

Short title

LOGISTICAL CONSIDERATIONS IN THE CANADIAN WAR OF 1812

STEPPLER

"A DUTY TROUBLESOME BEYOND MEASURE"

LOGISTICAL CONSIDERATIONS IN THE CANADIAN WAR OF 1812

by

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A B S T R A C T

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History

"A DUTY TROUBLE-SOME BEYOND MEASURE"

LOGISTICAL CONSIDERATIONS IN THE CANADIAN WAR OF 1812

The intention of this paper is to determine, in some degree, the extent to which logistical problems affected British military operations during the Canadian War of 1812. An understanding of the regular army's "civil administration," in particular the Commissariat Department, serves as a starting point, while an evaluation of the limits of Canadian agriculture and settlement quickly reveals the basic problem - Canadian resources, even in Lower Canada, were not sufficient to support the forces employed by Britain during the war. Agricultural production, precarious under normal conditions, was further depleted, indeed placed in jeopardy, by the mobilization of the local population for wartime service. Canadian financial reserves were soon exhausted, while martial law became a necessity in Upper Canada due to the apparent unwillingness of the people to furnish supplies. The physical difficulties of transportation in both provinces were made worse by the absence of a regular military transport service; the use of local magistrates in the upper province and the corvée in Lower Canada soon proved unsatisfactory substitutes. The conduct of the war was dominated by the need to consider carefully the problems of supply and movement, and the effectiveness of offensive operations was too easily neutralized by such difficulties. Yet, despite such facts, the size of the Commissariat's staff was never adequate to satisfy the Commissary-General, nor to fulfil completely the duties expected of his department. Nevertheless, in a war which was little distinguished, after the death of Brock, by spectacular military exploits, the logistical achievements of the British Commissariat were impressive.

EXTRAIT

Maîtrise

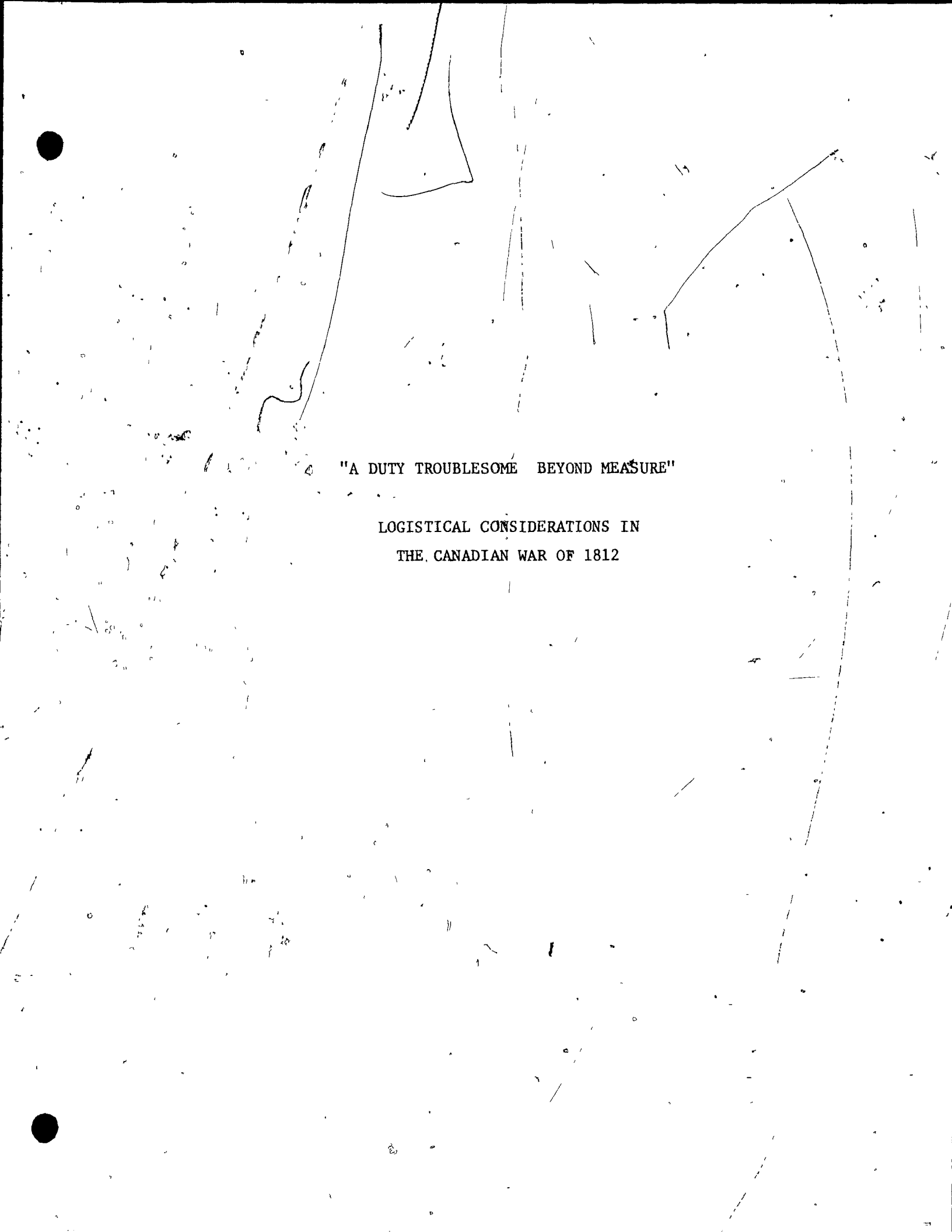
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Histoire

"UN PROBLEME OUTRE MESURE"

PROBLEMES LOGISTIQUES DE LA GUERRE DE 1812

Le but de ce travail est de déterminer l'influence des problèmes logistiques sur les activités militaires britanniques au Canada durant la guerre de 1812. Comme point de départ nous étudions l'administration dite "civile" de l'armée régulière, en particulier le service de l'Intendance, alors qu'une analyse des ressources canadiennes nous donne le coeur du problème - la production agricole, même au Bas-Canada, ne suffit pas au ravitaillement de l'armée. La production agricole, déjà précaire en temps normal, fut grandement touchée sinon paralysée par la mobilisation de la population locale pour la guerre. Les ressources financières canadiennes furent rapidement épuisées, alors que la loi martiale devint nécessaire dans le Haut-Canada à cause de la réticence de la population de fournir des provisions. Les difficultés physiques du transport dans les deux provinces furent aggravées par l'absence d'un service militaire régulier de communication; l'appel aux magistrats locaux dans le Haut-Canada et le recours aux corvées dans le Bas-Canada s'avérèrent très tôt insuffisants. La conduite des opérations de la guerre est dominée par l'analyse continue des problèmes d'approvisionnement et de mouvement des troupes qui, bien souvent, neutralisent le succès d'une offensive. Mais, même si l'influence de ces problèmes sur la guerre est certaine, le personnel au service de l'Intendance est incapable de satisfaire aux demandes du Commissaire général ni aux besoins de son service en temps de guerre. De toute façon dans une guerre qui, après la disparition de Brock, n'a rien de spectaculaire, les exploits du service de l'Intendance britannique pour répondre aux besoins de ravitaillement de l'armée sont remarquables.



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"How zealously soever a general, in such an undertaking as mine, may be served by the chiefs of departments (and much praise is due from me upon that score) for one hour he can find to contemplate how he shall fight his army, he must allot twenty to contrive how to feed it."

Lieutenant-General J. Burgoyne,
A State of the Expedition from Canada,
London, 1780, p. 128.

PREFACE

An account of battles won and lost cannot tell the full story of a conflict or in any way explain its results. Though popular attention is necessarily centered on the battlefield, it must be realized that the field commanders would not be in a position to win or lose battles if their supply services broke down. This was particularly true along the Canadian frontier during the War of 1812, when armies could not be supported for long solely on local resources, and every fighting man, including many of the Indian warriors, had to be maintained by a long line of communication extending across Lake Ontario, through Kingston, Montreal and Quebec, ultimately to the British Isles. Unless the routine work of supply and administration was performed adequately, battles and even garrisons would not have been possible.

If battle is largely a risk to be hazarded, its outcome often decided more by chance, then the foundations for success in war must be found in those aspects less susceptible to luck. Effective supply and administration are basic requirements for military success. They are the governing and limiting factors of strategy. "Logistics" is a word of modern usage and broad application. Contemporary American writers have defined it as "that branch of the military art that

comprises everything relating to the movement and supply of troops."¹

Derived from the Greek word *logistikos* meaning "skilled in calculating," it has come to embrace a wide range of activities which have one common aim: to enable an army to live, move and fight.

It is the intention of this study to explore the influence of logistical problems on the course of the Canadian War of 1812, as exemplified by Lieutenant-General Drummond's campaign on the Niagara in 1814. To what extent was the question of logistics a decisive factor in producing a series of inconclusive campaigns on the Canadian frontier? Considerable attention must be focused on one particular department of the British army in Canada - the Commissariat. For although the Commissariat was not the only department dealing in what might now be termed logistical matters, it was clearly by far the most important one. The strain of war and those uniquely Canadian conditions involved commissariat officers in an endless mire of "support" problems. The availability of local Canadian resources was a primary consideration around which all military operations had to be fashioned and this aspect therefore deserves particular attention. The problems faced by Drummond's army on the Niagara peninsula in 1814 were seen in some form, to a greater or lesser degree, all along the Canadian frontier from Michilimackinac to Quebec and Halifax.

¹Historical Section, Army Headquarters, Introduction to the Study of Military History for Canadian Students, Ottawa, 1951, p. 37.

The form adopted in this thesis, particularly with regard to abbreviations, capitalization and footnotes is based on that used in the second series of the "Studies in Irish History," recent works using contemporary editorial practices. Footnote references for all materials (whether originals, microfilm or transcripts) consulted at the Public Archives in Ottawa, are prefaced with the abbreviation "P.A.C." Record Group appears as "R.G." and Manuscript Group as "M.G." War Office and Colonial Office designations, "W.O." and "C.O." are also used where applicable, i.e., for transcripts and microfilm copies of documents kept at the Public Record Office in London, England. It should also be mentioned that first name initials have been retained, in addition to last names, in all footnote references to correspondence. This, and the retention of despatch numbers (when they were used) has been done to avoid any confusion between correspondents who shared the same last name (e.g., James Drummond and Sir Gordon Drummond; William H. Robinson and Frederick P. Robinson) and on those occasions when more than one letter was written on the same day, passing between the same correspondents. The original spelling and punctuation in quotations has been retained as far as possible.

I would like to express my appreciation to my father, Dr. H. A. Stepler, Professor of Agronomy at Macdonald Collège, for his advice concerning agricultural matters, and to Professor Hereward Senior of the History Department at McGill University for his kind attention and helpful criticism.

-- Glenn A. Stepler

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CHAPTER ONE

LOGISTICS AND THE CIVIL ADMINISTRATION OF AN ARMY

Although I should have wished it, I am apprehensive I shall not have it in my power to forward any further reinforcements to the Right Division, from the inability of the Commissariat to supply Provisions. And in fact I even dread their failing in due supplies to those already ordered there.¹

Lieutenant-General Sir Gordon Drummond, administrator and military commander in Upper Canada, was not only apprehensive over the supply of provisions for his troops on the Niagara frontier, but was already fearful that it might preclude the possibility of their reinforcement. At the time this letter was written the renewed American invasion of the Niagara frontier in 1814 had already resulted in a sharp reverse to British arms, yet it had scarcely begun. The worst of Drummond's problems lay in the future, but the material limitations on planning and strategy had already made themselves unpleasantly prominent. Suggesting plans of operation and devising strategems was one thing, but to assemble the means for their execution was another. What ought to be done did not necessarily coincide with what could be done. Nor could any strategy be put into operation without careful and intelligent planning.

¹Lieutenant-General Sir Gordon Drummond to Sir George Prevost, 15 July 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 684, p. 103).

Given any military force the primary requirements have always been the provision of food, clothing, equipage and shelter for the troops; of animals and vehicles with the forage or fuel they might consume; of weapons, equipment and the expendables of fire or missile power. From these basic requirements are derived subsidiary ones constituting a variety of services to ensure the effective performance of men, animals, weapons and equipment. While consumable and expendable items make up the bulk of an army's vital supply needs, usable items predominate among its fighting needs. Barring any disastrous loss of equipment, the problem of sustaining a force already provided with its basic weapons and equipment is predominantly one of maintaining a supply of the consumable and expendable items and to only a minor degree one of replacing usable articles.

Historically, then, food, forage and fuel have been the chief items of supply and until the nineteenth century and the great expansion in firepower, missiles and ammunition were required in much smaller quantities. Due to man's uncompromising dependence on a regular food supply, the provisioning of an army has always been the basic logistical task. Though a single man might survive without food for as long as five weeks, he becomes useless for any military purpose long before that. Without water he perishes in four or five days. An army might lose all its weapons, equipment and animals and yet still survive, but deprived of food it soon ceases to exist.

Fighting power, mobility and range of movement are essential attributes to any military force. Each of these depends on physical ingredients which must be transported and which therefore must be divided among the available means of conveyance. An increase in fighting power requires more troops, weapons and equipment on the battlefield; increased mobility demands more and faster means of conveyance, with the necessary support in men, animals, forage, fuel and food; increased range of movement means increases in everything that is consumed, and quite likely additional transport. Given a fixed amount of transport, an increase in fighting power must coincide with a reduction in mobility and range. Increased mobility diminishes fighting power and range of movement, while an increase in range will place new limits on mobility and fighting power. The logistician's problem is to achieve an optimum balance among all three elements.²

In 1812 the logisticians of the British army were drawn from several "departments." By this time Great Britain's involvement, since 1793, in the struggle with France had wrought many changes in her military machinery. Yet Britain's military institutions still bore the distinct stamp of previous times, of custom and tradition. The organization and administration of the army's supply services in the first decade of the nineteenth century were not exceptions to this general pattern. The soldier's clothing, food, weapons, accoutrements

²"Logistics," Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1959, XIV, pp. 334a-334b.

and camp equipage came from a variety of sources, handled in the main, at one point or another, by those civilians who constituted the "civil administration of an army."

The functioning of this "civil administration" was totally distinct from, and not associated with the command and government of the army. For the most part the responsibility for such administration rested with the Treasury and its subordinate departments. In the matter of supply, for both army and navy, the duties were divided between the Board of Ordnance, responsible to Parliament on its own, and the Commissariat Department, a subordinate of the Treasury.³ Thus the public treasure to be used in the supply of the army was kept in the hands of these two expending departments of state.⁴ The reasoning for this civilian intrusion into military affairs was traditionally traced back to Britain's experience and constitutional development since the time of Cromwell's commonwealth and the proverbial suspicion with which Parliament scrutinized the affairs of the king's standing army. The civilian commissaries of 1812 were seen as safeguards to both the public treasure and the public interest, being interposed between the army and the Treasury.

The warlike stores, from infantry muskets and bayonets to ammunition for heavy siege artillery, gunpowder and engineer stores

³See Appendix I.

⁴C. M. Clode, The Military Forces of the Crown; their Administration and Government, London, 1869, II, p. 181.

were supplied by the Ordnance Department and were issued at the request of the adjutant-general or the quartermaster-general, the demand being made upon the officer commanding the artillery or the engineers, the two "services" of the military branch of the Board of Ordnance. These stores were almost exclusively manufactured in Great Britain, were sent to the theatre of operations in ordnance storeships and were placed in the custody of ordnance officers. This, however, should not be taken to imply that such stores were at all times in the hands of the Ordnance. On occasion the Commissariat was required to assist in transporting these stores and though this might be true, it was clear that the Commissariat could not intrude into the business of the Ordnance. The civil branch of the Ordnance was the only department, other than the Commissariat, with the authority to spend money, and it guarded its preserves jealously, maintaining its own paymaster, estimates and accounts. Yet even in the matter of fiscal expenditures there were exceptions, and if necessary the Commissariat would negotiate all government bills, including those of the Ordnance, in order to avoid unfavourable competition on the money market between the different departments. This proved to be the case in both the Iberian peninsula and in North America. The Ordnance, while maintaining its independence as a separate agency of certain supplies, was nonetheless dependent on the Commissariat in many respects.

Medical and hospital stores were handled by the Medical Department and the Purveyor. These stores, and also such miscellaneous

items as fuel, candles and stationery might be sent out from England, but most of the food for the sick was purchased locally with imprests advanced by the Commissariat. The camp or field equipment, generally, but inaccurately referred to as the quartermaster-general's stores, was issued on the authority of the quartermaster-general, though, when overseas, it was stored under the care of the Commissariat. These stores were mostly of the type supplied by the storekeeper-general in England and were distributed on a scale decided by the quartermaster-general. Included were not only such items as tents, camp kettles and foraging equipment, but also haversacks, canteens and blankets.⁵

In the line regiments the soldier's clothing and "necessaries"⁶ were supplied by his colonel who paid for them out of an allowance derived from a stoppage in the soldier's pay known as the "off-reckonings." The funds thus obtained were expected to cover the packing and shipping of these articles to wherever the regiment was stationed and a colonel might also expect to derive some profit from the transactions. Such arrangements were made annually, just after Christmas. Ordnance troops and colonial regiments, with the exception

⁵S. G. P. Ward, Wellington's Headquarters, Oxford, 1957, pp. 75-78 and Appendix V, pp. 200-201.

⁶Necessaries "in a military sense are such articles as are ordered to be given to every soldier in the British service, at regulated price." C. James, An Universal Military Dictionary, London, 1816, p. 539. They included such items as drawers, shoes, shirts, socks, gaiters, neck stock and clasp, trousers, knapsack, oil-bottle, worm, brush and picker.

of the West India Regiments, were to be clothed by contracts made with the Board of Ordnance, while the Household Cavalry was provided for out of a fund from which the colonels derived no profit. Thus in normal circumstance the Commissariat was not responsible for the supply and transport of military clothing, but the strain of active campaign usually proved too much for the normal arrangements. Many commanding officers would end up providing extra shoes, shirts and pantaloons - the articles which generally wore the worst. Under these conditions the burden of supply fell upon the Commissariat, which procured them on demand from the quartermaster-general, from supplies either obtained from England or through local contractors.⁷

Though the Commissariat might play a subsidiary role in the supply of clothing, it expended its greatest energies on that most vital matter - the provisioning of the soldiers, beasts of burden and the numerous "non-effectives" which made up an army. The chief concern of the commissariat officer was in the sphere of "flour and forage." He was responsible for the procurement, forwarding, issuing of, and the accounting for, of food rations of various types. In addition to this he found himself charged with the awesome duty of providing all land and inland water transport necessary for the conveyance of the army and its various departments. Yet this was not all, for the Commissariat was also to raise and disburse in accordance

⁷Ward, pp. 78-79; Clode, II, p. 568.

with specified regulations, the whole of the funds required to carry on what was termed the "foreign expenditure" of Great Britain. Certain classes of these payments were made under specific directions from the Treasury, while others were made under warrants from the officers commanding or the colonial governors. In this way an account was constantly maintained between the government in Great Britain and her foreign dependencies, with the commissariat officers acting in effect as sub-treasurers, in overseas possessions, to the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury in London.⁸ In brief, then, apart from these fiscal duties, the Commissariat was to keep in store, and issue, the provisions, forage, fuel and light for the different branches of the service and was also to provide the means of conveyance when necessary. It is clear, therefore, that the Commissariat was the vital link in the line of supply and the logistics of the British army of 1812.

In all of Britain's eighteenth century wars her commissaries were "only employed in the time of war and sought for at the moment of active operations."⁹ In 1809 the special post of commissary-in-chief was created under the Treasury and in 1810 the numbers and allowances of the Commissariat's establishment were fixed by the Crown and regulations laid down for all future appointments and promotions.

⁸Clode, II, pp. 194-195.

⁹Richard Glover, Peninsula Preparation, Cambridge, 1963, Appendix A, p. 256.

A system of ranks and their military equivalents was established and finally confirmed in 1815.¹⁰ With respect to appointments and promotions, the system adopted was similar in form to that introduced by the Duke of York for officers of the regular infantry and cavalry regiments. No person could be admitted to the Commissariat except as a clerk and could not be under sixteen years of age. After one year as a clerk, he would be eligible for the rank of deputy assistant commissary-general, the Commissariat's lowest commissioned rank. From there, with the required experience, he could work his way up, step by step to the rank of commissary-general, with a small fee being deducted from his pay at each step of promotion. After 1810 a commissary-general had to have had at least thirteen years' experience in the Commissariat, while a deputy commissary-general and an assistant commissary-general required a minimum of ten and five years respectively.¹¹

Although the commissariat officer was a civilian representative of the Treasury, entrusted with the use of public monies, he

¹⁰Commissary-general - brigadier general
 deputy commissary-general - lieutenant colonel or major
 assistant commissary-general - captain
 deputy-assistant commissary-general - lieutenant
 commissary clerk - a non-commissioned rank in the
 Commissariat equated to an ensign.

¹¹His Majesty's Regulations for Promotions and Appointments in the Commissariat Department, 19 March 1810, m.s. enclosed in J. W. Gordon, Commissary-in-chief, to Deputy Commissary-General E. Couche, 5 April 1810 (P.A.C., R.G.8, C 115, pp. 38-40); Circular No. 8, 31 January 1814 on fees for promotion (P.A.C., W.O. 58/64, p. 173).

accompanied the army into the field and was consequently made subject to military discipline. By 1812 he held two commissions for the same appointment - one commission from the Treasury and the other from the War Office. His pay arrangements also reflected this dualism, while his dress was that of a soldier. These facts, however, did not go unnoticed and his assumed military character was questioned, though not altered, as the commissariat service was held to be a purely civilian avocation.¹²

The Commissariat was divided into two branches. A Stores Department procured the necessary transport and supplies, forwarded and issued them, while an Accounts Department checked the records made by the stores commissaries at the completion of each tour of duty. Whereas the members of both departments found themselves equally subordinate to their commissary-general, being paid at the same rate, the number of commissaries of accounts who accompanied an army was in minute proportion to the whole. It was generally recognized that the stores branch was the more meritorious of the two and more likely to bring a man to the notice of the commanding military officer.¹³

Nevertheless, a commissary of accounts was the only "civil officer," apart from a commissary-general, to receive his instructions direct

¹²Ward, p. 70; Clode, II, p. 194; General Instructions for an Assistant Commissary-General, ca. 1811 (P.A.C., W.O. 62/45, pp. 105-153, article No. 40).

