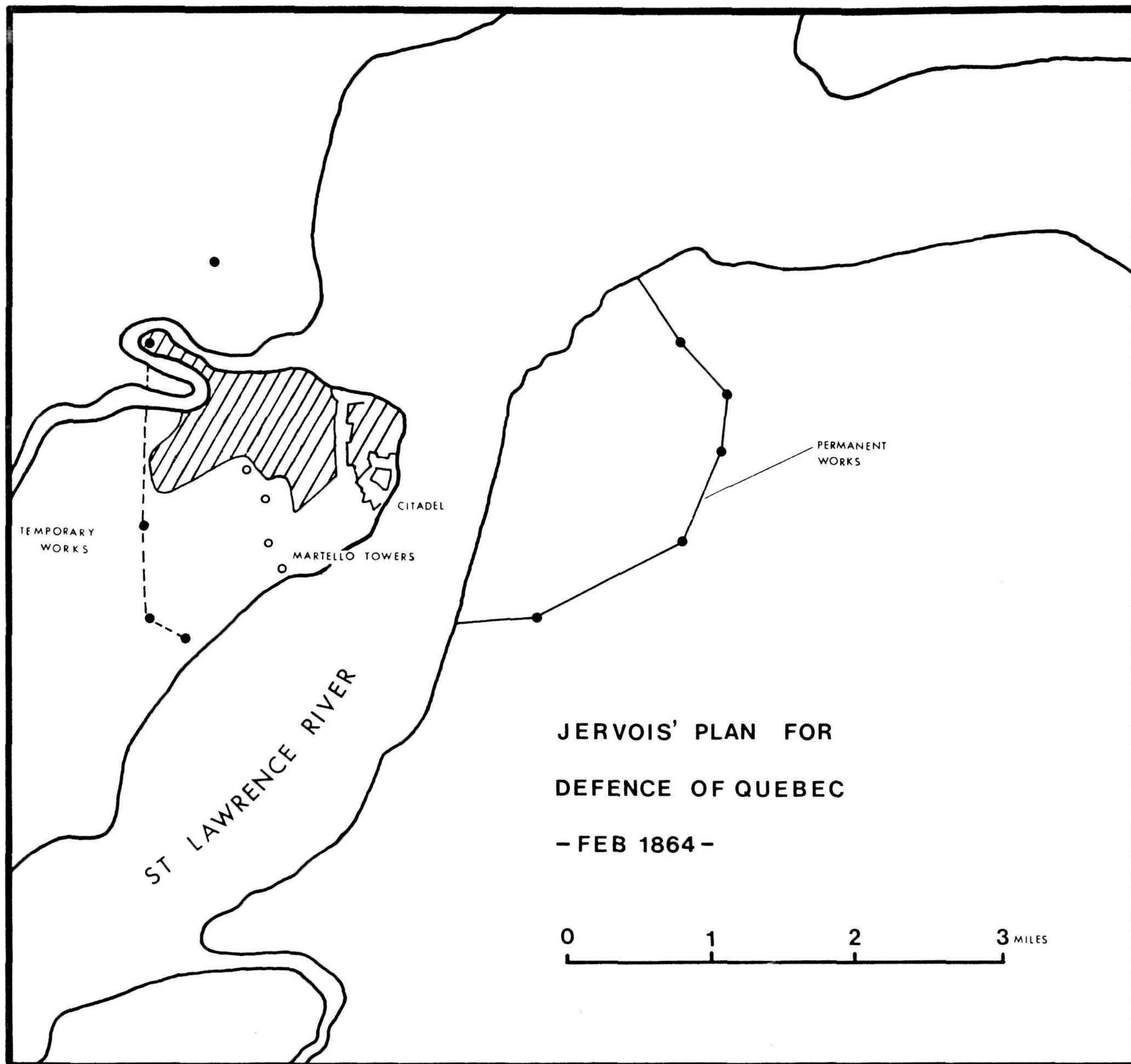
> It is a delusion to suppose that that force [the British regulars] can be of any use for the defence of the country without fortifications to compensate for the comparative smallness of its numbers. Even if aided by the whole of the volunteers that would be available both in the Upper and Lower Provinces at the outbreak of a war, it would be forced to retreat before the superior numbers by which it would be attacked, and it would be fortunate if it succeeded in embarking at Quebec and putting to sea without serious defeat.[11]

15 Jervois' plan for the defence of Canada, February 1864. (Drawing by D. Ford.)



JERVOIS' PLAN FOR THE DEFENCE OF CANADA – FEB 1864
Railroad
British Stations
Proposed Defences
0 50 100 150 mi.
LOWER CANADA
UPPER CANADA
UNITED STATES
QUEBEC
THREE RIVERS
SOREL
MONTREAL
ST JOHNS
PORTLAND
KINGSTON
Grand Trunk Railroad
TORONTO
HAMILTON
LONDON
AMHERSTBURG

16 Jervois' plan for defence of Quebec, February 1864. (_Drawing by D. Ford._)


PERMANENT WORKS
CITADEL
TEMPORARY WORKS
MARTELLO TOWERS
ST LAWRENCE RIVER
JERVOIS' PLAN FOR
DEFENCE OF QUEBEC
-FEB 1864-
0
1
2
3 MILES

The total cost of Jervois' scheme was projected at L750,000, considerably less than the expenses proposed by the Commission, but only meant to cover Montreal and Quebec. As a result of the report a plan was devised whereby the British government would take the necessary steps to strengthen Quebec while the Canadians took care of Montreal. Jervois had estimated the former expenses at L200,000 and the latter at L450,000. At Quebec the improvements consisted principally of the occupation of Point Lévis by several permanent detached works to deny the enemy ground from which he could command the harbour, a remodelling of the river batteries, and such repairs as were necessary to the citadel and land fronts of the town works. As an attack down the left bank of the St. Lawrence against Quebec was not considered likely unless Montreal had fallen beforehand, Jervois suggested that the only additional fortifications be a temporary line of entrenchments thrown up as needed to the west and south of Quebec.

In July 1864, Gladstone wrote a memorandum in which he cast considerable doubt on the propriety of proceeding with any of the recommendations then being considered for the defence of Canada. The new menace of the American navy's ironclads led Gladstone to doubt if even Quebec could be made safe since its retention ultimately depended on control of the St. Lawrence. Was fortifying Quebec worthwhile? Furthermore, the question of Quebec could not be separated from the whole defence of Canada. The Commission of 1862 had indeed proposed a "system" but, Gladstone suggested, the real cost of the Commission's plans was at least six to eight million pounds sterling. Now Jervois' report was presented "in complete supersession of this rather authoritative Report" and Jervois' assessment was completely different. Gladstone put forward a convincing argument to show that American aggression was unlikely but he still stressed the idea that the matter of Canada's responsibility

for its own defence had to be resolved. Canadian defence would have to be looked at all over again.[12]

The Colonial Secretary, Edward Cardwell, informed the Governor-General in early August that a revision of the problem of Canadian defence was in order. Jervois' report was to be brought to the attention of the Canadian Government and compared with that done by the Commission of 1862 under Gordon. Quebec was a special concern. Because of Jervois' pessimism about making any stand in the field against the enemy, his report had placed great emphasis on Quebec's importance to the British regulars then in Canada. Cardwell now underlined Britain's interest in the protection of that city:

> In any assistance towards a system of defence which Her Majesty's Government could recommend to Parliament, the two primary objects must be - first, an adequate protection for British Troops in Canada, and, secondly, a secure communication with the Naval Forces of Great Britain.
>
> It is obvious that Quebec is the Position which best fulfills these conditions. But Her Majesty's Government have no wish to confine your attention and that of your Advisers to any one point, however important. It is their desire that the whole subject of the defence of Canada should be considered in a comprehensive spirit.[13]

By the fall Jervois was once again in Canada to advise and report on Canadian defence. His second report, presented to the Canadian Government in November 1864, was notably different from his previous one. The Canadians had asked specifically for a reconsideration of the possibility of defending the areas west of Kingston and as the Canadian

government now indicated that it was considering the establishment of a proper naval base for Lake Ontario, Jervois felt that circumstances were sufficiently altered to warrant a re-assessment. Jervois' new report could be divided into two parts. The first gave consideration to the defence of the area east of Montreal, Jervois carefully noting that Montreal was the limit of direct communication for ocean steam ships. As before he proposed permanent works to cover both Montreal and Quebec, again pointing out the importance of each city. From a purely military point of view the lower province must always be the more important but there was now a second part to consider,namely the area to the west of Montreal. For this area Jervois wanted to fortify Kingston and construct permanent works to defend Toronto and Hamilton against an attack from Lake Ontario. He detailed the means by which a force relying on successive lines of defense could defend the western areas and also made suggestions for the provision of gun-boats, the improvement of particular lines of communication and the construction of works which might be thrown up in time of war. Nevertheless, a great deal would still depend on the Canadian Government taking the initiative in widening the Ottawa and Rideau canals.