¹³Ward, p. 76.

from the Treasury. The Accounts Department was also described as being a branch of the Comptrollers of Army Accounts and its staff could expect to be harried with an ever-increasing pile of paper work to which the distances and consequent delays, in an extensive command such as the Canadas, further obstructed the regular examination of accounts. Unlike their fellows in the Stores Department, the officers of the Accounts Department were not assigned any equivalent military rank, as their duties were considered to be strictly of a more civil than military nature.

Commissariat officers, though they might hold both Treasury and War Office commissions, were appointed by and were responsible to the Lords of the Treasury, not to the particular military commander under whom they might be serving, and who nevertheless had to give them orders. The Treasury had its own standing orders on matters such as contracts and accounts and in cases of conflict a commissary-general was instructed to make reference back to his chief in London. In practice the resolution of a commissary-general's divided loyalties depended much on his personal relationship with the officer in command. While it was clear that a general's plans could be at the mercy of a timid commissary-general, it should be pointed out that the commissary's responsibilities, combined with the pressure of spur-of-the-moment decisions did not make his post a particularly enviable one.¹⁴

¹⁴Ibid, p. 32.

At the time of the War of 1812 the commissary-general was responsible to the commander of the force to which he was attached, for the procuring of supplies, the hiring or purchasing of transport, and for the negotiating of the purchase of specie. He was accountable for all his transactions to the Lords of the Treasury and though his arrangements might have to be made in a hurry, he well knew that they would be scrutinized in London, at leisure, long after the event. Previous practice had allowed many accountants acting under his orders, each obtaining credit for imprests, yet accounting directly to the Treasury by themselves. By 1812, however, the commissary-general had been made the sole accountant and he alone was responsible for all his sub-accountants. His difficulties were further increased as the very men whom he was responsible for, could be appointed and dismissed without reference to him. Long after the battle smoke had cleared, or even after the departure of the army for home, he found himself at his depot settling all outstanding claims with his contractors and the local inhabitants. In the course of his duties he was to submit his cash accounts monthly to his commissary of accounts for examination and he in turn forwarded a copy of them to the Auditors of Public Accounts, while also sending a copy of the commissary-general's Store Accounts to the Comptroller of Army Accounts.¹⁵

¹⁵Ibid., p. 73; General Instructions to William Henry Robinson, Commissary-General, 1 September 1810 (P.A.C., W.O. 62/45, article No. 28).

The commissaries of accounts did not have the power to give any final clearance to an account as their duty was mainly to report apparent irregularities to the Treasury. A commissary-general could only be given his quietus, or discharge from accountship, after an examination by the Board of Audit in London. In Spain and Portugal, the special appointment of an auditor-general was felt to have eased the situation somewhat, but this step was not taken in Canada. The second examination, done by the Board of Audit in London, would rarely take place before a lapse of some years from the period of expenditure, when, in all probability many of the parties concerned would be employed elsewhere, had left the service or perhaps were no longer living. It was difficult, if not impossible to obtain explanations on doubtful points or satisfaction on improper ones.¹⁶ After much correspondence and possible re-submissions, a commissary's original transactions might be ten or even twenty years old. One could not envy:

. . . the hard situation of a Commissary-General, who after a long and arduous service on a foreign station returns to England with such an accumulation of accounts and intricate transactions to settle and explain that the Remainder of his Life may be too short to effect the purpose . . .¹⁷

If indeed the commissary in question did die before his quietus was obtained, the Treasury laid its claims against his executors and

¹⁶W.H. Robinson to Sir G. Prevost, 18 October 1813 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 117, pp. 161-165).

¹⁷Ibid., pp. 163-164.

dependents. A commissary's private fortune was thus exposed to the remorseless claims of the Treasury.

It was important that a commissary-general be in close, daily, communication with the military commander under whom he was serving. He had to be alert in ascertaining and analyzing information on a wide variety of subjects which might bear on the procurement and transport of provisions. This could mean local laws, customs and attitudes as well as material objects and physical facts. The nature of his responsibilities forced him to keep an eye out for abuses, especially by contractors who might be engaged, and it followed that money transactions caused him the most anxiety.

In the fiscal sphere, a commissary-general was properly concerned with the negotiation of bills from his own department along with such as might be drawn by the deputy paymaster-general for the pay, subsistence and ordinary expenses of the army. He could also be called upon to negotiate any ordnance or navy bills that might be given over to the Commissariat for that purpose. He was to control the extraordinaries,¹⁸ while the deputy paymaster-general, the

¹⁸Extraordinaries - "The allowance to the troops beyond the gross pay in the Pay-office come under the head of the extraordinaries to the army; such as the expences for barracks, marches, encampments, staff etc." C. James, An Universal Military Dictionary, London, 1816, p. 213.

The money on which the army was maintained under normal circumstances was known as the "Ordinaries." It was a sum disbursed by the Treasury after having been voted by Parliament, and consisted for the most part of pay and allowances.

commissary-general's subordinate colleague and representative of the joint paymasters-general in London, took care of the ordinaries. Though in practice all money in the military chest passed through the commissary-general's account, and the real control of both ordinaries and extraordinaries actually fell to the commissary-general, the chest was nonetheless in the custody of a deputy paymaster-general. Not until 1815 was the safe-keeping of the military chest entrusted to the Commissariat itself.¹⁹

The commissary-general was a key personality in any military operation, but it was obviously essential that he be well seconded by his subordinates.²⁰ Havilland LeMesurier, himself a deputy commissary-general in Flanders (1794-1795), outlined the duties of the deputies commissary-general. In broad terms they were to represent their commissary-general and perform his tasks when and where he could not be present. LeMesurier felt that two such deputies would answer most cases. Ideally one was to attend to the "mode of supplying the army and watching it in all its parts" while the other was to superintend the accounts. In the Canadas additional deputies were required for the various military "districts" in which the army might be operating. It was advisable to keep these deputies quite separate from the issuing commissaries; avoiding involvement in such "laborious detail."

¹⁹J. C. Herries, *Commissary-in-Chief*, to W. H. Robinson, No. 301, 29 April 1815 (P.A.C., W.O. 58/64, pp. 379-380).

²⁰See Appendix II.

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Their proper task was rather to attend to the smooth functioning of the whole system, watching for defects and being available to correct them. They were to have direct communication with the commissary-general and their reports were to be "incessant."²¹

It was therefore on the lower grades of commissaries, the assistants, that the "execution of the Commissariat Duties" fell. They were to choose the sites for their magazines, to attend to the correctness of receipts, returns, accounts and contracts while ensuring that every justice was done to the troops being supplied. Among their duties they undertook the immediate arrangements for labourers, transport, local purchases, the negotiation of bills and the movement of supplies. They were to keep a close watch on the magazines, apply for any guards required, make personal inspections and take account of all stores. They were further to report to their superiors on the available resources of the country. As with every grade of commissariat officer, an important part of their task, and one involving their own security, was the rendering of their monthly vouchers. Since the service could be quite active, a system of forms known as "abstracts" was used in place of cumbersome account books.²² Both they and their immediate inferiors, the deputy-assistants, found themselves the guardians of considerable quantities of paper, pen and ink.²³

²¹Havilland LeMesurier, "A System for the British Commissariat," Glover, Appendix B, pp. 270-271.

²²See Appendix III.

²³General Instructions for an Assistant Commissary-General; LeMesurier, pp. 271-272.

On field service a good deputy-assistant was expected to scour the countryside, searching for the not infrequently "hidden" resources of the land. When hard cash was available it was not such a difficult task to draw forth the unwilling farmer, but when paper promises were all that could be offered, the commissary had to rely on personal tact and in not a few cases, on trickery.²⁴ The mundane routine of the magazines and posts kept by the Commissariat was carried on by the clerks, and those "subordinate Persons," the storekeepers, issuers, conductors, coopers and labourers.

On the whole it would probably be an understatement to say that a commissariat officer was not a very highly regarded citizen. The Duke of Wellington remarked that the prejudice of society almost prevented a commissary receiving the common respect due a gentleman.²⁵ With the continual hounding of an apparently pitiless Treasury after the mismanagement of accounts, and the ever present possibility of court-martial and personal repayment for deficiencies, it is perhaps not so surprising to learn that many in the Commissariat were not overly scrupulous and intended to make profits where possible. Many were dismissed for such irregularities, and while two commissaries-general served terms in Newgate, it was almost expected that frauds would occur. Yet it is also certain that the service did contain more

²⁴Sir Charles Oman, Wellington's Army, London, 1913, pp. 312, 316-318.

²⁵Glover, Appendix A, p. 256.

respectable types who carried on in spite of the temptations, the abuse of army officers and the risks of acting on one's own initiative. These men might be the sons of bankers or merchants, or might themselves be men of more commercial experience who had fallen on hard times and looked to the government for some kind of security.²⁶

It was the usual practice of British armies to rely on civilian contractors to supply their various provisions. This could involve a large and important contractor, such as De Sampaio in Portugal, or numerous smaller local merchants who brought in supplies on a more temporary basis. Both local men and contractors back in Great Britain could find themselves employed in the maintenance of a British army overseas. The contract method meant that it was important for the commissary-general to establish a competition among the prospective contractors. A straight monopoly, though it could provide an easy answer to a commissary's worries, troubled some men's conscience. Yet in certain circumstances it was almost unavoidable, especially if very few merchants were available or willing to come forward.

In war, when an army took the field, a most common method of obtaining the necessary supplies was by ordinary local purchase. Such a purchase might take the form of a simple contract or be a straightforward transaction with a merchant or farmer. Foraging by requisition was a disagreeable task and was generally only employed as a last

²⁶Ward, pp. 71-72.

resort. Such requisitioning could require military escorts and was to be carried out in the presence of a commissariat officer who could either settle or give proper receipts (in lieu of immediate payment) on the spot. If this mode of operation was adopted it was considered to be of importance that a conciliatory attitude be maintained and good relations established with the populace. In this particular, it was recommended that if possible the individual farmer should be paid more regularly than the contractor. The Commissariat had to be certain to fix and make known prices for all articles of provision, yet the procurement of supplies from a reticent population could be a delicate and difficult matter. Naked seizure was certainly not recommended, but was acknowledged to be a possibility, though even in this case it was the commissary's supposed duty to make the necessity apparent and to give compensation. "Embargo" or confiscation under the law, was another possible, yet unpopular option.²⁷

The provisions, whether obtained by purchase, contract or requisition were collected at depots along the line of operations together with any other stores in the care of the Commissariat. The magazines thus established were usually in warehouses or some other suitable building rented for the purpose. The size of any given depot depended on its proximity to the army. Those nearer the front might contain two months' consumption, intermediate stations might provide

²⁷LeMesurier, pp. 278-280; General Instructions for an Assistant Commissary-General, article No. 8; Ward, pp. 81-82.

for reinforcements moving up, while those on the base line might contain enough for more than half a year's expected requirements. In the Canadas such a pattern was made more difficult by the fact that any depot along the lines of communication from the Montreal area westwards was constantly exposed to the threat of direct enemy action.

As Great Britain was a relatively rich nation and as her armies usually acted in friendly or at least neutral territories, she was able to make the greatest use of depots and contractors. The depot system allowed for a more punctual delivery of rations, which the British soldier both expected and needed, the more so as he seemed unable to husband the provisions issued him for more than a few days at one time. Besides this, it was found that a depot arrangement, being more equitable, had a more emollient effect on the local inhabitants than one which tried to make do without any heavy reliance on magazines. In North America it was virtually a necessity as settlement could be sparse and resources few. The depot system was expensive, but the commissary-general possessed an unlimited credit on the Treasury in Great Britain and provided that his bills were accepted by the Lords Commissioners, it was felt certain he could "never want of money as long as Trading towns are within his reach."²⁸

The storage of provisions was one problem but their movement was another. Reliance on the depot system meant the necessity of

²⁸LeMesurier, p. 280.

having regular convoys. In spite of this fact the Treasury was still reluctant to provide a permanently established wagon train for the Commissariat. The formation of the Royal Waggon Train in 1799 had encroached to a small degree on the Treasury's responsibility for land transport and by 1812 the Duke of Wellington, out of necessity, had created his own Commissariat Waggon Train for service in the Iberian peninsula.²⁹ The general rule, however, was still for the Commissariat to obtain land transport through purchase, contract or requisition. The choice of wagon, mule, ox-cart or other method of conveyance ultimately depended on local conditions and resources. In this respect the waterways and the winter season of North America were important factors in determining the Commissariat's mode of operations. Nor did any of the twelve troops of the Royal Waggon Train make an appearance in the Canadas during the 1812-1814 war.

The supply arrangements that existed for the army in 1812 were of cumbersome design. The normally small establishment and the traditional employment of commissaries only at the time of actual conflict meant that such departments as the Commissariat were usually unequal to the task of providing sufficient numbers of experienced men to support an army in the field. In Spain and Portugal the Duke of Wellington had brought the Commissariat up to a proper level of

²⁹On the Irish Establishment there was an "Irish Commissariat Corps of Waggoners," two troops of which were drafted into the Royal Waggon Train in 1808.

efficiency and strength, its numbers being just over 700 men. In the winter of 1811-1812 he had built some 600 bullock carts for the Commissariat and when the advance into Spain commenced there were just under 7,000 commissariat mules attached to his divisions for carrying supplies.³⁰

While inadequate numbers of experienced commissaries might gradually be made good as hostilities continued, the problems of divided authority and responsibility could also hamper the supplying of an army on active service. For in addition to the Board of Ordnance and the Commissariat, both a Transport Board and the Commissioners of Victualling were involved in moving men and supplies overseas. The Commissioners, in pursuance of instructions from the Treasury, would have certain provisions shipped out from England, while the Transport Board could be called upon to provide the freight for these items. Thus contracts made in Ireland and Great Britain with the Victualling Board could provide the flour, salt meat and other provisions for troops in garrison overseas, at places such as Quebec and elsewhere in the Canadas.³¹

The division of responsibility, when combined with the usages of custom and tradition, in matters such as "allowances," "back rations,"

³⁰Lieut. Col. C. H. Massé, The Predecessors of the Royal Army Service Corps, Aldershot, 1948, pp. 13-14.

³¹J. C. Herries to W. H. Robinson, No. 70, 22 August 1812; No. 117, 26 April 1813; No. 136, 12 August 1813; No. 152, 27 October 1813; J. Drummond, in the absence of the Commissary-in-Chief, to W. H. Robinson, No. 184, 21 April 1814; No. 208, 12 July 1814; No. 269, 9 February 1815 (P.A.C., W.O. 58/64, pp. 61, 107-108, 143, 160, 191, 220-221, 349-350).

and "stoppage," or in questions of authority and correct procedure in the handling of certain articles, could easily result in further complications which were neither easy of solution nor, at times, of explanation. Commissary-General William H. Robinson, as head of the Commissariat in the Canadas, not infrequently found himself addressing lengthy letters to the military secretary and others on just such matters. Petty squabbles and jealousy among officials in the various departments of the army, and between naval and military officers, did nothing to ease the problems of supply. In this respect a certain naval captain, Francis Kempt, heading the Transport Office in Quebec, managed to keep up a steady stream of complaints on various topics from candle allowances to the use of "his" seamen on the lakes. He succeeded in annoying both the governor-general and the commandant at Quebec, while conducting an open feud with members of the Quartermaster-General's Department.³² Unfortunately, Kempt's attitude was not unique and reports of imagined or real insults and disagreements over matters bearing on supply would eventually find their way to the commissary-general's desk, adding one more annoyance to his already considerable burden.³³

³²See Captain Francis Kempt to Sir G. Prevost, 18 May 1813; Noah Freer, Military Secretary, to F. Kempt, 5 July 1813; F. Kempt to Sir G. Prevost, 21 December 1813; Major-General G. Glasgow to N. Freer, 6 November 1814; F. Kempt to Maj. Gen. Sir S. Beckwith, 31 December 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 373, pp. 63-65, 74-76, 118-119, 217, 242-245).

³³See similar quarrels at Amherstburg, Prescott, and Kingston: P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 116, pp. 8-9, 35; C 117, pp. 121-129, 133-137, 148-158, 167-176; C 118, pp. 50-67.

In the first instance then, the logistics of 1812 would be affected by the system through which British troops were supplied. It was one which could produce friction where the responsibilities of various authorities overlapped and without a spirit of co-operation, jealousies between departments, and between soldier and civil administrator could do damage to both the "service" and to the contractors who came forward to supply the king's troops. Yet the formal organization of the supply services, having been once adjusted to the temperament of individuals, still remained subject to a host of physical limitations which varied from one area to another.

CHAPTER TWO

THE COMMISSARIAT IN CANADA * PEACE AND WAR

Appreciating the general nature of the arrangements through which British armies were supplied, it is well to understand that colonies such as Canada had developed characteristics quite their own. Against this background, the commissary-in-chief's London office was striving to create a regular and uniform system which would apply to all stations at which British soldiers were posted. In August 1810, William Henry Robinson, an experienced commissariat officer of recent service in Jamaica and on the Scheldt, was appointed to superintend the Commissariat in British North America. He was to take charge of "all the Provinces and Islands under the Military Command of the Governor-General Sir James Craig." Having crossed the Atlantic to Halifax, his first task was to re-organize the Commissariat in that quarter, the deputy commissary-general there having been suspended by sentence of a general court martial. He was then to proceed to Quebec, where he would examine his establishment and report any necessary alterations to the commissary-in-chief back in London. Robinson arrived in Halifax towards the end of October but the poor state of affairs in that command required his attention for an extended period of time. He did not finally arrive in Quebec until September of the following year.¹

¹J. W. Gordon, Commissary-in-Chief, to Sir James Craig, 25 August 1810; W. H. Robinson to Sir J. Craig, 30 October 1810;

In the years immediately prior to Robinson's appointment, the Commissariat in the Canadas had been under the direction of James Green, as acting deputy commissary-general. Green had commenced his career in North America as an ensign with Burgoyne's ill-fated army during the Revolution and had worked his way up to military secretary under Lord Dorchester. He had continued to serve as military secretary until 1808, when Craig gave him control of the Commissariat. But the new regulations on promotions and appointments in that department, laid down in 1810, made his position as acting deputy commissary-general untenable and he was soon replaced by Edward Couche.² On Couche's assumption of the command of the Commissariat an investigation by a board of survey revealed certain discrepancies between Green's provision ledgers and quantities actually found in store. There were reported deficiencies of over 40,000 pounds of flour and 23,000 pounds of Pork, while at the same time a surplus of some 5,000 pounds of Rice appeared, all unaccounted for. Such quantities were actually in extremely small proportion to the total amounts handled by the Commissariat, and though Robinson found the posts in Lower Canada to

J.W. Gordon to W. H. Robinson, 25 August 1810 (P.A.C., R.G.-8, C 115, pp. 128, 150, 192-193); General Instructions to W. H. Robinson, Commissary General (P.A.C., W.O. 62/45, p. 182); General Order, 18 September 1811 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 1168, p. 14).

²Statement of the Public Services of James Green, late Acting Deputy Commissary General (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 114, pp. 109-112).

be generally upon a "regular" system,³ he felt the Commissariat's mode of business in the Canadas to be at variance in certain particulars with that laid down by the commissary-in-chief.

Much of Green's problem in keeping up his accounts had stemmed from the fact that the distances to remote posts were considerable. Yet, despite the communication difficulties he had been obliged to obtain regular statements from widely scattered sub-accountants, without which his own accounts could not be completed. If sheer distance was not enough of an obstacle in Green's time, the conveyance of accounts was further hampered by the issue of general orders in 1811 which relegated such items to the regular postal service in an effort to cut expenses.⁴ But the labours of an under-staffed Accounts Department were not the only tasks affected by the simple facts of Canadian geography. Commissary-General Robinson explained:

The transport of Provisions, Ordnance, Barrack, Marine, Engineer and Indian Stores from this place [Quebec] to all the intermediate Posts between this and Detroit, a distance not less according to the route than seventeen hundred miles part of which is by land and part by water, so that every parcel of goods, is shipped and landed three or four times, at times put in small craft and in Batteaux to meet the Variety of the navigation; is of itself a most laborious and constant occupation to all the Commissaries in the route and is a business of great anxiety and trouble at this place.⁵

³J. Green to W. Thompson, Deputy Commissary-General of Accounts, 28 January 1812 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 116, pp. 31-32); W. H. Robinson to J. W. Gordon, No. 70, 7 November 1811 (P.A.C., W.O. 57/14).

⁴W. H. Robinson to N. Freer, 27 April 1812 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 116, pp. 112-113).

⁵W. H. Robinson to J. C. Herries, No. 87, 7 November 1812 (P.A.C., W.O. 57/14).