In terms of manpower, a force of 90,000 men would be required to defend the country from Kingston to Quebec while an additional 50,000 would be needed to cover the western-most areas if these also came under heavy attack. If the defending forces were in proper strength and all the necessary preparations made, the enemy would need at least 250,000 to 300,000 men to attack both the upper and the lower province simultaneously. Jervois reasoned that British naval activity on the Atlantic seaboard would pin down a large number of American troops and cut the striking force available for the main operations of a Canadian

invasion to about 150,000 men. In this case the enemy would be sure to concentrate on the lower province and the defenders' resources must then be deployed in such a way as to counter this threat. The total cost of Jervois' proposals, including all military works, purchase of land and gun-boats was now Ŀ1,754,000. Work at the Quebec and Montreal, the principal positions, was to cost L200,000 and L443,000 respectively.[14]

The Canadian Government was in agreement with the new proposals and Jervois informed the Secretary of State for War that the Canadians were now "ready to meet the mother country in a fair and becoming spirit in carrying out the measures which are requisite for the defence of Canada."[15] Having again stressed the absolute need for fortifications in Canada, Jervois further observed, "The question appears to be; ____ whether the British force now in Canada shall be withdrawn, in order to avoid the risk of its defeat, or whether the necessary measures shall be taken to enable that force to be of use for the defence of the province." Many of the "necessary measures" would now depend on Canada herself as the British Government was resolved to spend only in proportion to the commitment made by the Canadians.

Even before Jervois' second report had been presented to the Canadian Government there was considerable alarm caused by an incident at St. Alban's Vermont involving a group of confederate raiders, and the American Government's announced intention to abrogate the Reciprocity Treaty of 1854. The Canadian Government was now prepared to spend one million dollars on the militia and the fortification of Montreal, but only on condition that the British Government proceed with the recommendations made for upgrading Quebec's defences. In Britain, however, Gladstone was object- ing to any scheme to fortify Quebec, and outside the British cabinet the opponents of the government were calling for a complete withdrawal of the British regulars from Canada.

Nonetheless, the Defence Committee of Great Britain, whose membership included both the Duke of Cambridge and Sir John Fox Burgoyne, gave its full endorsement to Jervois' second report and confirmed the vital importance of Quebec as a base for defensive operations. Quebec would serve the army in Canada as Torres Vedras had served the Duke of Wellington during the Peninsular War. If necessary the army could find shelter and refuge at Quebec and be replenished there by the Royal Navy. The fact that Jervois' optimism over the success of naval operations against the American seacoast was not shared by the Admiralty, who looked upon the augmented American navy and strengthened coastal defences with dismay, did not seem to matter. Nor were the precise measures for gaining a naval dominance on the lakes detailed with any clarity. On this question too the Admiralty itself was most pessimistic.[16]

Gladstone's opposition to any expenditure on Canadian defence continued and, although he admitted that Britain would be obliged to help if Canadians were in earnest, improvements at Quebec would be quite sufficient. Personally he was convinced of the futility of any defence scheme and his notion was gaining support. In any case consideration of the whole matter was postponed as it was generally agreed that the confederation of the provinces of British North America then pending, was of more immediate importance. Britain would proceed to strengthen Quebec and secure its harbour and it was hoped the Canadians might at least make a start at Montreal.

In April 1865 the American Civil War came to an end, and much to the relief of Canadians, the victorious Union armies were soon disbanded. Even as the American threat receded, a new one took its place in the form of filibustering by the Fenians, an Irish-American organization obsessed with a hatred of England's presence in Ireland and determined to strike a blow at her wherever and

whenever possible. The Fenian troubles continued for several years, but at the end of 1867 the general situation for Canada looked much more optimistic than it had during the civil war. Confederation of the British North American provinces had been achieved and Britain was busy with improvements at both Quebec and Halifax. The final outcome of the Civil War had altered the balance of power in North America very much in favour of the United States, but the new commanding officer in Canada, Sir John Michel, supported by Colonel P.L. MacDougall, Adjutant-General of the Canadian militia, argued strongly in favour of Canada's defencibility in case of attack from the south.[17] The question of Canada's contribution to defence costs and the continued presence of the British regulars, however, now demanded a solution.

By February 1868 the British Government wanted to know why the Canadians had done nothing about fortifying Montreal and were not carrying out the committment made in 1865 to construct permanent works once confederation had been achieved. Some reinforcements had been sent to Canada because of the Fenians, but the Colonial Secretary now announced new withdrawals. The Canadian Government protested but in December a new Liberal Government headed by Gladstone took office in Great Britain and the process of withdrawal moved to its final conclusion.

Cardwell, the new Secretary of State for War, was embarking on a programme of army reform which would give Britain "an efficient defensive Force at a greatly reduced cost". Having explained to Gladstone that "The withdrawal of Troops from distant Stations is at the bottom of the whole question of Army Reform" he went on to outline his proposals. By cutting the "force abroad" from 50,000 men to 26,000, Britain would reduce her expenditures and

make enlistment at home seem more attractive. The concentration of troops in Britain would be increased and further reform of the army itself, and Britain's military organization in general, could take place. Of the 26,000 men to remain abroad, some 19,000 would garrison the "Imperial Stations", the remainder being assigned to the "Contributing Colonies". Significantly Cardwell did not choose to list Quebec among the "Imperial Stations". With the mechanism of withdrawal set in motion, however, the status of this fortress would now have to be settled. In Lord Granville's words, they must now answer the "practical question" as to whether Quebec was to be considered an "Imperial or a Colonial Fortress".[18]