Geography and topography were considerations of obvious importance, but the conduct of the Commissariat's work in the Canadas also suffered from a certain lack of uniformity. Robinson found it necessary to create a "uniform system" for the issuing of pay to the various departments and to further facilitate this and the general business of the Commissariat a branch of the Paymaster-General's Office was opened at Montreal. Robinson also made complaint of the lack of a "proper system" in other departments, especially the Barrack Department, which he claimed threw an immense amount of additional work on the Commissariat.⁶ Nor did other peculiarities of the Canadian command conform with Commissary-General Robinson's instructions. In consequence the issuing of stores in trust from the Commissariat to other departments was ended along with the pernicious practice of keeping private accounts with individuals. An attempt was made to have the staff and the departments draw their rations on a more regular basis while it was also found necessary to establish a regulation forage issue for the draught horses and oxen belonging to the government. Before Robinson's arrival, there had been no official one set for Canada.⁷

⁶General Order, 31 October 1811 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 1168, pp. 31-32); W. H. Robinson to N. Freer, 21 November 1811 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 114, pp. 157-158); W. H. Robinson to J. C. Herries, No. 87, 7 November 1812 (P.A.C., W.O. 57/14).

⁷W. H. Robinson to N. Freer, 12 June 1812 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 116, p. 244); General Order, 16 June 1812 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 1168, p. 175).

The unique Canadian custom of making stoppages in the ration issues for the staff and the departments was allowed to continue though it seems to have been a particularly irksome task to keep the records for it straight. In fact, it was not uncommon for commissariat officers to pay out of their own pockets to prevent queries on their accounts arising from any irregularities which occurred because of these stoppages. Again, it was the widely scattered nature of the army's posts and the constant movement of officers from one place to another, which produced much of the evil in this practice, all of which was increased with the strain of war and the influx of more troops to defend Canada.⁸

To facilitate the business of the various departments of the army in Canada, arrangements were made whereby the commissariat officer at any given post could pay the accounts of the other departments on the spot, upon their certification by the military officer commanding in that area. If such monies were not available the amount required was to be drawn on the respective heads of the departments at headquarters in Quebec. The annual demands for supplies were forwarded to the military secretary at Quebec and all accounts were sent to the commissary of accounts in that city, where they were examined and sent on to England. This was the general procedure for all departments of the army and was also applied to the naval

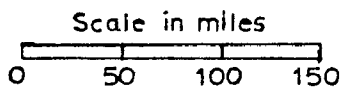
⁸W. H. Robinson to Sir G. Prevost, 1 November 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 118, pp. 178-180).

COMMISSARIAT POSTS

IN THE CANADAS

(January 1812)

- With commissioned officers
- Storekeeper only

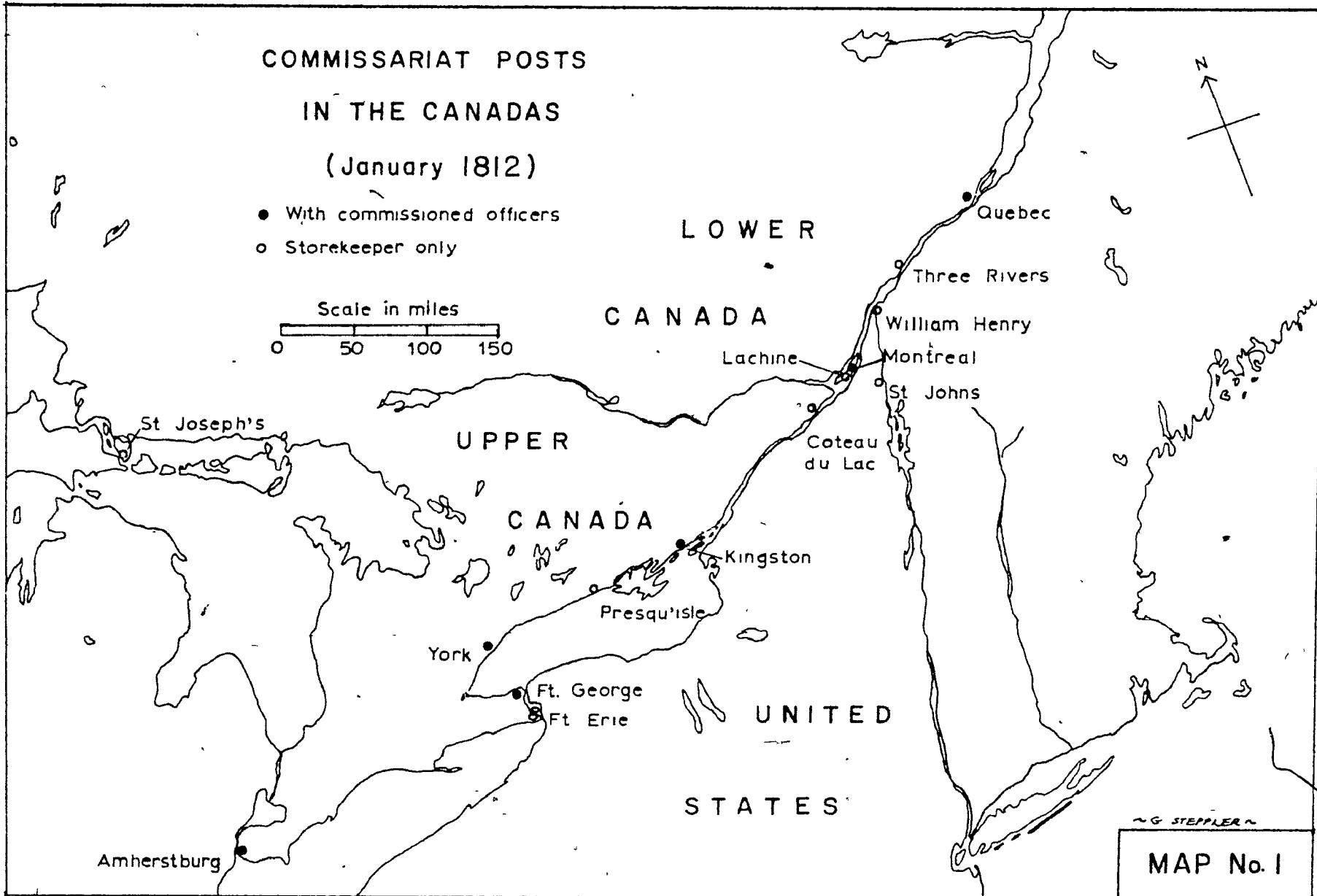


LOWER
CANADA

UPPER

CANADA

UNITED
STATES



~ G STEPLER ~

MAP No. 1

commissioner at Kingston, when that position was created in the summer of 1813 as a result of the Royal Navy assuming a partial responsibility, from the Quartermaster-General's Department, for naval operations on the lakes.⁹

In peacetime the Commissariat in Canada maintained depots from the fortress of Quebec to the remote island outpost of St. Joseph's near Sault Ste. Marie [see map No. 1]. The main provision items usually kept in store included flour, pork, pease, rice, oatmeal, salt and rum. Returns of "Commissariat Stores" at Montreal and Lachine listed batteaux and equipment, tents, camp kettles, tin canteens, rum kegs, axes, snowshoes, shovels and wheel barrows, while the Quartermaster-General's Department also maintained equipment for the batteaux service.¹⁰ The regular shipments of Indian presents were generally consigned to the governors of Upper and Lower Canada and upon their arrival from England were immediately handed over to the storekeeper of the Indian Department, never being placed in the commissariat stores. However, it was still the duty of the Commissariat to provide the means of conveyance and pay the freight for these goods, all upon a properly authorized requisition from an officer of the Indian Department. Barrack and purveyor stores were not under the charge of the

⁹General Order, 20 January 1812 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 1168, p. 88); W. H. Robinson to Sir G. Prevost, 16 July 1813 (P.A.C., W.O. 57/14).

¹⁰Report of a Board of Survey, by order of Col. Vincent, commanding the District of Montreal, 22 January 1812 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 116, pp. 4-6).

Commissariat and locally obtained building materials used by the Engineer Department, though contracted for by the Commissariat, were delivered by the contractors into the immediate charge of the Engineers, who had a storekeeper to receive them. This was not, however, the procedure with all engineer stores, for those sent out from England were placed in the charge of the Commissariat.¹¹

In 1810 the Commissariat at Quebec kept accounts for the provisioning of various departments and corps: Royal Artillery and field train, 10th Royal Veteran Battalion, 8th Regiment, 10th Regiment, Canadian Regiment, Ordnance Department, Engineer Department, Military Secretary's Office, Adjutant-General's Department, Quartermaster-General's Department, Barrack Department, Medical Department, Commissary of Accounts Department, the Commissariat Department itself and detachments of the 41st and 100th regiments. Beside these, there were several individuals holding private accounts with the Commissariat: James Green, then acting deputy commissary-general, the garrison Chaplain and Lieutenant Edward MacCoy, an aide-de-camp.¹²

The Commissariat's establishment return for January 1812 listed seventeen commissariat officers, an assistant deputy storekeeper-general and fifteen storekeepers. This included all posts from

¹¹W. H. Robinson to J. C. Herries, No. 129, 10 June 1813 (P.A.C., W.O. 58/14); W. H. Robinson to J. C. Herries, No. 479, 4 December 1815 (P.A.C., W.O. 57/15).

¹²Taken from reports concerning the deficiencies in provisions at Quebec while Green was head of the Commissariat (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 116, pp. 1206-1220).

Newfoundland to St. Joseph's. The vast extent of the Canadian frontier necessitated the maintenance of many posts and provision depots, yet the number of commissariat personnel available was small. In many instances the accounts of the outposts were in arrears simply because of a lack of clerks. The two Canadas were divided into three military districts: Quebec, Montreal and Upper Canada and it was Robinson's intention to have a deputy commissary-general for each one. This was supposed to enable the new commissary-general to concentrate his attention on the general problems of the whole command, relieving him of tedious details.¹³

Those serving in the Commissariat in Canada were generally dissatisfied with their rate of pay and the lack of promotions.

Robinson made increases where he could but such changes were long overdue and pay was not the only thing that needed improving.

Robinson removed a number of inefficient persons from his department and suggested higher rates of pay to attract and keep employees of better quality.¹⁴ In addition to those individuals who couldn't make out proper returns and accounts or write legibly, it appears that not

¹³Monthly Return of General and Staff Officers, British North America, 25 January 1812 (P.A.C., W.O. 17/1516, p. 1); W. H. Robinson to J. C. Herries, No. 87, 7 November 1812, and No. 22, 20 April 1812 (P.A.C., W.O. 57/14).

¹⁴W. H. Robinson to J. W. Gordon, No. 70, 7 November and No. 73, 8 November 1811 (P.A.C., W.O. 57/14); W. H. Robinson to N. Freer, 26 March and 6 April 1812 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 116, pp. 78-82, 91-94).

all of the king's property was in a satisfactory state of repair. Neglect and the ravages of the Canadian climate had reduced one storehouse for batteaux equipment to a "ruinous state," while the storekeeper at St. John's declared he would rather live in a tent than his present quarters. The building, he protested, was little better than a stable and respectfully submitted a suggestion to use his lodgings to house militiamen instead.¹⁵

Tenders for provision contracts from local merchants were usually called for in February and March and arrangements were made for deliveries to be completed by the beginning of August. Advertisement for tenders was made through the local newspapers and the produce so contracted for was to be properly packed and warranted to keep good for twelve months after delivery. Flour, pork and pease were regularly contracted for in this manner with Canadian or American merchants. Locally obtained supplies of pork, called for by the Commissariat in March 1810, were deliverable at the King's Wharf in Quebec and at the King's Stores in Montreal. A proportion of these provisions was then to be used to complete a requisition from Halifax. That year acting Assistant Commissary-General I. W. Clarke at Montreal, was presented with three proposals for pork - one for 300 barrels from two Montreal merchants, Bellows and Gates, another for 1,000 barrels

¹⁵W. H. Robinson to N. Freer, 7 May 1812; Storekeeper at St. John's to I. W. Clarke, 5 August 1812 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 116, pp. 228-231, 269-270.

from a Mr. Lyman who was drawing 700 of those barrels from Skeensborough, New York, and the largest offer came from an Albany merchant for 1800 to 2000 barrels.¹⁶

American suppliers and supplies were important, but in the years immediately preceding the outbreak of war between Great Britain and the United States the Commissariat was at times somewhat wary about making large contracts with American merchants. It was feared that in the event of any difficulty with the American government, these merchants might be unable to complete their deliveries. In fact, when war was finally declared in June 1812, such fears were realized as both the Commissariat in Canada and such American merchants as had outstanding contracts found themselves in difficulty. By September 1812, Robinson was anxious over the inability of Nathaniel Taft, a merchant of Troy, New York, to fulfil his pork contract for the Quebec garrison. The general Embargo of April 1812 by the American government made Taft's continued deliveries illegal and the declaration of war worsened still further an already risky operation. Nevertheless Taft had exerted himself and had completed delivery of some 2000 barrels at Montreal but was totally unable to meet his obligations for 1000 additional barrels deliverable at Quebec.¹⁷

¹⁶J. Green to Lieut. Col. William Thornton, Military Secretary, 17 March 1810 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 115, pp. 28-35); Major-General I. Brock to N. Freer, 9 March 1812 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 116, pp. 51-52).

¹⁷J. Green to W. Thornton, 17 March 1810 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 115, p. 31); W. H. Robinson to N. Freer, 21 September 1812; I. W. Clarke to W. H. Robinson, 1 September 1812 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 116, pp. 287, 289-293).

In Lower Canada it was the Commissariat that arranged the government's contracts, but in the upper province the king's posts and garrisons were provisioned through an "Agent for Purchases." John McGill had held this position for some fourteen years prior to Robinson's arrival in Canada. He purchased the necessary provisions for Upper Canada, made up separate accounts and transmitted them to the Commissariat Office in Quebec, where the head of that office would charge the amount in his own Account Current with the Treasury in London. McGill held his own commission from the Treasury and acted under that board's instructions. He was also referred to as a commissary of stores, but his name was not included in any returns of the Commissariat establishment. Though Robinson found McGill's position outside of the Commissariat "entirely novel," he was in for yet another surprise. For in addition to these appointments McGill was also the inspector of provincial accounts and as such he audited his own accounts, signing them in the double capacity of inspector and accountant. It was clear, however, that this procedure was now contrary to the instructions issued by the commissary-in-chief, and soon after Robinson's arrival at Quebec the office of agent for purchases in Upper Canada was abolished and McGill taken on the Commissariat's establishment as an acting deputy-assistant commissary-general.¹⁸

¹⁸W. H. Robinson to N. Freer, 2 November 1811 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 114, pp. 134-137); General Order, 5 November 1811 (P.A.C., W.O. 57/14).

In January 1812 Robinson reported to his chief in London that the yearly expenses of the two Canadas were about £400,000. Those of Nova Scotia and its dependencies were about half as much more. The problem was that not a fourth part of the necessary specie could be raised in these provinces, and about one fifth of the whole amount drawn for was lost through the exchange rate and the charges for transporting the money. It was therefore of necessity that recourse was made to the United States, especially to Boston and New York, for the negotiation of government bills. The possibility of rupture with the United States made the lack of specie a delicate matter. Both Couche and Green had also complained of the serious shortage of specie in Canada. Green felt this was principally due to the merchants using large amounts of specie to purchase timber, lumber, potash and other articles for export.¹⁹ Couche agreed with Green and further observed:

The greater part of the Articles exported from Canada are brought from the States; and what will appear more strange is, that Canada is supplied with almost every kind of East India Produce, leather, and many other manufactures from that Country also; the drain of Specie, in consequence, is incalculable.²⁰

Defence preparations prior to the war increased the expenses, adding about £50,000 to the annual disbursements and to supplement

¹⁹W. H. Robinson to J. C. Herries, No. 2, 23 January 1812 (P.A.C., W.O. 57/14); W. H. Robinson to N. Freer, 5 and 20 February 1812 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 116, pp. 27, 46-48); J. Green to W. Thornton, 3 March 1810 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 115, pp. 18-19).

²⁰E. Couche to W. H. Robinson, 31 July 1811 (P.A.C., W.O. 57/14).

contacts like Mr. Astor at New York, Robinson made arrangements to dispose of his bills of exchange in the Bahamas, receiving the proceeds via Halifax.²¹

When Robinson first arrived in North America, Sir George Prevost, then lieutenant governor in Nova Scotia, had observed that the new commissary-general's instructions seemed to be framed for "General Service" and were best adapted to an army in the field. Indeed, Robinson's instructions were almost identical to those given Commissary-General Kennedy for service with Wellington's Peninsular army.²² Whether or not this was deliberate, in view of the continuing tension with the United States, events were soon to thrust new burdens on the Commissariat and the arrangements of peacetime would face the strain of war.

In 1811 the effective strength of British regulars and fencibles in the Canadas totalled roughly 5,600 men, of whom only 1,200 rank and file were stationed in Upper Canada. The various departments of the army were correspondingly small. Lieutenant Colonel Bruyeres, commanding the Royal Engineers, had but four captains under him and drew the necessary labour force for military works from the surrounding population. Nova Scotia and its dependencies contained about another

²¹W. H. Robinson to N. Freer, 29 December 1811 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 114, pp. 185-188).

²²Sir G. Prevost to Sir J. Craig, 12 November 1810 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 115, pp. 210-213); General Instructions to William Henry Robinson, Commissary-General (P.A.C., W.O. 62/45, p. 182).

4,300 men, including a detachment of Royal Military Artificers.²³ In January 1812 Robinson forwarded his own establishment return for the Commissariat to London and requested additional personnel to improve the work of his department. He observed that even these increases would leave him no "disposable person" for any new contingencies. In the event of war with the United States more commissariat personnel would have to be sent out, in proportion to the troops employed and the extent of the operations undertaken.²⁴

The constant demand for an increase in personnel of all ranks in his department was to plague Robinson throughout the ensuing conflict. In the months before the American declaration of war, the numbers to be fed were increased by the raising of new provincial units and the partial embodiment of the militia. The regular forces in Canada would also continue to grow. By the end of 1813 the regular establishment (including fencibles) was almost 16,000 officers and men. In 1814 Sir George Prevost, now governor-general, received further reinforcements which pushed up the total number of effective other ranks in the Canadas to over 29,000 (exclusive of militia).²⁵ In an attempt to meet its growing burden the Commissariat's numbers were

²³J. Mackay Hitsman, The Incredible War of 1812, Toronto, 1965, p. 29.

²⁴W. H. Robinson to J. C. Herries, No. 3, 30 January 1812 (P.A.C., W.O. 57/14).

²⁵Hitsman, Incredible War of 1812, pp. 177, 216.

also increased. By March 1813 Robinson commanded 33 officers, 62 clerks and 68 "subordinate persons," being the storekeepers, issuers, conductors and labourers - a total of 163 men. In the course of the next year he was able to secure four additional officers, 21 clerks, a storekeeper and seven issuers.²⁶ The brigades that arrived from Wellington's army in the summer of 1814 were accompanied by their own commissariat officers.²⁷

At the commencement of hostilities in 1812 it was evident that the Commissariat was wholly inadequate for the exigencies of active campaigning. The threat of an American invasion demanded the occupation of new posts and the inevitable "press of business" mounted. The summer and fall of 1812 saw the formation of a large encampment of more than 4,000 regulars, fencibles and militia in front of Montreal, between St. John's and La Prairie. That July, Robinson visited the area to ensure that everything was going well. It soon became necessary for three of his own office clerks to be sent to work in that important district, and in November he again travelled to the frontier at the alarm of a possible attack. In the Montreal District alone there were now ten depots of provisions and fourteen military posts to be supplied. Robinson's Quebec office was stripped of every clerk not immediately necessary there, in order to meet the new

²⁶See Appendix IV.

²⁷W. H. Robinson to N. Freer, 1 April 1815 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 119, pp. 196-197).

demands of an army on active service. A relatively large Commissariat establishment was always required at Montreal, but even by the close of 1812 Robinson felt he had neither the numbers nor the quality of men required there.²⁸ Having by then personally experienced the difficulties of supplying an army in Canada, Robinson offered some observations to his chief back in London:

. . . I beg to remark, that in no Country I have served in, was a Stronger Commissariat required than in Canada on account of the long line of defence, which makes it necessary to have a great number of Depôts of Provisions even in time of Peace, but now that the whole force of the Enemy is directed against these Provinces, our Troops must of course be in advance and the whole Duty of the Commissariat is Arduous and extensive. The great distances also and the uncertain communication increase my difficulties, which are not in proportion to the Number of Troops in the field, but according to the Number of Posts, as well as the immense labour of Transporting all Military Stores . . .²⁹

In Upper Canada Deputy Commissary-General Edward Couche had assumed the direction of the Commissariat in that quarter just prior to the war. From York he accompanied Major-General Isaac Brock to Amherstburg and upon his return was hopeful that things would be well run there. But, as in Lower Canada, the Commissariat was weak in numbers and in need of new appointments. Further assistance was

²⁸W. H. Robinson to J. C. Herries, No. 309, 15 December 1814, No. 78, 24 October, and No. 48, 18 July 1812 (P.A.C., W.O. 57/15 and W.O. 57/14); W. H. Robinson to N. Freer, 8 October 1812 (P.A.C., B.G. 8, C 116, pp. 305-306); W. H. Robinson to Sir G. Prevost, 30 November 1812 (P.A.C., W.O. 57/14).

²⁹W. H. Robinson to J. C. Herries, No. 89, 1 December 1812 (P.A.C., W.O. 57/14).

required on the Niagara frontier at Fort Erie and Queenston. At Kingston, Deputy-Assistant Commissary-General William Ross was directed to extend his charge to the easternmost limits of the upper province. Ross himself made six new appointments for storekeepers to cover the posts east of Kingston, which were now being occupied to protect communications with Montreal. The extended line, and the difficulties in communication meant that Ross now required more than two weeks to visit his lower posts, yet the business at Kingston was so heavy that such an absence could be ruinous. It was therefore necessary to station another deputy-assistant at Prescott to control these new posts.³⁰

In order to meet the incessant need for more personnel in the Canadas, Robinson made temporary appointments and drew upon Sherbrooke's Nova Scotia command for additional officers and clerks. The war years saw a steady, if only gradual augmentation in strength as commissariat officers, clerks and conductors arrived from England, the West Indies and finally from Wellington's army in France. Yet the shortage of "disposable" men remained a chronic problem to the end of the war. When the frontier of Lower Canada was threatened the Quebec and Montreal offices were soon emptied, leaving only skeleton staffs to carry on the routine work as best they could. Work on the accounts

³⁰W. H. Robinson to J. C. Herries, No. 48, 18 July 1812 (P.A.C., W.O. 57/14); E. Couche to Major-General Sir R. H. Sheaffe, 24 October 1812 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 116, pp. 318-320).

came to a standstill as clerks were sent off to superintend the new posts and depots created to meet each crisis. In 1814 Prevost's expedition to Plattsburg engrossed those men just arrived from France and even required that several more of Robinson's department be drawn from the posts and garrisons to accompany the army on its line of march. Even before the arrival of Wellington's veterans that summer, Robinson had been most apprehensive over the backward state of his general accounts, which to his "great mortification and alarm are one year in Arrear."³¹

Robinson had arrived at Quebec about nine months before war finally broke out and had immediately set about the task of re-organizing the Commissariat. The department had been without a head of proper rank for some time and where possible the peculiarities of procedure and mode of business were corrected, efficiency being somewhat improved. Of much more importance, however, was the fact that the Commissariat normally not only placed a considerable reliance on the United States for its meat supplies, but also relied on the Americans as a source of specie - an ingredient vital to the proper functioning of Robinson's department. The prospect of war with such neighbours foreboded ill indeed.

³¹W. H. Robinson to J. C. Herries, No. 309, 15 December 1814 (P.A.C., W.O. 57/15); W. H. Robinson to Sir G. Prevost, 29 June 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 373, p. 167).

Nor did the quality of many of the personnel employed by the Commissariat please the new commissary-general. Robinson met with complaints over pay and promotions while competent local replacements were hard to find. Requests were made for additional staff to be sent from England but even by June 1814, when there were only two people in Robinson's own office, the work to be done could easily have employed a dozen. In Upper Canada the Commissariat was still short-handed and while changes were made continually, they could not be considered as permanent for long. Departmental "casualties" - the losses from illness, desertion, enemy action and dismissals for incompetent behaviour - sapped at the Commissariat's strength. The overall situation created an undercurrent of anxiety, while commissariat staff of all grades worked long hours at a seemingly endless task. The lack of sufficient personnel remained a constant problem to the very end of the war.

CHAPTER THREE

THE BASIC PREMISE - CANADIAN AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES AND SETTLEMENT

The logistical problems of 1812 cannot be understood without an appreciation of Canada's resources. For the Commissariat, a careful scrutiny of Canadian agriculture was of the utmost importance. What could the Canadian farmer of 1812 provide and would the quantities be sufficient? What effect would the war have on farming? Would the methods of production allow for a rapid increase to meet new and sudden demands? The very nature of the conflict would be determined in large measure by the answers to such questions. The density of population and the location of settled areas were decisive factors in shaping the war's course. A discussion of agriculture and settlement is therefore essential for an evaluation of the problems of supply, and for a broader understanding of the kind of war fought along the Canadian frontier.

At the time of the War of 1812 the non-Indian population of Lower Canada may be estimated at about 270,000, and that of Upper Canada at perhaps 77,000 white inhabitants. Settlement in Lower Canada, by comparison with that found in the upper province, was much older and better established, finding its roots in the French colonization of the seventeenth century. Comprehensive statistics on agricultural

production, livestock and cultivated acreage are both sparse and inadequate for early nineteenth century Canada, while there is little indication as to their reliability.¹ John Lambert, in his description of Lower Canada written in the years immediately preceding the war with the United States, speculated on these matters and suggested figures for 1808, noting that he presented them in the absence of any official documents. His statistics for Lower Canada were derived by extrapolation from two census, one of 1765 and the other of 1783,² with the assumption that the same rate of growth as seen between those two dates, was maintained to 1808.³

<u>Year</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Acres under cultivation⁴</u>	<u>Bushels of grain sown yearly</u>
1765	76,275	764,604	194,724.5
1783	113,012	1,569,818	383,349.5
1808	200,000	3,760,000	920,000

¹See R. H. Coats, "Beginnings in Canadian Statistics," The Canadian Historical Review, XXVII, June 1946, pp. 109-130; M. C. Urquhart, ed., Historical Statistics of Canada, Cambridge, 1965, p. 349.

²After the Conquest only three census were taken before 1800. Until the end of the War of 1812, statistics consist mostly of figures gleaned from reports by the various governors.

³John Lambert, Travels through Canada and the United States of North America in the years 1806, 1807 and 1808, London, 1813, I, p.146.

⁴It seems quite probable that Lambert confused the English "acres" with the French "arpents" (see census figures in Urquhart, p. 383). One arpent equals approximately .8 of an acre. Lambert's term "under cultivation" is not completely clear when compared with census figures for 1827 which distinguish between land "in pasture" and that "under culture." George Heriot noted in his Travels Through the Canadas, London, 1807, that it was common practice for the

<u>Year</u>	<u>Horses</u>	<u>Oxen, cows and young horned cattle</u>	<u>Sheep</u>	<u>Swine</u>
1765	13,757	50,000	27,064	28,976
1783	30,096	98,591	84,666	70,466
1808	79,000	236,000	286,000	212,000

Statistics taken from "A Topographical Description of the Province of Lower Canada," written by Joseph Bouchette, Surveyor-General of Lower Canada, would suggest a cultivated acreage in excess of three million for the lower province. In this same work Bouchette estimated the cultivated acreage of Upper Canada at nearly 290,000.⁵ A recent work, Urquhart's "Historical Statistics of Canada," provides no relevant figures for the first two decades of the nineteenth century on these subjects, but does provide information on both of the Canadas for 1827.⁶

	<u>Land "in pasture"</u>	<u>Land "under culture"</u>
Lower Canada	1,944,397 arpents	1,002,198 arpents
Upper Canada	-	645,792 acres

	<u>Horses</u>	<u>Milk cows</u>	<u>Other cattle</u>	<u>Sheep</u>	<u>Swine</u>
Lower Canada	142,432	260,015	145,012	829,122	241,735
Upper Canada	25,228	66,878	56,752	-	-

habitant to alternate the use of his land between pasture and wheat growing. If Lambert's "under cultivation" does include both land "in pasture" and "under culture" his figures still appear too high, at least by comparison with those of 1827. Bouchette's calculations would lie rather in the middle.

⁵Joseph Bouchette, A Topographical Description of the Province of Lower Canada with remarks upon Upper Canada, and on the relative connexion of both provinces with the United States of America, London, 1815, pp. 88-89, 286, 375 and 596.

⁶Urquhart, pp. 383, 386.

Without attempting the task of speculating on such statistics for Upper Canada in 1812, it could be anticipated that the cultivated acreage and numbers of livestock were considerably less than in 1827. Quite probably the cultivated acreage was less than half what was reported in 1827, for in that year the Colonial Office recorded Upper Canada's population as 181,745, or more than double the number estimated for 1812.⁷ Indeed such an assumption would correspond with Bouchette's 290,000 acres. It should also be mentioned that in the next twenty years following 1827, the figures on the various animal populations of Lower Canada fluctuate considerably. On the whole, Lambert's suggested animal populations for 1808 do not seem unreasonable.

Though all of these figures should be approached with care, this must not divert attention from the fact that a marked contrast existed between Upper and Lower Canada with respect to developed agricultural resources. A further perspective is gained when it is considered that Great Britain's population amounted to 12.5 millions in 1812, while the United States possessed about 7.5 million inhabitants. During the war the disparity between the two Canadas was felt all the more keenly as the upper province became the main theatre of operations, subject to repeated attacks by the enemy. Yet

⁷R. M. Martin, History of the Colonies of the British Empire in the West Indies, South America, North America, Asia, Austral-asia Africa and Europe, London, 1843, p. 184.

neither of the Canadas, either separately or together, possessed sufficient agricultural resources to sustain the forces employed by Britain during the war.

By 1812 both of the Canadas were established exporters of certain agricultural products of which flour, wheat and biscuit were by far the most important. In Lower Canada British entrepreneurs and exporters presided over the flow of breadstuffs while their counterparts at places such as Kingston became the chief figures in the grain trade of Upper Canada. Indeed wheat was the major Canadian staple in the early nineteenth century until the abrupt and dramatic rise in timber exports to Great Britain after 1807, following in the wake of Napoleon's economic war with England.

In general, agriculture in the Canadas did benefit from the prosperity engendered by the lumber boom, but the increases in local demand for farm products were offset to some extent by the competition between lumber and agriculture for much of the small labour force. Though contemporaries noted that agriculture had been much neglected in Lower Canada because of the great increase in commercial activity, the effect on farming in the Canadas was not as serious as in areas such as New Brunswick.⁸ Jean-Pierre Wallot points out that it would

⁸Donald Creighton, The Empire of the St. Lawrence, Boston, 1958, p. 145; Harold A. Innis, Essays in Canadian Economic History, Toronto, 1956, p. 213; J. P. Wallot, "The 1800s," in Colonists and Canadians 1760-1867, ed. by J. M. S. Careless, Toronto, 1971, pp. 104-105; J. Spelt, The Urban Development in South-Central Ontario, Assen, 1955, p. 37; G. P. de Twenebroeker Glazebrook, Life in Ontario - A Social History, Toronto, 1968, p. 41.

be rather misleading to think of a general decline or crisis in agriculture at this time in the Canadas:

Rather, it responded to a series of forces which changed it while bringing more prosperity: for instance, the lumber boom and the large military expenditures in the late 1800s [1800-1810], the demand for a labour force in certain urban centres, the growth of more diversified and enlarged, local markets, the variations of international markets, the penetration of the market mentality among the habitants, and the high wages offered.⁹

Still it is clear that even the normal practice of agriculture in either of the Canadas was not well calculated to support a sudden influx of soldiers, as an immediate increase in production, to any noticeable extent, was virtually impossible. In both the Canadas the usual practice of agriculture was founded in extensive and primarily subsistence farming.¹⁰ Though the lower province possessed a small elite of British farmers who used superior techniques, the agriculture of the habitant majority was frequently criticized. On the eve of the War of 1812 they already seemed to be convinced that production could not be improved beyond certain limits.¹¹ Conservatism, a lack of incentives and poor methods resulted in diminished returns while there was also a reluctance to increase the numbers of livestock. The small enclave of energetic American pioneers, who had settled along the

⁹Wallot, pp. 104-105.

¹⁰See Appendix V.

¹¹Fernand Ouellet, Histoire Economique et Sociale du Québec 1760-1850, Ottawa, 1966, p. 218.

southern border of the lower province after the Revolution, was still very much isolated from the communities of the St. Lawrence. In Upper Canada, even farms in the more established regions were for the most part operating little beyond the level of subsistence.

Yet even with better methods, agriculture still remains subject to many factors beyond the farmer's control. In 1812 neither good yields nor good markets could be counted upon with absolute certainty. The quantities of agricultural products exported from early nineteenth century Canada changed noticeably from year to year, but such variability resulted from a combination of factors which encompassed everything from foreign diplomatic decisions and pressures, to the usual gamut of natural occurrences. While this certainly sheds light on the limitations and problems of Canadian agriculture, it will be readily seen that the availability of an exportable surplus also gives some indication of the ability of Canadian agriculture to supply a wartime military establishment.

Available statistics on wheat exports before 1812 show considerable fluctuation and change.¹² Periodic crop failures and war in Europe created a large demand in Great Britain, yet throughout this period both Canadian harvests and foreign markets remained fickle. In the Canadas drought and the Hessian fly took their toll while the policies of the American government led to a period of feverish prosperity and smuggling as produce was sent into Canada illegally for

¹²See Appendix VII.

export overseas. Though the wheat exports of 1802 were in excess of 1,000,000 bushels, the harvest of 1801 in Lower Canada had been quite remarkable.¹³ It was the most bountiful in memory,¹⁴ but it remained unique for years to come. The 330,000 bushels exported in 1807 was about average, but some years saw far less leave the St. Lawrence.

Although breadstuffs were an important staple in the economy of early nineteenth century Canada it is evident that the exportable surplus could be reduced dramatically by poor weather conditions, pests and disease. George Heriot, the deputy postmaster-general of British North America, noted that yields, in some instances, could be reduced by half in a dry season.¹⁵ The quantity of breadstuffs exported in 1811 contrasted sharply to that of the following year. If one assumes for the moment adequate milling facilities, it may be seen that in 1812 the total quantity of exported wheat and flour could have provided in excess of seventeen and a half million rations of flour, or better than a one and a half year's supply for 30,000 men.¹⁶ In 1811, however, the exported surplus would have supplied the same numbers for little more than four months.

¹³The harvest of any given year was of course not exported until navigation opened in the following spring. The grain of 1801 was not exported until 1802.

¹⁴Montreal Herald, 2 July 1814.

¹⁵George Heriot, Travels Through the Canadas, London, 1807, I, p. 261.

¹⁶Refer to Appendices VII and VIII.

Although a modest peacetime military establishment might subsist on such agricultural resources as the Canadas possessed by 1812 it was obvious that serious difficulties could develop in wartime as reinforcements arrived and farmers were called out on militia duty. By the late summer of 1814 the Commissariat was in fact responsible for feeding close to 30,000 regulars in the Canadas, this number being exclusive of naval personnel, Indian allies and embodied militia, all of whom were also in the charge of the Commissariat. Although it was at least conceivable that a bountiful harvest in the Canadas could provide the material for an adequate quantity of flour, even for an augmented war establishment, such an occurrence could not be counted upon.

The Commissariat was certainly able to obtain supplies of flour, pease, and pork in North America but the quantities available were subject to drastic change. Canadian meat supplies were generally inadequate even for local consumption. In the winter of 1809-1810 there were over 2,000 barrels of pork for sale at Quebec. The next winter, less than 400 were available. The difference was attributed to a failure in the crop of Indian corn and a scanty supply of pease on which the hogs were fattened.¹⁷ In 1810 a serious meat shortage was experienced in the neighbourhood of Quebec even to the point where there were not enough oxen in some parishes to work the land.

¹⁷J. Green to W. Thornton, 17 March 1810 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C.115, p. 34).

As for supplies such as rice, these were regularly shipped out to Canada by way of England.¹⁸

War of course added new problems to the natural calamities which could affect agricultural production in the Canadas. For although the outright destruction of property was limited, notably to border areas, especially along the Niagara and in western Upper Canada, the requirements of government service, and in particular militia duty, were felt nearly everywhere. In both the Canadas there was virtually a universal liability for military service for all males from sixteen to sixty years of age, with few being exempted.¹⁹ Urban dwellers being few in number, the government's need for militiamen fell on a population whose principal pursuit was agriculture. It was expected that the Canadian farmer would leave his home and family and take his place in the line of battle when called upon. Yet it was inevitable in a country as sparsely settled as the Canada of 1812 that agricultural production must be adversely affected by such demands on the local population.

¹⁸The wild rice found in Upper Canada was of little commercial value.

¹⁹George F. Stanley, "The Contribution of the Canadian Militia During the War," in After Tippécanoe: Some Aspects of the War of 1812, ed. by Philip P. Mason, East Lansing, 1963, p. 30.

In particulars there were differences in the service requirements of the two provinces. See Colonel C. F. Hamilton "The Canadian Militia: Universal Service," Canadian Defence Quarterly, V, April 1928, pp. 288-300.

Lower Canada had somewhat more than 60,000 names on its militia rolls, while the total available manpower in the upper province was calculated at about 11,000.²⁰ Of these totals perhaps one-third could actually be spared from their normal employment, but the effects of mobilizing the local inhabitants for government service were soon felt. The drain on the agricultural labour force was explained in some detail to the Prince Regent in a petition for relief in Lower Canada, written in March 1814:

A short time before the declaration of War, the Commons of Lower Canada concurred in passing an act declaring every man between the ages of sixteen and sixty, a militia man;

- By this Law the Governor of this Province is empowered in certain cases to call out the whole or such part of the Militia as he may deem expedient; and there are now embodied under this Law about six thousand men;

By taking into consideration the Carpenters and others employed by Government in Public works, also those employed in Corvées for transporting effects belonging to the army, we ascertain the number of persons constantly employed in Services relating to the War, to be at least ten thousand;

- Add to these the several corps which within a few years have been raised in the Province as the 104th, The Canadian Fencibles, the Glengary Regiment, chiefly raised within the Province, the Canadian Voltigeur Corps, also the men annually employed in the fisheries and in the fur trade, and it will be found that agriculture is at this moment deprived of more than fifteen thousand men, being one third of the whole militia and being the most effective portion of the Male population; . . .²¹

²⁰J. Mackay Hitsman, Safeguarding Canada 1763-1871, Toronto, 1968, p. 79.

²¹A Petition to the Prince Regent by Representatives of the Commons of the Lower Canadian Provincial Parliament, March 1814 (P.A.C., C.O. 42/156, pp. 225-226).

The petitioners felt that the poor harvests could in part be attributed to "a want of hands for tillage." In March of the preceding year Louis Joseph Papineau had written to his father concerning this very problem:

La misère est grande au delà de tout ce que l'on a vu depuis bien longtemps, et point d'apparence que cet état puisse changer l'an prochain. Ce que vous pourrez employer de bras pour vos travaux ne vous seront probablement point enlevés pour les milices tandis qu'ils le sont dans la plus grande partie de la Province dans une trop forte proportion. Les travaux de l'agriculture en souffriront beaucoup, les semences seront moins fortes d'un tiers au moins de ce qu'elles ont coutume d'être, elles sont très mauvaises telles sont les suites de la disette cette année. L'interruption qu'occasionnera dans les travaux des habitants tout le remu ménage dont nous sommes menacés sera une nouvelle cause de disette pour l'an prochain.²²

Later that year another observer, Pierre Bédard, in writing of a very good harvest in the district of Québec, noted that, as it seemed to him, this was the region of the province least affected by the government's demands for service.

Indeed, in an age when fifty to sixty man-hours of labour were required to grow and harvest one acre of wheat,²³ neglect could soon bring adverse results. Land preparation, seeding and the harvest demanded the farmer's full attention. Poor ploughing and extended delays in seeding could readily affect yields and throughout the war

²²L. J. Papineau to his father, 10 March 1813, cited by Ouellet, pp. 218-219.

²³United States Department of Agriculture, A Chronology of American Agriculture, 1790-1965, Washington, 1965.

military authorities were confronted with the problem of saving the crops as they came to maturity. Cereals demanded the greatest expenditure of labour during the harvest, from the middle of July through August²⁴ - at a time when military operations were most likely to be in full train:

At a time when the Military-service of every one is required for the Defence of the Country, I regret that it should become a duty in me, to solicit the absence of a single Individual, from such an important Service, -

Yet so it is, and I humbly beg leave to state . . . that unless there be a sufficient number of Hands left at Home, to secure the approaching Harvest (which promises to be very abundant in this vicinity), The Supplies for His Majesty's Commissariat established at this place [York], and the necessaries of Life for the Inhabitant, will be extinguished and the Farms become a scene of desolation.²⁵

In Upper Canada the harvest of 1812 was noticeably affected where militiamen were called out to face the American invasion. In the autumn of 1813 a levy en masse of the militia in the Montreal area "prevented the complete tilling of the soil" and while the enemy remained on the frontier of Lower Canada there was a continuing fear that the militia would again be called out en masse, disrupting the spring seeding, even to the point "whence a famine will inevitably ensue."²⁶

²⁴See Appendix VI.