The basis for the final decision lay in a gradually evolving concept of defence in which strategists were beginning to consider defence plans for Britain and her possessions as a whole unit and not simply as separate isolated concerns. In practical terms, the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries had already seen the handling of defence matters on an "imperial" scale, especially in wartime, at least in so far as they related to the movement of troops, garrison reinforcement and replacement, and general naval deployment. In the years prior to the final British withdrawal from Canada a true consciousness of imperial defence planning was taking shape. The basis of Britain's imperial strength was her navy:

> ...by 1860 the British were apparently moving more rapidly towards a proper appreciation of their real strength and weakness, towards the abandonment - outside the United Kingdom - of general schemes of fortification which drained off their money and dissipated their scarce soldiers, and towards the deployment instead of an overwhelming naval strength based on a few select fortresses.[19]

17 Sir John Fox Burgoyne. (*National Army Museum, Great Britain*.)

In 1856 General Burgoyne had written a plan of defence for Britain's "foreign possessions" in which he carefully separated the fortresses of Gibralter, Malta, Corfu, Bermuda and Mauritius from the others. These fortresses would have to be maintained by Britain, but the rest were "...so numerous that the task of endeavouring much protection to all is hopeless...". In those colonies which had already acquired a degree of self-government, defence would be their own burden, with support and co-operation coming from Britain in "varying degree", chiefly in the form of warlike stores and troop reinforcements. Fleet stations, like St. Helena, Ascension and the Falkland Islands were essential to the navy and thus "worthy of attention". Burgoyne further noted that "At all foreign stations, it is of the greatest importance to obtain the utmost amount of cordial local co-operation in assisting to repel foreign aggression..."[20]

Six years later, in September 1862, Burgoyne was again expressing essentially the same ideas as he wrote a memorandum concerned with a recent report done by a special Defence Committee on the state of colonial defences.[21] The Committee had been charged with reporting on the defences of the colonies (excepting Gibralter and Malta) and with making recommendations on their continuance by Britain. The committee found that the colonies could by divided into two groups. There were those in which fortifications were essential "for some general object of national policy" and those "in which they are required, if at all, exclusively for local defence". The practical suggestions of the Committee were confined to the former, being positions of real importance to Britain:

> Some Colonies occupy such commanding positions on the globe, or are so situated with reference to other countries, that they are essential to the general power

> of the Empire, and call for permanent fortifications capable of prolonged defence. Examples of this class are the Mediterranean fortresses, Bermuda and Halifax.[22]

Others such as the Cape of Good Hope, Mauritius, and Hong Kong, although not of pre-eminent military importance, contributed materially to the safety of the principal routes of maritime traffic and were therefore valuable to British commercial interests. There were also places of "rendez-vous" for forces to be employed in the protection of British territory and trade. Certain locations in the West Indias and Trincomalee in Ceylon were among these.

In its assessment of Canadian defences, the Committee referred specifically to Quebec, "the place through which all succours from Great Britain to Canada must pass", and felt it should be maintained as a first class fortress. Quebec, Kingston and Montreal, though the Committee refrained from any elaboration on them were listed among those places to be maintained at Britain's expense, all three being positions which "involve an Imperial interest". Halifax, however, was given a separate distinction, being required for "national objects". If this separation was unclear, reference to a table prepared by the Committee provided further explanation of the relative importance attached to the various stations under consideration. The Quebec defences were reported as having some 195 guns while Halifax had 193, Kingston 71 and Montreal only 3. Much more significant was the fact that only Britain's North American naval stations, Halifax and Bermuda, had received the new 110-pounder Armstrong guns. Halifax had ten of them while Bermuda had twenty-four. Quebec had none. Bermuda had a total of 205 guns, of all types: only the defences of the Ionian Islands in the mediterranean had more, with 430 pieces. The reductions proposed would cut the number of guns at Quebec to 105 and those at Halifax to 182.

18 Edward Cardwell by G. Richmond. (*Public Archives Canada*.)

No reductions were suggested for Bermuda or the Ionian Islands.[23]

Gladstone for one, was not impressed by Quebec. In his critique of the proposals being made for Canadian defence by Gordon's commission of 1862 and in Jervois' first report, he registered a strong objection:

> ...I must protest against the doctrine that Quebec is in a distinctive sense 'an Imperial port'. I think that doctrine involves a seeming claim as against Canada, which we should do well to eschew; while, as regards ourselves, I would steadily avoid appropriating the responsibility of defending any city in America or any other distant regions, except such as we can have certain and unbroken access to by sea.[24]

Military authorities in Britain did not see the fate of Canada as particularly vital to the conduct of a war against the United States. It was a weak point, not a decisive theatre of operations. Great offensives such as Metcalfe had dreamed of would not take place. In Canada, Britain was clearly on the defensive and it was intended that the real conflict would be fought at sea where Britain was strongest. A defence of Canada might distract American energies and resources but it was to be the attacks on American shipping and the harassment and blockade of their Atlantic coastline which were to be the essential operations leading to a British victory. None of this could make Canadians enthusiastic, nor could the general pessimism over Canadian defence encourage them to spend lavishly, only to be treated as pawns sacrificed to more important ends. In turn Canada's reluctance to shoulder the financial burdens of defence only made matters worse.[25]

When Cardwell presented his proposed redistribution of the army to Parliament in 1869 he had already decided that Quebec should become a Canadian and not an imperial respon-

sibility. The intention was still to leave a small body of regulars in Canada to help with the training of Canadian volunteers but by February 1870 it was decided to withdraw completely. Only at Halifax would Britain retain a garrison. In May 1869 Colonel Jervois had prepared yet another report on Canada's defences, in which he was even more pessimistic than he had been in his first study, presented in February 1864. The whole of the Canadian frontier could not be defended. The new defences at Quebec were well on their way to completion but nothing had been done at Montreal and this seemed to compromise the work done at Quebec. Montreal would probably fall quickly and even Quebec might not be able to hold out.[26]

To the last the Duke of Cambridge objected to the abandonment of Quebec City and insisted it be maintained as an imperial post, at least to encourage Canadians to construct the works needed at Montreal. Stating that both Halifax and Quebec were stations of imperial importance he argued for a combined peace strength garrison of 6,200 men. Both Jervois' report and a new one done by Colonel MacDougall insisted on the retention of both positions as the keys in maintaining the connection with Britain,[27] but neither Cardwell nor Gladstone were moved. The Canadians continued to argue against a complete withdrawal again stressing the value of Quebec, but during the summer of 1870 the British regulars gave up their remaining posts in the interior and on November 11, 1871 the last British regulars left Quebec city.

## CONCLUSIONS

The course of events during the conquest of New France, and subsequently during the American Revolution clearly pointed out the salient features of Quebec's strategic position. The defence of New France, like that of British North America in a later period, was dependant on safe communications with the mother country in Europe and Quebec was recognized as the key link in those communications. To the British during the Seven Years War Quebec's capture was the only certain way to end French resistance in the interior. Yet Quebec's role as the principal entrepôt of the St. Lawrence, was not her only possible function. She could also be a stronghold against a hostile interior. Twice in the eighteenth century the retention of Quebec (over the winter of 1759-1760 and again in 1775-1776) in conjunction with a superior naval presence, enabled Britain to keep a toe-hold in Canada. Quebec provided the "*tête-du-pont*" from which reinforcements could force their way up the St. Lawrence and into the Canadian interior. After the Conquest and throughout much of the nineteenth century Canadian defence was dependant on British resources and the strategic role of Quebec as delineated in the eighteenth century continued to be valid until the withdrawal of the British army in 1871.

In the broader context of Canadian defence, the strategic significance of Quebec and what became known as Lower Canada, was set against the desirability of defending the regions to the west of Montreal. The problem had existed in Montcalm's day but was greatly magnified following the War of 1812 as the population of Upper Canada increased. Could Upper Canada be held while still ensuring the safety of the lower province and particularly Quebec? After 1783 there was a constant possibility of aggression

from the south and prior to the War of 1812 the answer to this question seemed firmly in the negative. Although there was some disagreement, it was clear enough that the lower province, because of the importance of its communication with Great Britain, must be given every priority in defence. As the American attack seemed likely to be overwhelming and the defending field force too small, those responsible for the defence of Canada comptemplated a complete withdrawal on Quebec. There they would await the reinforcements needed to launch a recovery. Under such conditions Quebec's importance was given great emphasis, apparently at the expence of everything else.

The successful defence of Upper Canada during the War of 1812 was unexpected. Nevertheless, the result in the post war years was a deliberate attempt to develop a scheme whereby the whole of the inhabited interior could be protected. The problem of Canadian defence was essentially one of communication along a lengtly and vulnerable frontier exposed to attack from the south. Wellington and others stressed the absolute importance of finding an alternative route to the upper St. Lawrence and further encouraged the development of inland communications to avoid a naval race on the lakes, which they could not win. In the 1820's Quebec's importance as the base for any defensive system was clearly acknowledged in the construction of a citadel, but at the same time military planners were no longer thinking simply in terms of a withdrawl on Quebec to await reinforcements. Instead there were plans for powerful fortresses at Montreal, Kingston and on the Niagara. Montreal's importance as the strategic and commercial heart of Canada was referred to repeatedly, as was its virtual defencelessness. Three key points of strategic value were recognized - Quebec, Montreal and Kingston.

But the Wellingtonian schemes of the 1820's foundered. They were too expensive to have much appeal to the British government and were caught in the drive for economy. Political relations between the mother country and Canada became the important issue and while men like Wellington were confident, others doubted whether Canada could or even should be made defensible. In the 1840's the large scale fortifications schemes were set aside and British statesmen contemplated the withdrawal of the garrisons then in Canada.