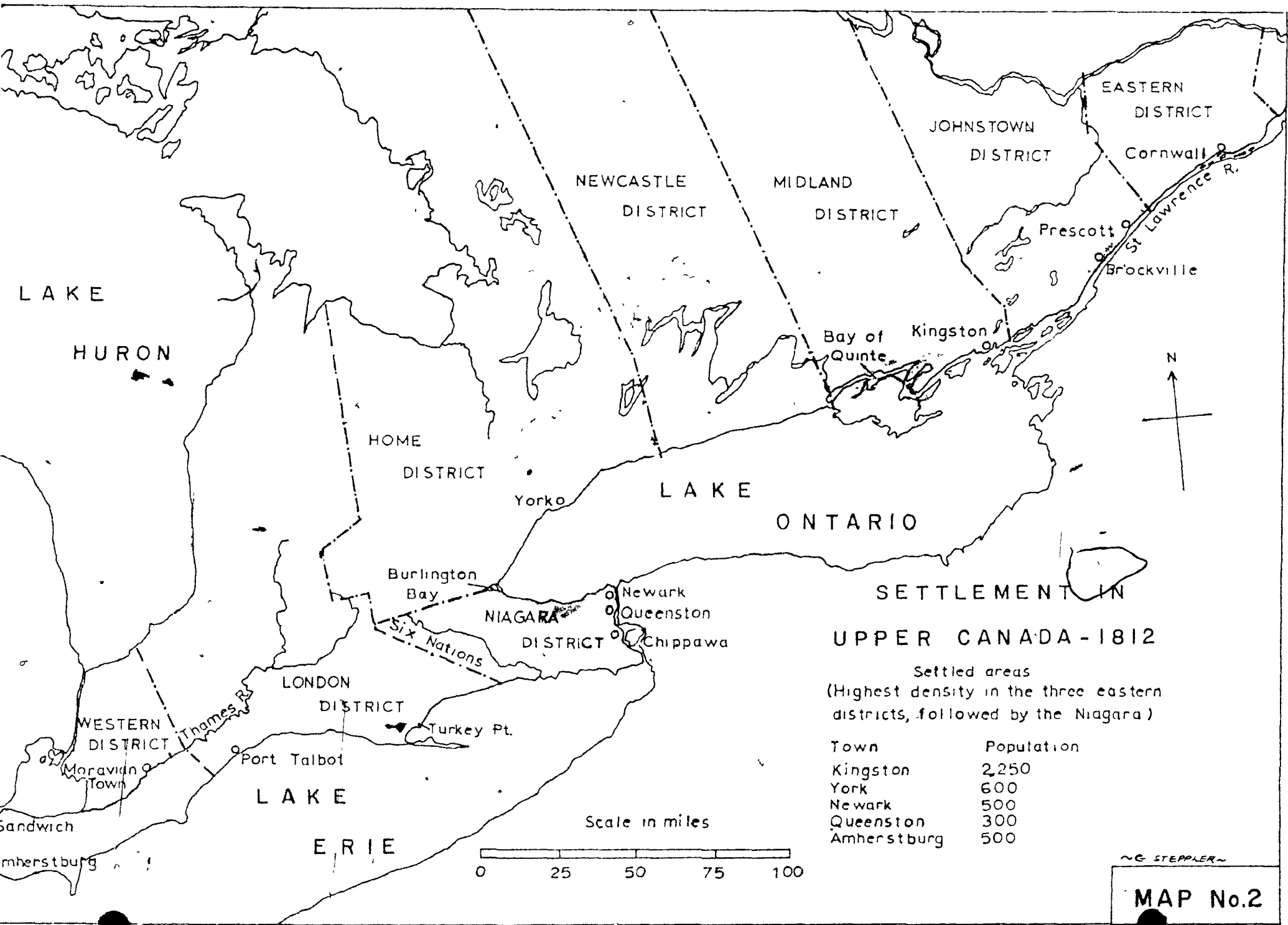
²⁵Thomas Ridout, M.P. to Robert R. Loring, civil secretary in Upper Canada to Sir G. Drummond, 23 July 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 684, p. 200). Ridout represented the people of the East Riding of York County. His son Thomas served in the Commissariat during the war.

²⁶Petition to the Prince Regent, March 1814, p. 227.

Due to the seasonal nature of the militiamen's agricultural endeavours, his appearance at any given time in his military role could not be counted upon. As a farmer he was important to the Commissariat, but he was also needed as a soldier, especially when and where regular troops were few or not available at all. When mobilized and placed on active service, however, he soon became an additional burden on the Commissariat, while his absence from the farm could and did result in reduced production, adding to the problems of finding sufficient food and forage. The solution to such a dilemma seemed to lie in increasing the number of regular troops, leaving the militiaman to his domestic rather than military pursuits. To the same end it was also hoped that other government demands on the farmer's time might be reduced,²⁷ yet such problems remained unsolved to the end of the war.

The realities of logistical planning can be brought into sharper focus by a more specific description of Upper Canada. The upper province soon became the principle seat of war, the nature of the conflict being deeply affected by the location and development of its settlements. The limitations thus imposed remained a constant factor throughout the war, affecting the planning of every military operation. They must be considered as the vital background for understanding and assessing the campaigns of 1812-1814 which were fought on the Canadian frontier.

²⁷See Sir G. Drummond to Lord Bathurst, No. 2, 20 March 1814 (P.A.C., C.O. 42/355, pp. 18-20); Sir G. Drummond to Sir G. Prevost, 26 January 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 682, pp. 52-55).



SETTLEMENT IN
UPPER CANADA - 1812

Settled areas
(Highest density in the three eastern
districts, followed by the Niagara)

Town	Population
Kingston	2,250
York	600
Newark	500
Queenston	300
Amherstburg	500

~C STEPLER~

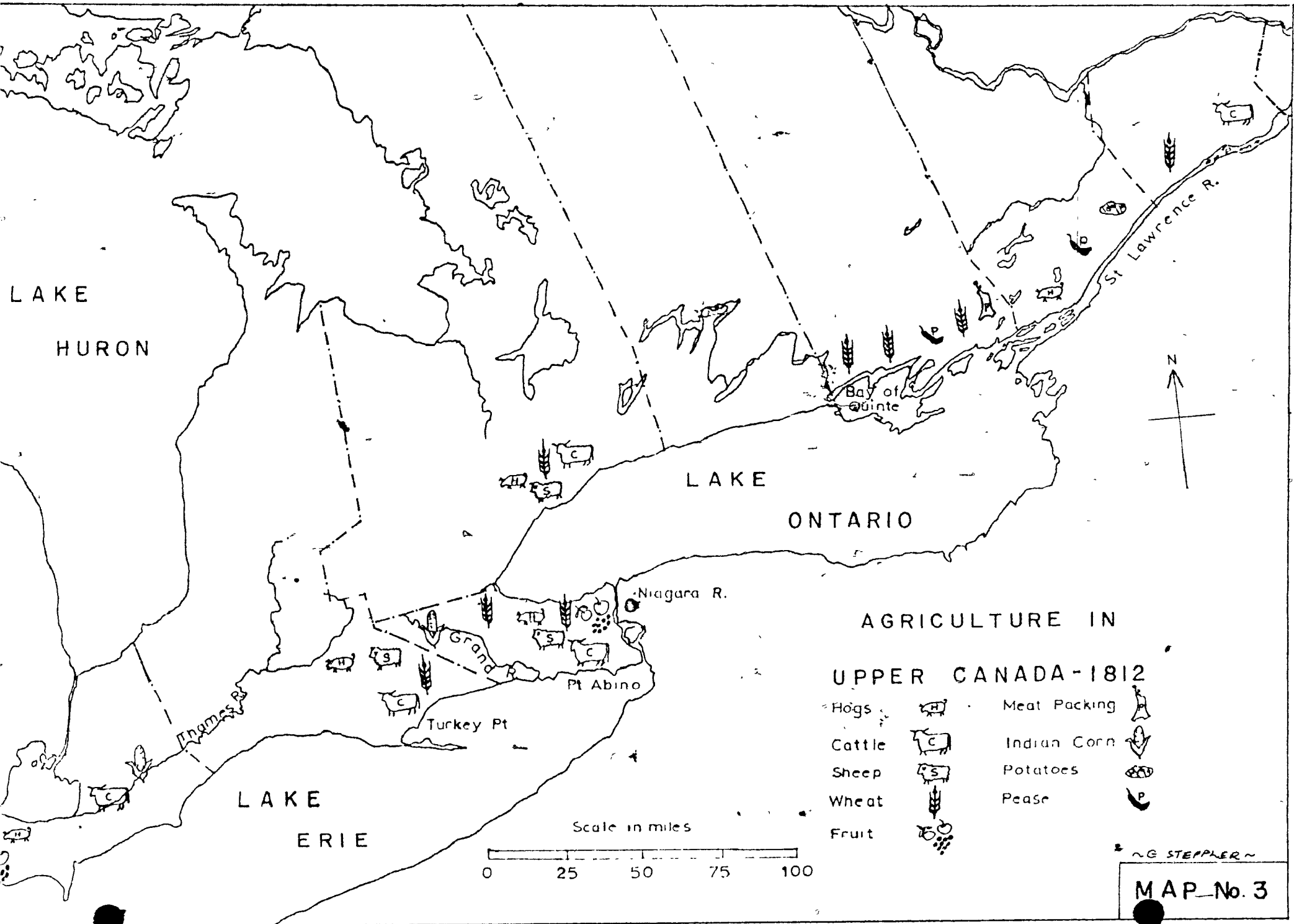
MAP No.2

Agricultural production in the upper province varied from one area to another as did the extent and pattern of settlement [see Maps No. 2 and 3]. Upper Canada's twenty-four counties stretched up the St. Lawrence, around Lake Ontario, into the Niagara peninsula and along Lake Erie. For the most part both settler and surveyor had kept close to these expanses of water. North of the lakes were extensive tracts of unmapped land designated simply as forest and woodland. To the east in the Johnstown and Eastern Districts, settlement ran along or near the banks of the St. Lawrence on land which was deemed to be very fertile. Above Kingston, in the Bay of Quinté area, the settled land ran back from Lake Ontario about fifty miles giving the appearance of a "beautiful old settled country."²⁸ Beyond this point, for about one hundred miles along the lakeshore, westward towards York, cultivated areas did not extend more than about six miles back from the lake.










In general, land for agricultural purposes improved as one went west from the border of Lower Canada, though there were certainly prosperous and thickly settled areas in the Johnstown and Eastern Districts. In fact, the most populous region of the upper province was along the St. Lawrence from Pointe au Baudet to the head of the Bay of Quinté.²⁹ The land of the Midland District, adjacent to the

²⁸D'Arcy Boulton, Sketch of His Majesty's province of Upper Canada, London, 1805, p. 40.

²⁹Bouchette, pp. 596-597.



AGRICULTURE IN
UPPER CANADA-1812

- | | | | |
|--------|---|--------------|---|
| Hogs |  | Meat Packing |  |
| Cattle |  | Indian Corn |  |
| Sheep |  | Potatoes |  |
| Wheat |  | Pease |  |
| Fruit |  | | |

MAP No. 3

Bay of Quinté was already well known for its wheat production and considerable quantities of flour were exported, being sent down the river to Montreal. While yields of 25 bushels per acre might be expected in this area, the Eastern and Johnstown Districts grew comparatively less wheat, winter-wheat being an uncertain crop. On the other hand, townships such as Lancaster were well adapted for raising cattle and had a ready market in Montreal.

Newcastle District had far fewer inhabitants than its eastern neighbours, while Home District's Scarborough township was much admired, having good land and being situated close to the seat of provincial government at York. North of York, well established farms were to be found on both sides of Yonge Street. In one observer's words this district was "tolerably thick settled," yet for some twenty miles west of York, along the lakeshore there were but "small settlements."³⁰ From York to Burlington Bay there were large tracts of hemlock swamp and pine barrens. Along Dundas Street, lying about four miles from the lakeshore, in an area recently purchased from the Indians, there was thick settlement for approximately twenty miles, though the area between Dundas Street and the lake was only thinly inhabited.

The sandy plains of Coot's Paradise, at the head of Burlington Bay, supported settlement from the shore to the Niagara Escarpment, on

³⁰M. Smith, A Geographical View of the Province of Upper Canada and Promiscuous remarks on the Government, Trenton, 1813, pp. 53, '49.

the top of which were "fine settlements" stretching back for fifteen miles to the west and north-west.³¹ Inhabited regions continued to the south around Burlington Bay and along the road to Niagara, being thickest near the shore of Lake Ontario. Eastwards to the Niagara River, about 30 miles from Burlington Bay, older settlements could be found spread across the peninsula from Lake Erie to Lake Ontario. Farther to the west of Burlington, settlements were scattered in various pockets.

There were few inhabitants in the 20-mile stretch across the land belonging to the Six Nations and in Norfolk County the highest concentration of settlement was in the Turkey Point region, mostly in the townships of Woodhouse and Charlotteville. Westward along the Talbot Road to Port Talbot were scattered settlements and to the north in Oxford County there were habitations along the Governor's Road and on the banks by the Thames. In Middlesex County settlers were very few and it was only after the Moravian village was reached that settlement of any note reappeared, following along both banks of the Thames, almost to its mouth. Located about 30 miles further on, past the mouth of the Thames, were the settlements of Upper Canada's western frontier, scattered along the eastern bank of the Detroit River and along Lake Erie into the township of Mersea.³²

³¹Ibid., p. 50.

³²G. Brock, "The London and Western Districts of Upper Canada, 1815" (McGill University, manuscript map, Hardinge Papers).

Settlements were frequently sparse and widely scattered, yet the successful maintenance of a military force such as Drummond's "Right Division" had to be dependent, to some degree, on the immediate local resources, in particular those of the Niagara peninsula, the London³³ and Home Districts. Lincoln County, on the Niagara peninsula was populated by perhaps 12,000 people³⁴ and was generally noted for its favourable climate and agricultural production. Peaches, pears, and other fruits did well and the left bank of the Niagara river was reported to be "pretty well cultivated, and the soil though less fertile than the interior yields corn and rye and from 18 to 21 bushels of wheat an acre."³⁵ The less populous London District was claimed to be the best part of the two Canadas for wheat, commonly producing yields from 20 to 35 bushels per acre "perfectly sound and clear from smut."³⁶

In 1812 Norfolk County probably had about 3,000 inhabitants.³⁷ The township of Burford, just to the north, in Oxford County, had

³³See Appendix XXIV.

³⁴Sir D.W. Smyth, A short topographical description of His Majesty's Province of Upper Canada in North America, London, 1813, p.27.

³⁵National Intelligencer, Washington, January 1813, E. A. Cruikshank, The Documentary History of the Campaign upon the Niagara Frontier in the year 1813, Welland, 1902, I, p. 25.

³⁶Smith, p. 6.

³⁷E. A. Cruikshank, "The County of Norfolk in the War of 1812," Papers and Records of the Ontario Historical Society, XX, 1923, p. 13.

little more than 400. The more westerly regions of Upper Canada were also more favourable to the production of Indian corn, averaging about 25 bushels to the acre, while in the extreme eastern districts of the province not more than 16 could be expected. Rye was quite widely cultivated, though it was used principally for distilling. Both rye and barley reportedly averaged yields of about 20 bushels to the acre, but the latter was not by any means a common crop.³⁸ Though oats appear to have been grown at least as extensively as rye, they were reported to be of a generally miserable description.³⁹

Besides finding a source of flour for the army, the Commissariat had also to ascertain the availability of fresh meat, especially of beef. On the southern side of the Niagara peninsula, in the area around Point Abino and the Grand River, cattle were raised at little expense. In 1805 Boulton reported the number of cattle raised in this area to be too great for the local market and noted the alternative of selling them in the United States at places like Albany. Farther along the shore of Lake Erie, at Turkey Point, the settlers raised great numbers of cattle which were driven to market in various parts

³⁸By modern standards such a yield would be very good for rye but very poor for barley. In eastern Canada the following yields might be expected (1974):

Winter wheat	40-55 bushels per acre	Rye	20-30
Spring wheat	30-45	Barley	40-50
Oats	45-70	Indian corn	75-100

³⁹Edward A. Talbot, Five Years' Residence in the Canadas, London, 1824, I, pp. 298-301.

GRIST MILLS IN WESTERN UPPER CANADA

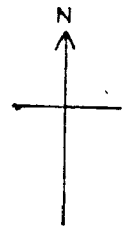
- 1812 -

LAKE
HURON

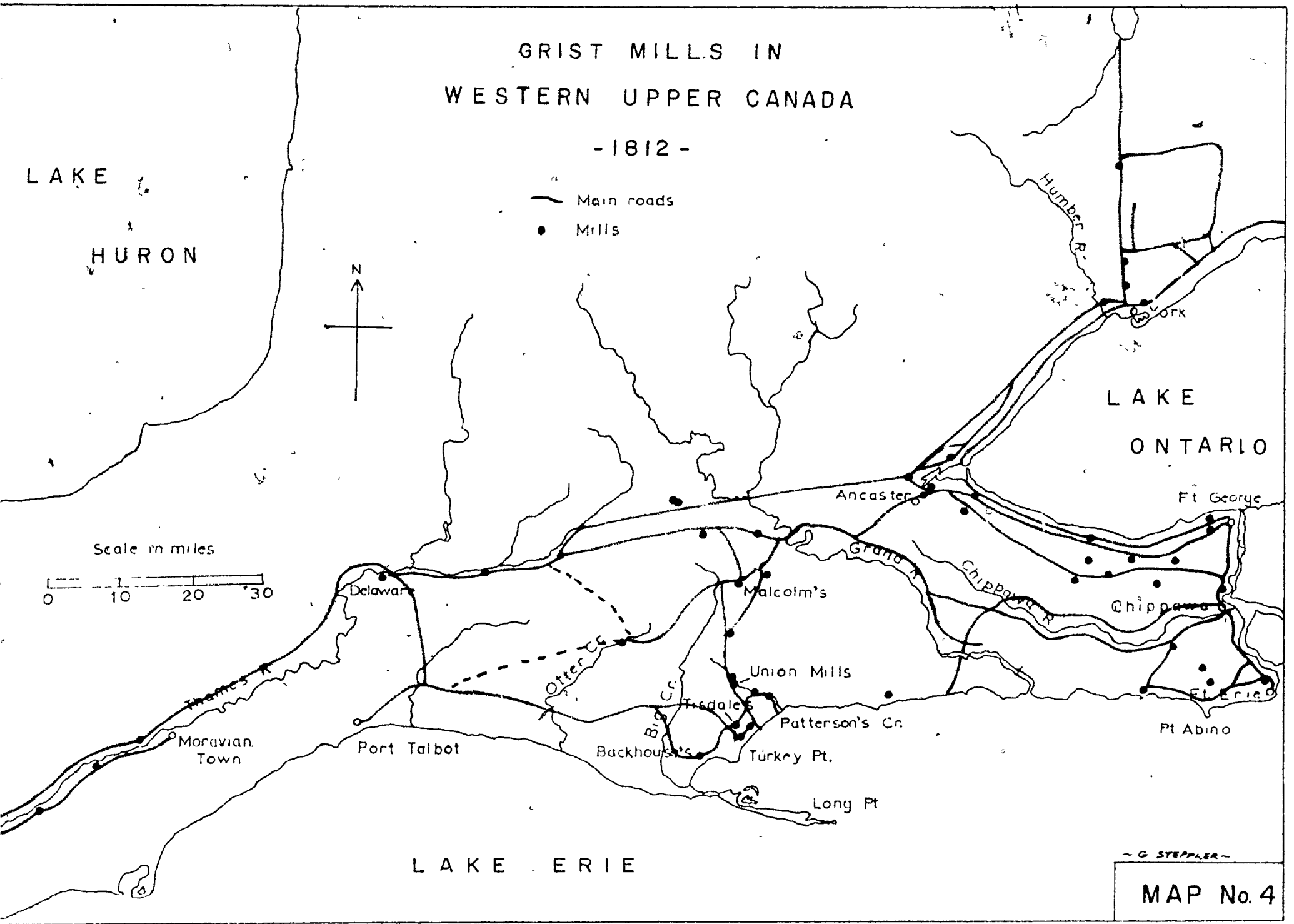
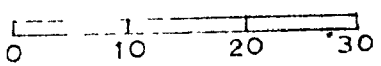
LAKE
ONTARIO

LAKE ERIE

- Main roads
- Mills



Scale in miles



- G. STEPLER -

MAP No. 4

of the province.⁴⁰ Local swine populations were another possible source of meat while sheep were quite numerous in Lincoln County, though much fewer in the counties of London District. In peacetime the commissaries purchasing for the army in the Canadas might reject poorly cured pork and pay little attention to the native sheep as a source of food. War, however, was a different matter, and the farmer's woolbearers were duly acknowledged on resource returns for consideration by the Commissariat.

Though wheat was certainly available in Upper Canada it could be of little use to the Commissariat unless it was ground into flour. The distribution of grist mills in the upper province was closely linked to the general distribution of population. In 1817 the Midland District was reported to have had at least 27 grist mills, but the real number was probably higher.⁴¹ Other areas had far fewer, and in 1812 many settlers found use for their own "hominy-block," being remote from proper mills. Grist mills had first been erected in the Kingston area, then at Niagara, and had gradually appeared in other settled areas prior to 1812 [see Map No. 4]. The demand in Lower Canada for exportable breadstuffs, since the turn of the century, had also resulted in the construction of profitable "merchant mills."⁴²

⁴⁰Boulton, pp. 60-61.

⁴¹Spelt, p. 40.

⁴²R. L. Jones, "History of Agriculture in Ontario, 1613-1880," University of Toronto Studies, History and Economics Series, XI, 1946, p. 28.

In fact the Canadian flour exported from the St. Lawrence in the early nineteenth century came principally from the upper province, being more easily handled than the grain.

On the Detroit frontier the milling facilities dated back to the mid-eighteenth century and the creation of the first white agricultural community in what had become Upper Canada.

Mill capacity was variable, a small one usually averaging from 4,000 to 15,000 bushels of grain per year, while a better one could sometimes handle as much as 40,000 bushels. Almost all of them could, if necessary, work extended hours and speed up the process, increasing production by a third. The obvious drawback, however, was the possibility of a forced suspension of operations for long periods due to insufficient water. Windmills, such as those on the Detroit frontier, were of course useless without wind.⁴³ Nevertheless the importance of the mills was evident. Both grist mills and saw mills became targets for raiding parties during the war. The loss of such mills, most noticeably in the more remote and sparsely settled regions, not only disrupted the activities of the local population, but created considerable problems for the Commissariat.

The overall picture of Upper Canada in 1812 must be one of small farms and self-sufficient farmers, who made their own clothing, tools, household articles and other necessities of daily life. Urban centres were small indeed, and isolation, the result of low population and poor transportation, both within the province and with the outside world, had created such a situation, especially in the areas more

⁴³Edwin C. Guillet, Early Life in Upper Canada, Toronto, 1933, pp. 222, 230; Glazebrook, Life in Ontario, p. 18.

remote from water routes. Even in a relatively well developed area such as that by the Bay of Quinté, farming remained to a large extent more or less self-sufficient.⁴⁴ Though yields in the more westerly areas, like the London District, were higher, this was also a region of very recent and sparse settlement. Less favourable land in the eastern reaches of the province continued to attract the greater number of settlers even for some time after the war was over. A contemporary gave this summary of the upper province's condition in 1812:

Before the declaration of war took place, Upper Canada was in a state of progressive though slow improvement, and her inhabitants prudently attempted such exertions only as were proportional to their means. Agriculture was pursued by all classes, and few thought of enriching themselves by any other occupation.⁴⁵

Extensive and primarily self-sufficient farming was thus the hallmark of early nineteenth century agriculture in both of the Canadas. There was, of course, a much larger population in the lower province but productivity was low, while in Upper Canada a much smaller population enjoyed the advantages of newer, more fertile soils and a climate which allowed the growing of superior winter wheats. Nonetheless the resources of the Canadas, and in particular those of the upper province, were inadequate for the subsistence of large military forces, the sparse and scattered nature of Upper Canada's

⁴⁴Speft, pp. 38, 41.