Meanwhile the potential military strength of the United States had continued to grow, being fully displayed in the 1860's during the Civil War. Britain reacted quickly with a show of force over the "Trent Affair", but a deep pessimism soon set in. A renewed scheme of fortifications to protect Canada was proposed and was again found unsuitable. Lieutenant Colonel Jervois submitted a gloomy report suggesting the complete abandonment of Upper Canada in order to establish a strong defensive line based on Montreal and Quebec. The harbour of the latter was to be well protected to cover the arrival of reinforcements - or the withdrawal of the entire regular force. A subsequent report attempted to alter such pessimism but the British Government moved steadily towards a complete withdrawal of her forces from Canada.

Once the decision to withdraw was made the status of Quebec became an important question. Was Quebec to be considered as a position of imperial importance or merely as a local concern? As long as Britain was willing to accept direct responsibility for Canadian defence, Quebec had to be maintained as a vital strategic link in communications. But now British politicians were determined that Canadians should be responsible for their own defence and although the traditional role of entrepot would continue, Quebec's

significance to Britain was now much diminished. Moreover it was clearer than ever that that the real strength of the Empire was dependent on the Royal Navy and those fortresses which could sustain the fleet. The Canadian interior was a military liability and Quebec was not an important naval station. When the final decision was made, Halifax was retained as an imperial station, and Quebec was not. Indeed from the imperial viewpoint it had always been assumed that in a future North American war the decisive theatre of action was not Canada, but the Atlantic seacoast of the United States.

Throughout its period as a British garrison town, Quebec had been a symbol of British power in Canada. Following the conquest, a garrison had been installed to "overawe" the local inhabitants and the fortress city served as a principal depot and military headquarters for the army in Canada. Certainly to the untrained eye Quebec's immediate topographical situation seemed to be of immense strength: the Gibraltar of North America. Yet despite its acknowledted importance, Quebec was no Gibraltar. Fears may have been exaggerated, in view of the obvious difficulties which an American army would have had in assembling a powerful siege train at Quebec, but for sixty years British engineers pressed the home government to make the improvements which would turn the city into a position of real strength. The Quebec citadel was not started until 1820 and by 1860 new revisions were required to protect the town and particularly the harbour. In one sense Quebec seemed to have come a full circle. At the close of the British period Quebec was still tactically weak though a principal entrepôt of Canadian communications with Britain. On the imperial scale, however, interest had moved elsewhere. Quebec was no longer a British concern.

# Endnotes

## The "key of french America"

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19 Ibid.

20 PAC, MG 11, CO 42/136, pp. 167-71, Gore to Craig, 5 January 1808.

21 PAC, MG 11, CO 42/136, pp. 183-86, Craig to Erskine, 13 May 1808.

22 PAC, MG 11, CO 42/136, p. 189. Craig to Cooke, 15 July 1808.

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24 PAC, MG 11, CO 42/73, pp. 216-217, Dorchester to Grenville, 14 June 1791; R.G. 8, C 381, pp. 20-32, A General View and Explanation of the several Services carried on in the Engineer Department in the Province of Quebec in the year 1789, 22 September 1789; Ibid. pp. 60-77, A General Statement of Services performed in the Engineer's Department in the Province of Quebec in the year 1790, with the Works proposed to be carried on in

1791; Ibid., C 1707, pp. 4-15, Prevost to Liverpool, 18 May 1812.

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26 PAC, RG 8, C 383, p. 172-188, Mann to Hunter, 1 August 1804, Report on the Defences of the City of Quebec.

27 PAC, MG 11, CO 42/129, pp. 393-396, Mann to Chatham, 22 March 1805 and p. 397-8, Report of the Committee of Royal Engineers on the Quebec Papers, 14 march 1805; RG 8, C 384, pp. 102-3, Mann to Hunter, 27 July 1805.

28 PAC, MG 11, CO 42/134, p. 45, Brock to Dunn, 17 July 1807.

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35 PAC, MG 11, CO 42/136, p. 128, Craig to Castlereagh, 12 July 1808.

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37 PAC, MG 11, CO 42/129, pp. 397-8, Report of the Committee of Royal Engineers on the Quebec Papers, 14 march 1805.

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40 Ibid., p.9.

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1 C.P. Stacey, "An American Plan for a Canadian Campaign, American Historical Review, Vol. XLVI, No. 2, January 1941, p. 348.

2 PAC, MG 11, Q 137, p. 324-331, Sherbrooke to Bathurst, 16 December 1816.

3 PAC, MG 11, Q 139, p. 58-9, Entract, Bathurst to Drummond, 10 October 1815.

4 PAC, MG 11, Q 139, p. 57, 60-1, Foster to Nicolls, 1 January 1816 and 2 January 1816; Bathurst to Drummond 10 October 1815.

5 PAC, MG 11, Q 139, p. 63-64, Nicolls to Mann, 23 December 1815.

6 PAC, MG 11, Q 139, pp. 52-3, Mann to Mulgrave, 24 April 1816.

7 PAC, MG 11, Q 139, p. 138, Harrison to Goulburn, 15 October 1816.

8 Karl Raudzens, "The British Ordnance Department in Canada 1815-1855", (Doctoral thesis, Yale University, 1970), pp. 78-9; McGill University, Hardinge Collection, "Brief Notices of the Military Services of Lieut. General Sir John Harvey", 1842.

9 Raudzens, p. 78.

10 PAC, MG 11, Q 149, p. 124, Richmond to Bathurst, 10 November 1818.

11 _Despatches, Correspondence and Memoranda of field Marshall the Duke of Wellington_, edited by his son, the Duke of Wellington, (London, John Murray, 1868), vol. 1 pp. 36-44, Wellington to Bathurst, 1 March 1819.

12 Glenn A. Steppler, "Logistical Considerations in the Canadian War of 1812", (Master's thesis, McGill University, 1974) pp. 142-9.

13 McGill University, Hardinge Collection, marginal comments by Hardinge dated 1825 on Wellington to Bathurst, 1 March 1819.

Hardinge was a close friend of Wellington and had been made Clerk of the ordnance in 1823.

14 <u>Despatches, Correspondence and Memoranda of field Marshall the Duke of Wellington</u>, (London, John Murray, 1868), vol. 2, p. 439, Wellington to Griffin, 11 April 1825.

15 Ibid., vol. 2, p. 574, Wellington to Bathurst, 6 December 1825.

16 David Lee, <u>Isle-aux-Noix: 1759-1870</u>, Manuscript Report Series, No. 40 (Ottawa - Parks Canada, 1965), p.37-8.

17 On occasion, depending on circumstances, headquarters might be momentarily transferred elsewhere, accompanying the person of the commander of the Forces, as he moved to be closer to the frontier, for example to Montreal. Important officers, such as the commissary - General would accompany him, but always left at least a skeleton staff at Quebec.

18 Steppler, pp. 109-112.

19 PAC, MG 24, F 23, p. 51 de Gangreben, "Memoir on the places which ought to be fortified for the Defence of Lower Canada against the Americans", enclosed in de Gangreben to Nicolls, 1 June 1815.

20 Murray to Melville, 27 March 1815, cited in Gerald G. Graham, "Views of General Murray on the Defense of Upper Canada, 1815", Canadian Historical Review, vol. 34, no.2, June 1953, p. 162.

21 PAC, MG 11, Q 137, p. 324-31, Sherbrooke to Bathurst, 16 December 1816; Q. 149, p. 62-4 and p. 122-9, Richmond to Bathurst, 11 August and 10 November, 1818.

22 Despatches, Correspondence and Memoranda of field Marshall the Duke of Wellington, vol 1, p. 36, Wellington to Bathurst, 1 March 1819.

23 Mary Durnford, Family Recollections, (Montreal, 1864), p. 86.

24 Despatches, Correspondence and Memoranda of field Marshall the Duke of Wellington, vol 1, pp. 170-4, Wellington to Arbuthnot, 1 June 1821.

25 Ibid., vol 1, p. 111, Wellington to Crew, 23 March 1822.

26 Raudzens, pp. 37-46.

27 PAC, MG 11, Q 159, p. 190, Hill to Goulburn, 13 March 1821.

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29 PAC, RG 8 II, vol. 6, Copy of a Report to this Grace The Duke of Wellington .... Relative to His Majesty's North American Provinces .... 1825, p. 3.

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33 PAC, MG 11, Q 161, pp. 322-5, Dalhousie to Bathurst, 16 December 1822; Q. 180, p. 121, General Order, 30 October 1826.

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35 PAC, RG 8, II, vol. 14, pp. 1-27, Carmichael-Smyth to Mann, 31 March 1826, "Memoranda respecting the proposed new Works and Improvements in the Canadas".

36 _Despatches, Correspondence and Memoranda of field Marshall the Duke of Wellington_, vol. 2, pp. 574-5, Wellington to Bathurst, 6 December 1825.

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1 McGill University, Hardinge Collection, notes, 1828, entitled "Supp. Canada"; Great Britain Parliament. _The Parliamentary Debates_, Hansard, New Series, (London: T.C. Hansard, 1829), vol. XIX, 22 April-28 July 1828, pp. 1628-9; Great Britain Parliament. _Parliamentary Papers_, (London, 1828), no. 420, vol. V, Second Report from the Select Committee on the Public Income and Expenditure of the United Kingdom - Ordnance Estimates, p. 26, 74-6.

2 *Despatches, Correspondence and Memoranda of Field Marshall the Duke of Wellington*, (London, John Murray, 1868), vol. 4, p. 389, Evidence of Field Marshall His Grace the Duke of Wellington on the Defences of British North America, House of Commons, 15 April 1828.