⁴⁵John Howison, Sketches of Upper Canada, London, 1821, p. 94.

population presenting further problems. Though a considerable proportion of the breadstuffs required might be provided, there was always the chance of a poor harvest. Despite the export of cattle from parts of the upper province, Canadian meat supplies were chronically short, much of the fresh beef coming from the United States.

Given the conditions of early nineteenth century Canada, a major increase in production could only have been achieved by extending the areas under cultivation. Clearing the land and the necessary preparation for wheat production would have taken at least three years and hundreds of man-hours of labour. Manure supplies would have been directly limited by the number of livestock on hand. Even under the best management conditions of the Twentieth Century a significant increase in the cattle population would have taken five or even ten years to achieve. On the other hand, the swine population could have been rapidly increased in little more than a year. It must be concluded therefore that significant increases to meet war demands were an unrealistic expectation - the more so when the farmer was also required to do militia duty. Though there were hopes that the Canadas might some day become a granary for Britain,⁴⁶ crops were still precarious and the quantities insufficient.

⁴⁶Hugh Gray, Letters from Canada, written During a Residence There in the Years 1806, 1807 and 1808, London, 1809, p. 71.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE DEMANDS OF WAR - PROVISIONS, SMUGGLERS, STORES AND SPECIE

Some thirty years after the war for Canada had ended, Dr. William Dunlop, a former surgeon of the 89th Regiment, recalled his wartime experiences and presented a picture of the immense effort required to sustain the military and naval forces in the Canada's during the 1812-14 war:

At this time the expense of carrying on the war was enormous. Canada, so far from being able to supply an army and navy with the provisions required, was (as a great many of her effective population were employed in the transport of military and naval stores) not fit to supply her own wants, and it was essential to secure supplies from wherever they could be got soonest and cheapest. Troops acting on the Niagara frontier, 1,000 miles from the ocean, were fed with flour the produce of England, and pork and beef from Cork, which, with the waste inseparable from a state of war, the expense and accidents to which a long voyage expose them, and the enormous cost of internal conveyance, at least doubled the quantity required, and rendered the price of them at least ten times their original cost. Not only provisions, but every kind of Military and Naval Stores, every bolt of canvas, every rope yarn, as well as the heavier articles of guns, shot, cables, anchors, and all the numerous etceteras for furnishing a large squadron, arming forts, supplying arms for the militia and the line, had to be brought from Montreal to Kingston, a distance of nearly 200 miles, by land in winter, and in summer by flat-bottomed boats . . .

Although Dunlop's description is not completely accurate in every particular, it does provide an essentially correct outline of the

¹William Dunlop, Recollections of the American War 1812-1814, Toronto, 1905, pp. 35-36.

difficulties which had to be overcome. Indeed the business of supply in the Canadas was a perplexing and frustrating problem, for which the solutions were frequently surprising, if not unique.

The fundamental question to be dealt with was of course the supply of food and forage. The success of the Canadian harvest was always a matter of importance to the Commissariat. In 1811 the harvest in Lower Canada was a good one with a considerable surplus of grain available for export the next year. Montreal and Quebec merchants were hopeful that the crop of 1812 would also be successful, but by spring the prospects of a bountiful harvest were already looking poor. The snow melted slowly and frosts continued. Seeding was usually completed by the fifteenth of May,² but in 1812 the habitants had been unable to even start by that date, except on elevated ground which had already dried - elsewhere the thaw was not yet over. The delay soon led to the pessimistic belief that the harvest would somehow be damaged by cold nights in August.³

Despite such gloomy predictions, Commissary-General Robinson expressed every confidence that adequate quantities of flour and pease would be available in Lower Canada, to last the next thirteen months - until 1 June 1813. His calculations called for the issue of some 9,100 rations daily to a mixed force of British regulars, new

²Heriot, I, p. 259.

³Ouellet, p. 218.

provincial corps and embodied militiamen, but there was uncertainty over the exact quantities that would be needed as the political situation was unsettled and looked threatening. Beside the estimated requirement of three and a half million pounds of flour for use in Lower Canada, better than one million pounds was also needed for shipment to Nova Scotia. Contractors in Lower Canada were already engaged to supply 15,000 barrels of flour, or close to three million pounds, and Robinson fully expected that a further million pounds could also be purchased in the Lower province, the remainder of his requirements being satisfied from quantities already in store. Pease were being provided for in a similar way, with about one third of the total quantity needed coming from purchases made by McGill in Upper Canada.⁴

Meat supplies, however, were a problem, for although it was true that farmers in parts of Upper Canada did export cattle, Robinson complained that the Canadas could not even provide meat for their own inhabitants. Large quantities were regularly imported from the United States. In May 1812 Robinson was expecting something more than half of his year's supply of salt meat from England. His demand was considerably enlarged by the increasing number of men under arms in the Canadas and the probability of the usual six-month contracts for fresh beef not being made because of the American land Embargo and the

⁴General Estimate and State of Supplies and Provisions required to Victual His Majesty's Troops and Others in Lower Canada from 25 April 1812 to 1 June 1813, 18 May 1812; W. H. Robinson to J. C. Herries, No. 33, 18 May 1812 (P.A.C., W.O. 57/14).

distinct possibility of war. With respect to rice supplies, all were to be imported by way of England.⁵

The declaration of war by the United States in June 1812 changed the complexion of the supply situation immediately. At the end of June Robinson was still certain of there being an adequate supply of flour available in Canada, but was now faced with rising prices, while his own cash was seriously depleted. The salt meat from England was now needed before the close of navigation.⁶ Plans for relieving the shortage of specie in the Canadas were already being considered and the Executive Council of the lower province was to ascertain the stocks of breadstuffs, other provisions of all types and all "Warlike Stores" then in the province in the hands of individuals.⁷ Nevertheless, in July the Commissariat was able to complete local contracts for large amounts of flour, salt meat and rum, and by the end of August arrangements had been made for the supply of "Irish Beef" in Lower Canada, hopefully to last until April of the next year. At Quebec itself, however, it seemed likely that even by the end of the year there would be difficulties in getting meat.⁸

⁵See Appendix IX.

⁶W. H. Robinson to J. C. Herries, No. 44, 29 June 1812 (P.A.C., W.O. 57/14).

⁷Minutes of Proceedings of Executive Council of Lower Canada, 30 June 1812, William Wood, ed., Select British Documents of the Canadian War of 1812, Toronto, 1920, I, p. 19.

⁸W. H. Robinson to J. C. Herries, No. 48, 18 July 1812 and No. 61, 19 August 1812 (P.A.C., W.O. 57/14).

In August the predictions of a bad harvest in Lower Canada became a reality. Yet in September Robinson indicated that he was willing to try and gather together as many as 6,000 barrels of flour to send to Lisbon in compliance with a request for any he might be able to spare for Wellington's army. If additional contracts could not be made, he still felt quite able to spare a great part of such an amount from his own magazines and "have it replaced in time to answer all purposes here."⁹ The renewal of the American Embargo in April and the declaration of war in June was affecting the provisioning of British armies on both sides of the Atlantic.¹⁰ In Canada American contractors were forced to renege on their agreements, worsening the meat situation at Quebec,¹¹ and in early October the exportation of biscuit, breadstuffs and salted provisions from Lower Canada was forbidden except under licence and then only for the supply of British forces.¹² By that time, however, considerable quantities had already been exported and it was with some relief that Robinson reported on

⁹W. H. Robinson to Sir G. Prevost, 11 September 1812 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 116, p. 278).

¹⁰British forces in Spain and Portugal also used breadstuffs from the United States.

¹¹See Chapter Two, p. 34.

¹²Proclamation of embargo on export of breadstuffs and salted provisions, Lower Canada, 6 October 1812, Wood, I, pp. 236-237.

20 October the arrival at Quebec of three victuallers with his salt meat and rice from England.¹³

Early in November Robinson received a request from Commissary-General Bullock at Barbados for as many as 5,000 barrels of flour. Once again the disruption of relations with the United States was the cause of the shortage, but this time Robinson felt unable to comply with the request, doubting if even 2,000 barrels, deliverable within three months, could then be purchased in Lower Canada.¹⁴ Less than a week later the threat of invasion forced Robinson to make a hurried journey to Montreal. At the end of November he expressed his growing concern over the supply situation to Sir George Prevost. The large numbers of militia, volunteers and Indians who had recently taken the field had thrown out his previous calculations and further estimates could not be accurate as he did not know what numbers might be called out in future nor what reinforcements might arrive. The relative optimism of early summer had faded:

From the situation of this Country however, in point of Resources, I entertain no doubt, of its being essentially necessary to obtain a supply of Flour and Salt Pork from England.

In this Province [Lower Canada] the Scanty crop of wheat, has proved a most serious evil, and if the war continues and

¹³List of Exports from Lower Canada in 1812, enclosed in Sir G. Prevost to Lord Bathurst, No. 97, 25 October 1813 (P.A.C., C.O. 42/151, p. 197); W. H. Robinson to N. Freer, 20 October 1812 (P.A.C.; R.G. 8, C 116, p. 328).

¹⁴W. H. Robinson to N. Freer, 3 November 1812 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 116, p. 335).

the Militia is called out Agriculture will of course be neglected, and we cannot rely upon the next harvest.

In Upper Canada there was a promise of more abundance, yet from a large portion of the Population having been under Arms in defence of the Country before the harvest was compleat, a great deficiency is experienced, and if Hostilities continue, of course the land will not be tilled next year - From the above Circumstance, as well as the Interruption in the Communication, not half the usual quantity of Flour has been brought down to this Province; Consequently I have only been able to supply a sufficiency for the Winter - tho' I have purchased every Barrel that was in the Market and shall continue to do so.¹⁵

The remedy was to be a further requisition for 10,000 barrels of flour and 6,000 of salt pork from England, to be sent out as early in the spring as possible. With that amount Robinson hoped that the forces then present in the Canadas could be successfully maintained, but, he added, "in proportion as Reinforcements come out, provisions must be sent to feed them."¹⁶ It was to be a phrase often repeated throughout the war.

Provisioning troops in Upper Canada was always a more difficult task than it was in the lower province. Major-General Isaac Brock, Administrator and Commander of the Forces in Upper Canada since October 1811, took the opportunity in February 1812 to insist that efforts be made at Amherstburg to purchase a supply of indian corn, as it would be absolutely necessary in the event of war. If possible the corn was to be procured from American settlements, thus leaving a

¹⁵W. H. Robinson to Sir G. Prevost, 30 November 1812 (P.A.C., C.O. 42/148, pp. 70-71).

¹⁶Ibid.

stock on hand within Canadian boundaries, while depleting that of the enemy. Whether war came or not the corn could always be used to supply the Indians, who would gladly accept it in lieu of other types of rations. The corn, however, was not readily available - on either side of the frontier. A small crop the preceding year, the use of corn as forage over the winter, and the demands of distilleries, all helped to reduce supplies and by March only sixty bushels had been purchased, with little prospect of finding more.¹⁷

The general arrangements for the year's provisions in Upper Canada (October 1812 to October 1813) were made as usual through Mr. McGill, the former agent for purchases. Brock was apprehensive that the merchants would dispose of much of the flour before the Commissariat had concluded its contracts. His continued desire to obtain additional quantities of flour and pork for the forces in Upper Canada seemed likely to meet with frustration, when in May it appeared that there would hardly be a barrel left by the middle of June as the local merchants were exporting such provisions as quickly as possible.¹⁸ After war was declared an embargo was laid on all flour, wheat and pork still in the province, and according to an American resident,

¹⁷I. Brock to N. Freer, 12 February 1812; Lieutenant Colonel St. George to Captain Glegg, 9 March 1812 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 116, pp. 35-36, 62-63).

¹⁸I. Brock to John McGill, 29 February and 16 May 1812, Wood, I, p. 296; III, pp. 1710174; I. Brock to N. Freer, 12 February and 9 March 1812 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 116, pp. 35-36, 51-52).

Michael Smith, only a small amount had actually been exported by that time. Smith went on to describe the ensuing situation:

. . . The next harvest was truly bountiful, as also the crops of corn, buckwheat, and peas; the most of which were gathered except the buckwheat, which was on the ground when all the people were called away after the battle of Queenston; so that the people have a plenty of provision as yet (April, 1813). But should the war continue, they must suffer, as not more than one half of the farmers, especially of the upper part of Canada, sowed any winter grain, because when they ought to have done it, they were called away to the lines. Although I say that the people in general have grain enough, yet some women are now suffering for bread, as their husbands are on the lines, and they and their children have no money or credit, nor can they get any work to do.¹⁹

If the inhabitants still had "grain enough," what surplus was available to the army? The harvest of 1812 was not "truly bountiful" everywhere in Upper Canada. The demand for militiamen that summer seriously affected the harvest despite the fact that many men were periodically allowed to return home. At the end of August it was reported that wheat yields in Western District were less than half and corn not a quarter of the usual.²⁰ The effects of such a harvest were not to be felt immediately and for the moment supplies of fresh beef for the upper province seemed assured,²¹ but it was clear that the resources of Upper Canada could not sustain the needs of both soldier

¹⁹Smith; pp. 94-95;

²⁰Fred Landon, Western Ontario and the American Frontier, Toronto, 1941, p. 40.

²¹W. H. Robinson to J. C. Herries, No. 61, 19 August 1812 (P.A.C., W.O. 57/14).

and civilian indefinitely. Over the winter months, in December and January, Smith noted that "some hundreds of sleighs" were on the roads, hauling various supplies from Lower Canada to Kingston, York, the Niagara and other posts in the upper province.²²

Smith admitted to his readers that he was unable to determine the source of all these supplies, yet at the same time he had already given part of the answer:

As soon as the snow fell in Canada, and the sleighing became good, (which was in the last of November) the British exerted themselves to the utmost to provide for the support of the war. A large price was offered for flour and pork, particularly near the line of the lower part of the state of New York, on the St. Lawrence, and near the line of Vermont and New Hampshire, in order to get a large supply for another year, and to induce the citizens of the United States to transgress the laws; and it appears that some, by love of money, were prevailed upon to do it.²³

For one reason or another, Smith would appear to have underestimated the treasonous inclinations of his fellow Americans. It was a known fact on both sides of the border that not all Americans supported the war, and that many openly opposed it. The governors of both Massachusetts and Connecticut had refused to furnish the militia-men asked for by President Madison. Along the Atlantic seaboard a mutual agreement between the New England states and Nova Scotia and New Brunswick prevented open hostilities. In New Hampshire, Massachusetts and Maine, the war was virtually ignored and American

²²Smith, p. 95.

²³Ibid.

vessels sailing with provisions for Wellington's army in Spain were given protection. American vessels called at Halifax under Spanish colours and indeed for several months after the declaration of war, there was hope that hostilities might be stopped and a reconciliation considered.²⁴

Of more immediate concern to the Commissariat in the Canadas was the attitude of New Englanders living along the border directly to the south. They had long expressed an interest in maintaining their commercial ties with Britain²⁵ and in the years before the war had blatantly defied Jefferson's Embargo and the Non-Intercourse Acts, even to the point of forcibly preventing interference by customs officials and the army.²⁶ The war did little to daunt their enthusiasm. The people of northern Vermont soon made it known in Lower Canada that they wished to maintain normal trade relations, continuing to exchange their agricultural products for British manufactured goods. By October 1813 the Vermont Legislature even went as far as to repeal the law inflicting penalties on persons trading with

²⁴Hitsman, Incredible War of 1812, pp. 48-50, 115; W. H. Robinson to N. Freer, 3 November 1812 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 116, p. 335).

²⁵See Ira Allen to Duke of Portland, 19 March 1796, H. A. Innis and A. R. M. Lower, ed., Select Documents in Canadian Economic History 1783-1885, Toronto, 1933, p. 151.

²⁶It is one of the ironies of the war that General J. Brown who commanded the American forces on the Niagara in 1814 had been deeply involved in the pre-war smuggling, earning the nickname "Potash Brown."

Canada.²⁷ New Englanders had also settled in northern New York, and in St. Lawrence County there was overt treason as the agents of the wealthy David Parish²⁸ fraternized with the enemy and blatantly protested any interference by the American military. Though Parish himself held different opinions, his agents freely sympathized with the British and did not doubt Britain's ultimate triumph and the probability of a large part of St. Lawrence County being annexed to British North America in the process. It was "Mr. Madison's War" and he could fight it without them.²⁹

Shortly after the American declaration of war, Sir George Prevost had requested that a certain Mr. George McLéan be appointed as a clerk in the Commissariat and assigned to special service - procuring cattle from behind the American lines and foraging for the army generally. Within a month, however, McLéan was reported as captured and his appointment cancelled.³⁰ It was an inauspicious

²⁷R. L. Jones, "Agriculture in Lower Canada, 1792-1815," The Canadian Historical Review, XXVII, 1946, pp. 42, 44-48; Hitsman, Incredible war of 1812, pp. 21, 48.

²⁸David Parish, the German-born land developer of St. Lawrence and Jefferson counties who had made a fortune acting as an agent for a syndicate transferring bullion from Mexico to Napoleon's coffers in France. He committed suicide in Vienna in 1826 following the failure of a banking firm he had joined.

²⁹J. Mackay Hitsman, "David Parish and the War of 1812," Military Affairs, Winter, 1962-63, p. 171; Harry F. Landon, Bugles on the Border, Watertown, 1954, pp. 6; 32-36.

³⁰W. H. Robinson to J. C. Herries, No. 49, 18 July 1812 (P.A., W.O. 57/14).

start, but in the autumn of 1812 British military authorities made it known to the residents of north-eastern New York, northern Vermont and northern New Hampshire that their produce would be welcome in the Canadas. On 22 December Major-General De Rottenburg, commanding at Montreal, made reference to these efforts in a letter to the military secretary, Noah Freer: "You will be pleased to inform His Excellency that every thing relative to the importation of Provisions from the United States is in a fair train, at Missisqui Bay, as well as upon the Chateaugai, but as yet I have received no intelligence of its Success."³¹

The venture, however, did prove successful. As the war continued the illicit trade in pork, flour and livestock assumed larger and larger dimensions, becoming a year-round affair. Importation was regulated through trading licences and attempts by the American government to suppress the trade produced little in the way of success. In June 1813 two American schooners ventured into the mouth of the Richelieu River in an effort to prevent the illegal export of provisions, but were promptly captured by the British.³² New England seaports were deliberately not included in the British naval blockade and while the Commissariat offered to pay a good price, the inadequacy of Canadian resources insured a constant need for American provisions.

³¹Major-General Francis de Rottenburg to N. Freer, 22 December 1812 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 116, p. 344).

³²Hitsman, Incredible War of 1812, pp. 136-137.

Events at Ogdensburg, New York, may be taken as a case in point. The first months of the war had been relatively peaceful and friendly relations with Canadian neighbours and British officers across the St. Lawrence were hardly affected. In September, however, a small American militia brigade under Brigadier-General Jacob Brown and a detachment of regular riflemen arrived. Much to the chagrin of many, shore batteries began firing on British bateaux convoys while the riflemen proceeded to raid the Canadian shore, harassing the local inhabitants. One attempt to dislodge the American forces in October failed miserably, but the following February the Prescott garrison, augmented by two companies of British regulars, dispersed the remaining riflemen, Brown's militia having gone home before Christmas. Relations were soon back to normal and Americans continued selling their provisions at Prescott throughout the war to Mr. Gilkinson, a local merchant who had been appointed as a purchasing agent by the Commissariat.³³ Such traffic was general all along the northern frontier of New York as was reported to David Parish in July 1813: "It is incredible what quantities of cattle and sheep are driven into Canada. We can hardly get any for love or money; the day before yesterday upwards of 100 Oxen went through Prescott, yesterday about 200."³⁴

³³Hitsman, Safeguarding Canada, p. 97.

³⁴Ross to D. Parish, 23 July 1813, cited by H. F. Landon, p. 34.

At best, however, importation from the United States was only a partial solution. Certain garrisons could make good some deficiencies and obtain a supply of fresh meat, but other measures were required to insure that proper provisions would be available for all of the forces serving in the Canadas. The provincial parliament of Upper Canada, meeting in February ~~and~~ March 1813, earnestly discussed the matter of saving grain. The relatively poor harvests of 1812 induced Major-General Sir Roger Sheaffe, who had become Administrator and Commander of the Forces in Upper Canada after Brock's death, to ask for controls over the export of provisions and the distillation of grain in the province. These requests were eventually granted, but the question of martial law for the purpose of collecting provisions was also considered, as British forces were hard pressed in the Niagara and at Amherstburg. At the latter post a partial operation of martial law was actually imposed. Such actions, however, were not entirely successful. The ban on distillation proved an awkward problem when the government found itself without a local source of liquor for the army. As a result the original proclamation was rescinded and not reimposed again until Major-General De Rottenburg took command in Upper Canada towards the end of June.³⁵

³⁵William R. Riddell, "The First Canadian War-time Prohibition Measure," The Canadian Historical Review, I, 1920, pp. 187-188; William M. Weekes, "The War of 1812: Civil Authority and Martial Law in Upper Canada," Ontario History, XLVIII, 1956, pp. 151-154.