3 Great Britain. Parliament. *Parliamentary Papers*, (London, 1828) no. 420, vol. V, Second Report from the Select Committee on the Public Income and Expenditure of the United Kingdom - Ordnance Estimates, p. 74, Evidence of Sir Henry Hardinge, 24 March 1828.

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6 Ibid., p. 1636.

7 *Despatches, Correspondence and Memoranda of Field Marshall the Duke of Wellington*, (London, John Murray, 1868), vol. 4, pp. 389-92, Evidence of Field Marshall His Grace the Duke of Wellington on the Defences of British North America, House of Commons, 15 April 1828.

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10 Raudzens, pp. 200-1.

11 John Oliver Dendy, "The Strategic Importance of Kingston: A Study of the Role played by the British Base at Kingston, Ontario in the Defence of Canada, 1778-1854", (Master's Thesis, Carleton University, Ottawa, 1965), pp. 61-4, 85; Raudzens, pp. 192-3; Saunders, pp. 53-5.

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25 Bourne, p. 236; Preston, p. 51.

26 Hitsman, pp. 213-20.

27 Bourne, pp. 297-300.

Glossary of Terms

Army Extraordinaries - "The allowances to the Troops beyond gross pay in the pay-office come under the head of extraordinaries to the army; such as the expenses for barracks, marches, encampments, staff, etc." (James' Military Dictionary, London, 1816).

Bastion - in fortification terminology refers to "...a part of the inner inclosure of a fortification, making an angle towards the field, and consists of two faces, two flanks, and an opening towards the center of the place called the gorge." (James).

Citadel - "a fort with 4, 5 or 6 bastions, raised on the most advantageous ground about a city, the better to command it; and commonly divided from it by an esplanade, the more effectually to hinder the approach of an enemy; so that the citadel defends the inhabitants if they continue in their duty, and punishes them if they revolt. Besiegers always attack the city first, that, being masters of it, they may cover themselves the better against the five of the citadel. Having bastions, it is thereby distinguished from a castle. Sometimes the citadel stands half within, and half without the ramparts of the place." (James).

Coup de Main - a sudden and unforeseen attack. Usually undertaken at some risk to the assailant, this might, for example, involve a sudden assault on a fortification by escalade i.e. scaling the walls; or perhaps an unexpected attempt to seize the gates.

Enfilade - to sweep the whole length of any work, or line of troops, with artillery or small arms fire. In fortifications, positions vulnerable to enfilade are those "which may be scoured by the enemy's shot along their whole length". (James).

Exterior lines - used in military terminology to describe the strategic situation of an army which possess lines of communication which splay outwards. The inherent strength of exterior lines is that from whichever flank the army strikes, there is on the opposite flank, in the form of its own troops an anvil against which the enemy can be crushed. This is not usually so if the army operates on interior lines. The postulates for the successful employment of exterior lines may be tabulated as follows:

1. Superior numbers, because a longer front has to be held actively.

2. Good communications between the various columns.

3. Resolute and bold subordinate commanders of columns.

4. An attack all along the line, all the time. (Lt. Colonel Alfred H. Burne, The Art of War on Land, London, 1950).

Interior lines - are possessed by an army whose lines of communication close inward. Despite their popularity through much of the Nineteenth century, the real opportunity for decisive results is limited, unless the enemy's line of retreat is obstructed, or unless exceptional speed is used in the pursuit. Time and space to manoeuvre are essential for success and a very delicate judgement is required. The conditions and methods

favourable to the use of interior lines may be summarized as follows:

1. There must be sufficient time and space to manoeuvre (but too much space will defeat the object).

2. The hostile columns must be kept separated.

3. Only one of these columns should be attacked at a time, concentrating superior forces against it.

4. Continue this attack until this column has been definately defeated and disposed of.

5. Always attack somewhere once the enemy has come within effective reach.

N.B. 1. Decisive results can only be expected if the enemy's line of retreat is blocked.

2. Speed is the essence of the operation. (Burne)

<u>Lines of Communication</u> (or Operation) - The line or lines that connect an army with its base (i.e. the locality from which it is supplied). They may be thought of as the vital artery of the army and form an obvious objective for the enemy.

<u>Outworks</u> - "in fortification, are works of several kinds, which cover the body of the place...These outworks not only cover the place, but likewise keep an enemy at a distance, and hinder his gaining any advantage of hollow or rising ground". (James).

Seen in reverse - (Etre vu de Revers) - "to be overlooked by a reverse commanding ground. When a work, for instance, is commanded by some adjacent eminence, or has been so badly disposed, that the enemy can see its terre-pleine, or rampart, that work may be said to be over-looked, être vu de revers." (James).

Tête de pont - that part of a bridge which is on the enemy's side of a river. It can provide access to the enemy's position. The modern english equivalent is bridgehead.

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