As the summer of 1813 progressed, the provision problem in Upper Canada assumed serious tones. In June orders were issued forbidding women and children to accompany troops proceeding into Upper Canada. That July De Rottenburg took action to secure the grain fields and stock left behind by inhabitants of the Niagara peninsula who had defected to the enemy following the successful American attack on Fort George at the end of May.³⁶ To the west, at Amherstburg, this disruption of the Niagara line was felt severely. Provisions ran short, the situation much aggravated by the presence of large numbers of Indian warriors and their families. This in turn led directly to a risky naval action and defeat on Lake Erie in September. The probability that the troops and Indians from Amherstburg would retreat towards Burlington created additional problems for commissariat officers in the Niagara peninsula, who were then already concerned about finding adequate supplies for those presently in their charge. By the beginning of October a general withdrawal of all forces towards Burlington was momentarily expected - at a time when almost the whole of the area's commissariat personnel was sick in bed with fever.³⁷

³⁶General Order, 5 June 1813 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 1170, p. 228); Riddell, pp. 187-188.

³⁷E. Couche to W. H. Robinson, 27 September 1813 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 117, pp. 145-147); T. G. Ridout to his father, 2 October 1813, Matilda Edgar, ed., Ten Years of Upper Canada in Peace and War 1805-1815, Toronto, 1890, p. 228.

Concurrently, the Kingston garrison experienced serious difficulties. By August De Rottenburg was advocating martial law in the surrounding area as both food and forage were running low while disaffection among the local inhabitants seemed rampant. That autumn provision stores sank to less than a week's subsistence while aid from Montreal was disrupted by an attempted American invasion from Sackett's Harbour down the St. Lawrence into the lower province. Some supplies were sent across Lake Ontario from York and Burlington, but on 22 November De Rottenburg proclaimed a partial existence of martial law in the Johnstown and Eastern districts.³⁸ During the winter only a limited assistance was sent from Montreal and at Kingston the winter months were spent "exposed to the most imminent danger of wanting flour." By the following March, however, the anxiety had subsided.³⁹

In Lower Canada, Commissary-General Robinson had trouble with contractors unable to complete deliveries of flour and biscuit. By May 1813 wheat was difficult to obtain. The owner of the Jacques Cartier Mills blamed the trouble on the poor harvest, the disruption of intercourse with the upper province and the general "Calamities of War."⁴⁰ It was, however, already clear that neither local contractors

³⁸[John Richardson], The Letters of Veritas, Montreal, 1815, pp. 76, 79-80.

³⁹W. H. Robinson to J. C. Herries, No. 225, 26 March 1814 (P.A.C., W.O. 57/15).

⁴⁰W. H. Robinson to N. Freer, 12 May 1813; Petition of Adam Rennie, 22 June 1813 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 117, pp. 57-58, 83-84).

nor American smugglers would suffice and as the war progressed increasing importance was placed on supplies from the British Isles. Additional quantities of flour were sent from Halifax in the Spring of 1813⁴¹ but by June Robinson sent off another pressing requisition for some four million pounds of flour to be forwarded from Britain, to reach him by the summer of 1814.

The requisition arrived in London in August but was too late for the Victualling Board to supply the proper quantity in time for the convoy then leaving Great Britain. Further arrangements were made for two vessels to carry additional flour from Cork while it also appeared that Commissary-General Bullock in the West Indies might be able to supply Robinson with as much as one million pounds. Altogether the Commissioners of Victualling, along with Commissary-General Bullock, would provide the Canadas with upwards of two million pounds of flour before the end of the navigation season at Quebec. This would, of course, be in addition to quantities already sent.⁴² Rice and salt meat were also needed and over a million pounds of meat was sent along with the flour from Great Britain. The remainder of the four million pounds of flour, with that of some four million of salt meat, and a further 670,743 pounds of rice, were all to be sent the following spring.⁴³

⁴¹Sir J. Sherbrooke to N. Freer, 1 June 1813 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 117, p. 67).

⁴²See Appendix X.

⁴³J. C. Herries to W. H. Robinson, No. 137, 12 August; No. 142, 7 September and No. 152, 27 October 1813 (P.A.C., W.O. 58/64, pp. 143, 150-151, 160); J. C. Herries to Lord Bathurst, 17 August 1813 (P.A.C., C.O. 42/154, pp. 222-223).

In the final result Bullock proved unable to supply the million pounds of flour from the West Indies, but by that time the harvest of 1813 in the Canadas was complete and the news was good. Less had been seeded than usual, but climatic conditions had allowed an abundant harvest in the lower province, especially near Quebec.⁴⁴ Bullock's flour was not needed, but the picture was still far from satisfactory. Young Thomas Ridout, soon to be given a commission with the Commissariat, wrote to his father from Montreal in November 1813: "I have not seen a stack of hay or wheat in Lower Canada, and the barns appear to be only half full. There are also few or no cattle. Flour is now \$20 per barrel, and bread 2s. per loaf."⁴⁵

As the new year of 1814 began there were grave doubts as to whether any meat, fresh or salt, would be obtainable in Upper Canada. The supply of cattle in every part of the province was exhausted and Robinson looked anxiously for the supplies ordered from England.⁴⁶ Meanwhile importation from the United States continued. In January 1814 De Rottenburg informed the military secretary of the return of "Our Beef Contractor" from Albany,⁴⁷ and during the summer of 1814

⁴⁴J. Drummond to W. H. Robinson, No. 161, 28 December 1813 (P.A.C., W.O. 58/64, p. 170); Ouellet, p. 219.

⁴⁵T. G. Ridout to his father, 20 November 1813, Edgar, pp. 255-256.

⁴⁶W. H. Robinson to N. Freer, 12 February 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 118, pp. 39-41); W. H. Robinson to J. C. Herries, No. 225, 26 March 1814 (P.A.C., W.O. 57/15).

⁴⁷F. de Rottenburg to [N. Freer], 7 January 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 682, pp. 14-15).

droves of American cattle made their way towards the Canadian border.

At the end of June Robinson reported to Sir George Prevost with some confidence:

On the Score of Provisions I feel no alarm, taking it for granted, His Majesty's Government will not only direct all the supplies I have demanded from England, to be forwarded, immediately, but that an additional quantity of every article in proportion to our increase of numbers will accompany or follow the Troops - and there is a sufficiency at this moment in the Country for the Summer, as I have concluded Contracts for Fresh Beef for all the Troops from Quebec to Coteau du Lac inclusive from the 25th of August to the 24th of March next, besides partial Contracts for the Garrison of Montreal and the Posts of Chambly and St. John's which are now in force having commenced on the 25th Inst. and they will only terminate when the General Contract commences, the 25th August.⁴⁸

By that time Robinson had also completed a contract for 600,000 pounds of fresh beef deliverable at Kingston between August 25 and December 24, most or even all of which doubtless came from the American side of the border.

Reliance on fresh beef supplies which came from behind an enemy's lines was not without its anxieties. Prevost explained the situation to Lord Bathurst in London:

In fact, my Lord, two-thirds of the army in Canada are at this moment eating beef provided by American Contractors, drawn principally from the States of Vermont and New York. This circumstance, as well as the introduction of large sums of specie into this Province, being Notorious in the United States, it is to be expected that Congress will take steps to deprive us of those resources, and under that Apprehension large Drovers are daily Crossing the Lines Coming into Lower Canada.⁴⁹

⁴⁸W. H. Robinson to [Sir G. Prevost], 29 June 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 373, pp. 168-169).

⁴⁹Sir G. Prevost to Lord Bathurst, No. 190, 27 August 1814 (P.A.C., C.O. 42/157, p. 158).

On the other side of the border, Major-General George Izard gave a vivid picture to the American Secretary of War of the illegal trade and the futility of efforts to stop it:

From the St. Lawrence to the Ocean, an open disregard prevails for the laws prohibiting intercourse with the enemy. The road to St. Regis is covered with droves of cattle, and the river with rafts, destined for the enemy. The revenue officers see these things, but acknowledge their inability to put a stop to such outrageous proceedings. On the eastern side of Lake Champlain the high roads are found insufficient for the supplies of cattle which are pouring into Canada. Like herds of buffaloes they press through the forest, making paths for themselves.

. . . Nothing but a cordon of troops from the French Mills to Lake Memphramagog could effectually check the evil. Were it not for these supplies, the British forces in Canada would soon be suffering from famine, or their government be subjected to enormous expense for their maintenance.⁵⁰

By 1814, at posts like that of Cornwall in Upper Canada, American suppliers were a vital element in maintaining the troops quartered there. Thomas Ridout told his father that the supplies to feed the 1,600 men stationed at Cornwall in January 1814, would all have to come from the Americans. Cattle were driven from the American interior on the pretence of supplying the United States Army on the Salmon River, on the south side of the St. Lawrence, but were crossed over to the Canadian shore at night. Apart from the clandestine arrival of the all important cattle herds, Ridout also expected that he would have to draw most of his flour from across the border as well.

⁵⁰ Major-General George Izard to John Armstrong, secretary of war, 31 July 1814, cited by Henry Adams, History of the United States of America, 1801-1817, New York, 1890, VIII, p. 93.

The trade at Cornwall continued throughout 1814. In June Ridout noted that he had contracted for fresh beef from a "Yankee Magistrate" and that September the horses of one of Wellington's artillery brigades were doubtless quite content to consume hay willingly provided by American farmers from across the river.⁵¹

At times relations must have seemed friendly, nevertheless there was concern over spies finding easy cover by posing as eager cattle traders. During the winter of 1813-14 a temporary halt was put on American importation at Ogdensburg and in September 1814 Mr. Gilkinson and several other government agents warned that a "general & pernicious intercourse is maintained with the enemy in the Eastern & Johnstowne districts, but chiefly in the latter."⁵² Their recommendation was that all such activity above Prescott should be suspended.

Convoys arriving at Quebec in 1814 brought increasing numbers of men and supplies from Britain. Provisions ordered the previous year were sent out in the spring and additional quantities accompanied the influx of reinforcements from southern France. The war with Napoleon being finished for the moment, supplies originally intended

⁵¹T. G. Ridout to his father, 19 January 1814; T. G. Ridout to his mother, 1 September 1814, Edgar, pp. 269-270, 318-319.

⁵²Solomon Jones, W. G. Gilkinson, Joel Stone and William Fraser to [Sir G. Prevost], September 1814, cited by Ruth McKenzie, Leeds and Grenville: Their First Two Hundred Years, Toronto, 1961, p. 63.

for Wellington were diverted and sent to Canada for the support of offensive operations against the American frontier. Included were over three hundred tons of the recently developed "forage cakes," complete with instructions.⁵³ During 1814 the maintenance of forces in Upper Canada and especially on the Niagara frontier was a constant and pressing problem until the very close of navigation. Mounting an offensive operation into northern New York in August and September involved additional effort and the rapid organization of a supply train.

Despite the increased numbers to be fed, Robinson's provision estimates, covering the period from 25 April 1814 to 24 September 1815, were calculated on the basis of his being able to supply much of the required flour and the whole of the pease and rum needed, from British North America.⁵⁴ The good Canadian harvest of 1813 meant that better than half of the 10,612,698 pounds of flour needed could be provided locally, yet the British government decided to ship the entire quantity of flour and rum from Britain. The harvest had been good on both sides of the Atlantic but the preference went to English farmers and merchants, regardless of the local Canadian surplus.⁵⁵

⁵³See J. Drummond to W. H. Robinson, No. 177, 31 March; No. 184, 14 April; No. 184, 21 April 1814 (P.A.C., W.O. 58/64, pp. 184, 187, 191); J. Drummond to Harrison, 8 June 1814 (P.A.C., C.O. 42/159, p. 50); J. C. Herries to W. H. Robinson, 4 June 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 119, p. 263).

⁵⁴See Appendix XI.

⁵⁵J. Drummond to W. H. Robinson, No. 219, 25 August 1814 (P.A.C., W.O. 58/64, pp. 234-236); W. W. Rostow, British Economy of the Nineteenth Century, Oxford, 1949, pp. 178-179.

The official cessation of hostilities at the end of 1814 brought some modification in the arrangements for sending provisions from Britain in the spring but the flow of material continued and Robinson's expenditures on transport in 1815 were higher than in the two preceding years. The strained conditions of war subsided only gradually, but by April 1815 the commissary-general's brother, Major-General Fredrick P. Robinson, stationed at Kingston, was delighted to report that, thanks to those irrepressible American traders, ". . . we are supplied with all the necessaries of life in the greatest abundance."⁵⁶

It occurred to William Coffin, writing half a century after the war, that there had been two basic elements in what he termed the "pabula belli" of the struggle for Canada - shoes and bread.⁵⁷ Indeed, the provision of food alone would obviously not suffice for the maintenance of an army. Clothing, arms, ammunition, accoutrements, various bits of equipment, fuel and shelter were needed for every man under arms, while garrison and field ordnance, with the proper ammunition and stores, naval supplies and Indian presents were also essentials for the Canadian war. Yet the likelihood of obtaining these items in sufficient quantities "on the spot," in British North America, was remote indeed.

⁵⁶Major-General Fredrick P. Robinson to Lieutenant Colonel John Harvey, 25 April 1815 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C-682, p. 215).

⁵⁷William F. Coffin, 1812, The War and its Moral: a Canadian Chronicle, Montreal, 1864, p. 169.

Many were simply not produced in either of the Canadas. The little manufacturing that was done was very much tied to the pattern of a self-sufficient farming economy. In Upper Canada, grist mills, saw mills, distilleries, carding machines and fulling mills did little more than process or improve the raw materials provided by the customer. Weavers were in business, but many farmers did much of their own weaving. Even by 1820 neither glass nor paper was produced in the upper province. Labour and capital were scarce, the market was small and provided little incentive.⁵⁸ A town such as York, the provincial capital, had only 600 residents, while Kingston, the largest, had but 2,250 in 1817.⁵⁹ The situation in Lower Canada was quite similar, though urban development was much in advance of that in Upper Canada. Montreal and Quebec counted upwards of 12,000 inhabitants⁶⁰ each and it was possible to obtain locally, at least in part, certain of the items required.⁶¹ Local procurement, however, was generally a matter of expediency to cover a momentary shortage. Everything from writing utensils to anchors was ordered and received from the British Isles.

⁵⁸Spelt, pp. 31-41.

⁵⁹Agnes M. Machar, The Story of Old Kingston, Toronto, 1908, p. 161.

⁶⁰See Bouchette, p. 153. He gives the population of Montreal as 15,000. A map by Melish (ca. 1812) gives Quebec as 12,000 and Montreal as 10,000 inhabitants.

⁶¹The firm of Meneclier and Massue in Montreal sold various items of military clothing, personal equipment and accessories for officers. These articles were imported from Great Britain but Commissary-General Robinson also mentions trousers and blankets of local manufacture being purchased.

With respect to clothing and accoutrements, the chief concern was to equip the militia and various provincial corps placed under arms during the war. In July 1812 Major-General Brock wrote from Upper Canada of the militia, ". . . assembled in a wretched state with regard to clothing. Many without shoes, an article which can scarcely be provided in the country,"⁶² Nor could the King's Stores in the upper province provide the necessary camp equipage. There were neither blankets, haversacks, kettles nor tents available. Deputy Commissary-General Couche was obliged to purchase locally whatever he could but his supply of specie was soon exhausted. In Lower Canada Robinson was ordered to purchase a considerable quantity of clothing for the militia but shortages in the upper province were relieved only gradually.⁶³ At York a subscription was organized by the citizens to provide the militia with shirts, shoes, stockings and mittens.⁶⁴

Certainly at the beginning of the war Canadian militiamen were turning out in ordinary civilian dress but those present at the capture of Detroit in August 1812 were also supplied with cast-off clothing from the British regulars. In November and December, Prevost

⁶²Cited by Major-General C. W. Robinson, Life of Sir John Beverley Robinson, Toronto, 1904, p. 61.

⁶³W. H. Robinson to J. C. Herries, 18 July 1812 (P.A.C., W.O. 57/14).

⁶⁴John Strachan to Captain Cameron of the 3rd York Militia, 7 December 1812, George W. Spragge, ed., The John Strachan Letter Book: 1812-1834, Toronto, 1946, p. 28.

requested complete clothing and accoutrements from England for about 10,000 men serving in the militia and fencible regiments. Over the winter Commissary-General Robinson was directed to obtain materials to make up clothing and equipment for 2,000 militia in Upper Canada. Such clothing was only to be temporary, for Prevost was asking that his requisition on England be filled and sent out as quickly as possible, ". . . for without this assistance, the Public Service may experience serious inconvenience, and the Military Spirit of the disposable population will be checked, by want of proper Clothing which the Country itself, is unequal to furnish in a sufficient quantity."⁶⁵

The clothing procured locally was not entirely to Prevost's satisfaction but it did have one certain advantage:

Clothing of inferior quality has been procured by the Commissary General for 4000 militia men in Lower Canada and for 2000 in Upper Canada, which will be in readiness to be issued, in April, at least four months sooner than I can look for the requisitions. I have made to England for this Service.⁶⁶

In due time the clothing and accoutrements for the militia arrived from England and replaced those supplied by Robinson's Commissariat. The regular regiments, including those arrived from France, received extensive shipments of clothing in the summer of 1814. Camp equipment was ordered from England on a large scale⁶⁷ but correspondence

⁶⁵Sir G. Prevost to Lord Bathurst, No. 29, 16 December 1812 (P.A.C., C.O. 42/148, p. 97).

⁶⁶Sir G. Prevost to Lord Bathurst, No. 41, 8 February 1813 (P.A.C., C.O. 42/150, p. 39).

⁶⁷See Appendix XII.

from both Brock and Drummond indicates that precious little was available on the Niagara during the war. It was strongly urged that all troops proceeding to Upper Canada be amply provided with the proper necessaries, especially with shoes, as they were unobtainable in that province.⁶⁸ A reserve store of greatcoats was established under the care of the Commissariat at Quebec to prevent difficulties, ". . . owing to the non arrival Great Coats from this Country [England], before the settling in of the Winter Season . . ."⁶⁹ Their timely arrival on the distant Niagara frontier, however, was not guaranteed⁷⁰ and at posts such as Michlimackinac the problem was much worse, throwing the garrison on whatever local substitutes might be obtained.

Cannon, small arms and ordnance stores generally, were not obtainable from local Canadian producers. In Upper Canada there were only the merest beginnings of iron works, one on the Gananoque River, already a failure, another just started in 1813 in Norfolk County. Neither was capable of boring cannon or making shot. The products of the St. Maurice Forges in the lower province seem to have been chiefly for household and farm use with some mill machinery, though they were previously reported in the mid-eighteenth century to have cast cannon

⁶⁸General Order, 19 May 1813; 29 August 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 1170, p. 208, C 1172, p. 12).

⁶⁹Lord Palmerston, secretary at war, to [Sir G. Prevost], 3 October 1812 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 116, p. 300).

⁷⁰See T. G. Ridout to his father, 30 August 1813, Edgar, pp. 210-211.

and mortars.⁷¹ Ordnance supplies already in store prior to the outbreak of hostilities were inadequate to meet the requirements of active service and expanded wartime establishments. Importation from the British Isles was a necessity, not only to meet the needs of the land forces in Canada, but also those of the naval forces employed on the lakes.⁷²

Demands for small arms, like those for clothing and accoutrements, were mainly intended to equip militiamen. Shipments arrived at Quebec by the close of the 1812 navigation season but the situation in Upper Canada at the beginning of the war was a critical one, especially as the militia were soon called out to meet the enemy. In February 1812 Major-General Brock had only enough muskets to arm the "active part" of the militia and according to the Reverend John Strachan there were scarcely arms for every third man when war broke out. Consequently the capture of some 2500 stand of arms at Detroit was of infinite value:

This country has actually armed itself from the enemy. almost all the militia from the Western District and many here [York] and at Niagara are supplied with arms taken from the Americans. I believe the like never happened before that a country took from its invading enemy the arms by which it was defended.⁷³

⁷¹Lambert, pp. 484-485; C. P. Stacey, "Another Look at the Battle of Lake Erie," Canadian Historical Review, XXXIX, 1958, p. 41.

⁷²See Appendix XIII.

⁷³J. Strachan to the Marquis Wellesley, 1 November 1812, Spragge, p. 30.

Capture was one method of providing arms, heavy ordnance and stores "on the spot" in Upper Canada, yet it obviously could not be counted a reliable source of supply. Nevertheless such a windfall was not to be discounted and it certainly did have the advantage of saving the expense, effort and time of transport from depots in Lower Canada, the ultimate source being Britain. In 1814 Drummond was able to replace the farm wagons and carts usually employed by the Ordnance Department on the Niagara frontier with proper tumbrils and wagons, all of them taken from the American forces at Fort Niagara.

Requisitions for materials needed by the naval commissioner at Kingston were handled by the Commissariat⁷⁴ either from depots at Montreal or Quebec, or by purchase in those towns when possible. But, apart from timber, the Canadas produced virtually nothing required for naval vessels. Guns, heavy anchors and cables were not made locally and though strenuous efforts had been made by the government to promote the production of hemp, it had met with relatively little success. Still there was some local cordage available and Canadian contractors were of course able to supply wood; also stone for ballast and small quantities of nails.⁷⁵

Yet even timber and scantling supplies were not always readily available for immediate use. They had to be contracted for in

⁷⁴The naval commissioner did make his own contracts for timber.

⁷⁵Sir G. Drummond to N. Freer, 24 March 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 118, pp. 74-77).

advance and could only be obtained during the winter months when the labour was available and the season suitable for drawing the logs out of the woods. To augment the supplies of naval stores and armaments sent directly from England, any spare stores were requested from naval vessels which called at Quebec during the war, and demands were also made on the naval station at Halifax.⁷⁶ Once the materials were assembled in the ports of the St. Lawrence, the arrangements for transport to the upper province fell to the Commissariat.

The thousands of blankets, sheets, bolsters, paillasses, rugs, candles and other sundry items required by the Barrack Department, along with the tools and materials needed by the Engineer Department, were all sent from England. Office stationery and supplies were sent out to all departments in the Canadas, while there were also the annual Indian presents to be dispatched - items of increasing importance as the war created an urgency for strong alliances with tribes along the Canadian frontier.

Fuel supplies, for both cooking and general heating, constituted yet another necessity, especially over the winter months. By 1814 the Kingston garrison's yearly fuel consumption was estimated at 10,000 cords of wood. Local contracts were usually arranged by the Commissariat in mid-summer. Yet, despite the seemingly endless abundance of

⁷⁶Report of a Board of Officers on the Subject of Conveying the Frames of Two Frigates and Two Brigs to Kingston, 6 April 1814 (P.A.C., W.O. 57/15); Captain Montoyer to N. Freer, 15 June 1813 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 117, p. 78).

Canadian timber, there were still the usual problems over exorbitant prices and difficult contractors. When, in October 1814, there was an impending shortage of winter fuel at Montreal, arrangements had to be made at once for additional contracts, wood was brought by transports from Quebec and an attempt was made to conserve existing supplies by issuing, where possible, only coals for cooking. As a further inducement to economize, payments were offered to the troops for any fuel saved.⁷⁷ Though the army might be sitting in the midst of a forest of plenty, fuel supplies did not materialize without proper planning and management. Still, as with everything else needed to sustain the defense of the Canadas, there were countless pitfalls which even the most careful arrangements could not foresee or avoid.

One of the major pitfalls was finance. Throughout the war the availability of local food supplies and other resources for the government's use, depended not only on their actual physical presence or absence, but also on the ability of the Commissariat to obtain them. In large measure this in turn was dependent on adequate supplies of acceptable currency being near at hand. Government expenditures, however, had to cover much more than just the cost of local goods and materials. The cost of calling out 4,000 militiamen in Upper Canada in 1812 was estimated at about £15,000 per month.⁷⁸

⁷⁷On fuel supplies and wood contractors see: P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 118, pp. 50-67, 116, 119-120, 174-177, 200-202.

⁷⁸W. H. Robinson to Sir G. Prevost, 30 July 1812 (P.A.C., C.O. 42/147, pp. 43-44).

Civil expenditures aside, there were the normal expenses, such as regimental pay and sundry other items, also greatly increased transport costs for more men, provisions, armaments and stores of all types. In 1814 Robinson's department accounted for transactions worth more than £2,300,000 on the Extraordinaries alone.⁷⁹ This was almost six times the normal yearly expenses for both the Canadas. Naval construction on the lakes cost at least an estimated £1,310,000. The St. Lawrence alone was built for about £300,000, while some £25,000 per year was expended for the twelve hundred ship carpenters, shipwrights and labourers employed at Kingston.⁸⁰

As soon as it had been learned that war had been declared, the price of local provisions rose rapidly. Profiteering, government demand and relative scarcity forced prices up, while there were periods when some commodities were simply not available on the market. Fine flour that had sold at Quebec for \$10.50 per barrel in June 1812 rose to \$16.00 by December and a year later, in June 1813, was going at \$20.00. At the beginning of the war Michael Smith reported that the common price of wheat in Upper Canada was one dollar per bushel, sometimes one dollar and 25 cents. Indian corn was 50 cents. By the end of the war the Commissariat was paying two and a half dollars per bushel for wheat and two dollars for Indian corn.⁸¹

⁷⁹See Appendix XIV.

⁸⁰H. F. Landon, p. 2.

⁸¹Quebec Prices Current, lists for June 1812 to September 1813, enclosed in despatches from Sir G. Prevost to Lord Bathurst (P.A.C.),

Inflated prices were charged for many materials, labour was always expensive and expenditures on transport were considerable. Moving the frame of the frigate Psyche, which had been built at the Clyde shipyards and brought across the Atlantic, from Montreal to Kingston, cost the government almost £12,600, being paid out of the Extraordinaries.⁸² This was about three times the actual cost of its construction in Britain. Transport costs for forty 24 prs taken from Montreal to Kingston in 1813 were about £4,000, while it was reported that £1,000 had been spent on sending one large cable from Sorel to Kingston by land during the winter.⁸³ The expense of moving provisions and other stores was correspondingly high.

Money, or at least good credit, was the vital ingredient in the Commissariat's operations. The chronic shortage of specie in early nineteenth century Canada was therefore a serious problem. War expenditures greatly aggravated the situation, the more so as the enemy, the United States, was an important source for the specie used by the government in British North America. At the beginning of the war, in view of the world-wide danger threatening Britain's interests, neither reinforcements nor specie could be sent from the British Isles.

C.O. 42/147, pp. 92-93; C.O. 42/148, pp. 84-85; C.O. 42/150, pp. 63-65, 127-129; C.O. 42/51, pp. 177, 179, 181, 183, 185, 187); Peter Turquand to W. Kent, N. Bigger, I. Colner and others concerned, announcing prices to be paid by the Commissariat, 5 December 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 119, pp. 160-161); Smith, pp. 24-25.

⁸² Sir G. Prevost to Lord Bathurst, No. 216, 26 November 1814 (P.A.C., C.O. 42/157, pp. 364-367).

⁸³ H. F. Landon, p. 2; Stacey, "Battle of Lake Erie," p. 42.

Yet the Commissariat in both the upper and the lower province was desperately short of specie. Deputy Commissary-General Couche tried to arrange for the establishment of a paper currency in Upper Canada which would be backed by some of ". . . the most respectable Gentlemen in the Province."⁸⁴ In Lower Canada Commissary-General Robinson took loans from merchants and was borrowing specie ". . . in every way it could be obtained."⁸⁵ He was also expecting a small sum from the Commissariat in Halifax, being a part of a larger amount obtained in the Bahamas.

Such measures, however, could not suffice and it soon became necessary to attempt the creation of an acceptable paper currency. Such a measure had been considered prior to the outbreak of war and a special session of the Legislature of Lower Canada, called in July 1812, approved the issuance of "Army Bills." Backed by the British government, the larger denominations were redeemable with interest, while smaller bills were to be paid in cash on demand.⁸⁶ This action eventually saved the situation in Upper Canada where the Legislature refused to make such an innovation, the Commissariat being authorized to issue its own notes to supplement the province's military chest.

⁸⁴Extract, E. Couche to W. H. Robinson, 3 July 1812, enclosed in W. H. Robinson to J. C. Herries, No. 48, 18 July 1812 (P.A.C., W.O. 57/14).

⁸⁵W. H. Robinson to N. Freer, 15 July 1812 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 116, p. 257); W. H. Robinson to J. C. Herries, No. 52, 30 July 1812 (P.A.C., W.O. 57/14).

⁸⁶See Appendix XV.

In fact, all money used in Upper Canada during the war, whether in specie or paper, came by way of the lower province.

When the war was over Robinson wrote to Herries, his chief in London, with great satisfaction over the success of the Army Bills. Wartime requirements had made them indispensable and according to Robinson they had succeeded beyond all hopes, benefitting both the individual and the king's service, without ". . . a Shadow of complaint or dissatisfaction from any Quarter." He continued:

Never, perhaps, was a Measure adopted under greater disadvantages, from the prejudice of the Canadians to all Paper Money - and yet it was impossible to be more Completely Successful than it is universally acknowledged to have been. This is not only to be attributed to the original Plan but to the confidence the Canadians have in Sir George Prevost - whose call upon Every occasion they have never failed to obey with zeal and alacrity.⁸⁷

Indeed, in October 1812 Robinson had reported the complete success of the new bills in enabling payment to the troops and in generally easing his financial difficulties. Good faith in the government seemed to be well established and the bills had added advantages over specie, being more easily transported, at less expense and with less risk.⁸⁸ There were, however, still problems. Money shortages remained an obstacle throughout the war. At Prescott, for one example, the Commissariat was often without bills for two or

⁸⁷W. H. Robinson to J. C. Herries, No. 346, 17 March 1815 (P.A.C., W.O. 57/15).

⁸⁸W. H. Robinson to J. C. Herries, No. 84, 27 October 1812 (P.A.C., W.O. 57/14); Proceeding of a Board of Officers on the Subject of Army Bills in Circulation, 19 February 1815 (P.A.C., W.O. 57/15).

three weeks at a time, payments in the interim being made by the commissary's own office notes.⁸⁹ In February 1814 Lieutenant-General Drummond complained of the inadequate supplies of money usually sent to the upper province. That same month Deputy-Assistant Commissary-General Ridout at Cornwall had expended £4,000 in only two weeks.⁹⁰ In Kingston it was at least possible to get loans from merchants but elsewhere in the province the government's credit suffered because of the lack of funds.

The suspicion with which many of the habitants of Lower Canada viewed the new paper currency made it necessary for the governor to have Bishop Plessis of Quebec try to convince them of its validity. Nonetheless, there continued to be problems, as were explained to the Prince Regent in March 1814:

... notwithstanding the repugnance of the Inhabitants of the country to Paper money, a repugnance arising from their experience of unhappy consequences from a former circulation of that kind, the Law in question [the Army Bill Act] had at first all the effect that could be expected; But the depreciation which these Bills soon experienced has made the same articles dearer when purchased with paper than when purchased with Specie; It has also created a difficulty, amounting nearly to impossibility, of obtaining specie for Paper; With pain we behold this paper threaten to diminish in utility to Government, notwithstanding the earnest intention of the House of Assembly to communicate to it the highest degree of credit.⁹¹

⁸⁹Deputy Assistant Commissary-General Green to W. H. Robinson, 25 October 1813 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 117, pp. 167-170).

⁹⁰Sir G. Drummond to Sir G. Prevost, 8 February 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 682, pp. 104-108); T. G. Ridout to his father, 9 February 1814, Edgar, p. 274.

⁹¹Petition to the Prince Regent, March 1814, pp. 224-225.

If the new bills did bring a general, but short-lived prosperity to many, there were certainly those who lost out.⁹² At the beginning of 1814 Lieutenant-General Drummond in Upper Canada found himself faced with complaints by inhabitants of the upper part of the province who had been denied payment on the grounds that their receipts were too old. Even those who were paid did not necessarily get the whole sum owed them. The commissaries seldom had sufficient money on hand and as they possessed only the higher denominations, payments of less than twenty-five dollars were not made at all, while other claimants might find themselves short-changed on greater amounts. The situation caused hardships for the local population and did nothing for the government's credit.⁹³ Drummond's need for small bills was alleviated to some extent by fresh issues approved by the Legislature in the lower province, but even there supplies were running low. Counterfeiting was also encountered. Some local attempts were crude and amateurish but more serious trouble was met when the American government tried to introduce forgeries into the Canadas.⁹⁴

The Army Bills were undoubtedly a great help in financing the war, but when battles were lost, confidence in the government and its

⁹²See Ouellet, pp. 223-226.

⁹³Sir G. Drummond to Sir G. Prevost, 27 January 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 682, pp. 59-62).

⁹⁴J. Green to N. Freer, 8 November 1813 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 117, pp. 180-182); Sir G. Prevost to Lord Bathurst, No. 139, 10 March 1814 (P.A.C., C.O. 42/156, pp. 133-135).

paper currency wavered. In May 1813 the American army captured Fort George and was subsequently able to advance towards Burlington. When Prevost wrote to London the situation in Upper Canada looked dismal:

The period has arrived - when from the uncertain state of affairs paper money loses its effect & specie alone can command the hidden resources of the Country - Your Lordship has long been aware of the total deficiency of Specie in the Canadas, & I must now beg leave to inform you that among the many difficulties I have to encounter this is becoming one of excessive magnitude, in consequence of the small quantity of provisions which can be obtained in these Provinces for the maintenance of the Troops.⁹⁵

Throughout the war specie remained of the utmost importance while the Army Bills would not appear to have been the completely unqualified success that the commissary-general, and later historians, reported. Lost battles were only part of the trouble. In March 1814 Prevost was still lamenting the attitude of many of the habitants towards paper money:

To be enabled to meet the demands for Supplies in carrying on a Defensive War on an immensely extended frontier with an inevitable extreme expansion of the Forces, many Depôts ought to be established, supporting each other to the extremity of a long line; but most unfortunately an almost insurmountable difficulty exists to frustrate all our attempts; I allude to the want of Specie for payment of the Articles obtained:- A paper Currency has as yet proved itself but an indifferent substitute to Bullion, in consequence of the inevitable prejudice against it in the minds of the Canadians, and the frequent attempts made by the Enemy to imitate it, and more particularly by the introduction of a number of forged Army Bills into the Province by Major General Wilkinson's Army last Autumn.⁹⁶

⁹⁵Sir G. Prevost to Lord Bathurst, No. 66, 6 June 1813 (P.A.C., C.O. 42/150, p. 95).

⁹⁶Sir G. Prevost to Lord Bathurst, No. 139, 10 March 1814 (P.A.C., C.O. 42/156, p. 134).

Specie was needed to support the Army Bills, but there were also many articles of "indispensable necessity to the troops" which could not be obtained locally without coin.⁹⁷ It was most important in purchasing cattle from the Americans, as they could not be expected to accept Army Bills, while specie alone offered sufficient reward for their risks in dealing with the enemy. By 1814, with specie becoming scarce in the United States, supplies of American coin, such as the £10,000 worth of Eagles and Half Eagles sent to Kingston in April of that year, must have seemed irresistably attractive to American smugglers.⁹⁸

Ironically, much of the specie used by the Commissariat in the Canadas came from the United States. Commissary-General Robinson continued to negotiate the government's bills in the northeastern United States, despite the war. On 11 July 1814 he reported having raised almost £140,000 from the Americans since his previous report of 8 June. The same summer £200,000 in specie was sent to him from England. The continuing influx of American specie was by that time, according to Robinson, ". . . a fortunate circumstance, as we are fast approaching the limits of the Act of legislature sanctioning an

⁹⁷Sir G. Prevost to Lord Bathurst, No. 148, 18 March 1814 (P.A.C., C.O. 42/156, p. 196).

⁹⁸W. H. Robinson to J. C. Herries, No. 84, 27 October 1812 (P.A.C., W.O. 57/14); Sir G. Prevost to Sir G. Drummond, 21 April 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 1222, pp. 105-107). An Eagle was an American gold coin worth ten dollars.

extension of the Issues of Army Bills."⁹⁹ Certain Americans played an important role in financing the defence of the Canadas, while at the same time refusing to help their own government when it faced bankruptcy over war expenditures. Indeed, it would appear that the money obtained from one American was used to pay another to smuggle provisions which enabled British redcoats in Canada to carry on a war against the United States!

Canadian resources alone were unequal to the task of sustaining the war. Warlike stores of all types came almost wholly from Great Britain, while a combination of locally obtained provisions, imports from the British Isles and smuggled produce from the United States was used to feed the military and naval personnel which defended the Canadas. Yet each source of supply had its own limitations. Transport over long distances was an obvious disadvantage in using any materials coming from Great Britain, but Canadian provisions, though they might be near at hand, were frequently hard to obtain, especially when government credit was low and the inhabitants unwilling to come forward. Making up for the inadequacy of local Canadian resources by encouraging smuggling from behind the enemy's lines was of course attended by its own risks and demanded expenditures in hard cash - a commodity which itself was frequently in short supply. Indeed the willing support of not a few of the enemy was one of the unique aspects of the conflict. It enabled the Commissariat to

⁹⁹W. H. Robinson to J. C. Herries, No. 257, 11 July 1814 (P.A.C., W.O. 57/15).

draw on local North American resources which were not solely Canadian and in no small measure insured the success of the British defence.

It must have been with a particular satisfaction that Sir George Prevost reported to London on the success of his commissary-general's efforts in sustaining the war.¹⁰⁰

¹⁰⁰Sir G. Prevost to Lord Bathurst, No. 159, 19 May 1814.
(P.A.C., C.O. 42/156, pp. 317-318).

CHAPTER FIVE

THE LINES OF COMMUNICATION

The lines of communication, by which an army is connected with its base of supply, may be described as the backbone and vital artery of that army.¹ Their secure maintenance is essential in ensuring a regular flow of reinforcements and supplies. Though they form an obvious objective for the enemy, they may be exposed to hazards quite apart from their vulnerability to enemy action. For inseparable from an understanding of the particular strategic problems of a given line of communication is an appreciation of the transport problems encountered. Whatever the manner in which the various supplies of war are obtained, at one point or another they will require transport. In 1812 the British army in the Canadas faced communication problems which were not only affected by strategic position, terrain and the usual vagaries of weather, but also by relations with the local inhabitants. Nor was the current technology able to overcome, or minimize to any extent, the difficulties experienced.

The source of much of the provisions and virtually all of the "warlike stores" used in the Canadas was the British Isles. At

¹Lieut. Col. Alfred H. Burne, The Art of War on Land, London, 1950, p. 24.

Woolwich, on the Thames, the endless rows of brass and iron ordnance, the immense piles of shot and shell and the frenzied bustle of activity were bound to impress the casual visitor. Here transports destined for distant colonies docked and took on board ordnance stores, while the foundries cast and bored cannon, the whole supported by a small army of workmen.² Not far along the river, at Deptford, ships were loaded with provisions and stores from the storekeeper-general. It was an impressive display of Britain's growing industrial might, but what was the guarantee that a Woolwich cannon would arrive in time, or indeed would arrive at all, to defend a distant post in Upper Canada or to arm a vessel on the Great Lakes? Three thousand miles separated Woolwich from Quebec and from there to Amherstburg was another seven hundred.

From the dockyards along the Thames and from ports like Cork and Portsmouth, the flow of men and material began to move across the Atlantic towards North America.³ Regular convoys left Britain from April to September, the journey to Quebec usually taking a little under two months, though on occasion it could certainly take much longer.⁴ Losses at sea due to bad weather or the action of American

²See T. G. Ridout to his father, 18 December 1811; T. G. Ridout to his brother, 6 June 1812, Edgar, pp. 68-69, 120-123.

³See Appendix XVI.

⁴Announcements of ship arrivals printed in the Montreal Herald also give information on the time of passage. In 1814 there were anxious moments as the June convoy did not arrive at Quebec until the end of September.

or French privateers was a possibility but the long ocean voyage was not necessarily a handicap as long as the Royal Navy's control of the North Atlantic was secure and the men and supplies were dispatched in time to arrive before any shortages occurred. On this latter point, the close of navigation over the winter presented a particular difficulty as supplies sent out the following spring from Britain might arrive late in the Canadas. With this in mind, it was arranged to send out "those Supplies by the last Fleet of the year preceding that on which they may be required."⁵ On the whole, however, the ocean voyage was comparatively safe. Once in Canada, new hazards were encountered.

At Quebec an Agent for Transports, a naval officer appointed by the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, was responsible for the handling of the transport vessels after they arrived. With a minimum of delay, they were to land their cargoes either at Quebec or elsewhere up the St. Lawrence and make the return journey to Great Britain. In accordance with specific instructions, the returning transports were loaded with Canadian timber, plank and masts for the Navy Board in Britain and though they were not supposed to winter in Canada, late arrivals sometimes found themselves frozen in at Quebec.⁶

⁵Lord Bathurst to Sir G. Prevost, 9 June 1813 (P.A.C., R.G.8, C 117, p. 73).

⁶F. Kempt to G. Glasgow, 12 October 1813 (P.A.C., R.G.8, C 373, pp. 105-106); Sir G. Prevost to Lord Bathurst, No. 219, 3 December 1814 (P.A.C., C.O.42/157, p. 400).

While the navigation season lasted on the St. Lawrence (usually May into November) the ocean-going transports were able to go up the river with troops and stores as far as Montreal,⁷ or could disembark them at intermediate points such as William Henry [Sorel]. Usually, however, they docked at Quebec, which was also designated as one of the two general depots for bateaux in the lower province. Posts as far up the river as Three Rivers drew on Quebec for the services of these small river craft and those posts above Three Rivers could request bateaux from the other general depot, at Montreal.

Schooners were also engaged to carry men and supplies up the St. Lawrence,⁸ but one of the more unique occurrences of the war was

⁷In 1773 Lieutenant John Marr, R.E., reported that the St. Lawrence was navigable for large top-sail vessels drawing as much as sixteen feet of water ("Remarks on the Province of Quebec" by J. Marr, March 31, 1773 in P.A.C., M.G. 23, A-1, packet 2307), and in the early nineteenth century Hugh Gray noted that large vessels preferred to stop at Quebec as navigation above that point was "attended with so many inconveniences."

Though Montreal harbour was secure for shipping during the navigation season it did have one particular disadvantage. The St. Mary's Current, about a mile below the harbour, was strong enough that vessels could not stem it without a good north-easterly wind. Vessels could sometimes be detained, even for weeks, idling only two miles from the point at which they were to discharge their cargoes. To avoid this, they could be towed through the current and tied to the bank for unloading.

In 1811 Thomas Ridout wrote to his brother on his impressions of the two ports, Montreal and Quebec: "There are near two hundred sail lying in the river [at Quebec], they form a forest of three or four deep for six miles. . . . Montreal is nothing to compare with Quebec in regard to bustle, business or anything else. Consider what the loading and unloading of two hundred sail must make." (T. G. Ridout to his brother, 5 July 1811, Edgar, p. 38).

⁸See Appendix XVII.

the employment of John Molson's⁹ steamboat Swiftsure¹⁰ to move men and light stores between Quebec and Montreal. The vessel was engaged by the government on a trip basis only, mostly under charter to the Quartermaster-General's Department, though Molson had been willing to fit it up as a regular transport and put it permanently at the government's disposal for the entire navigation season.¹¹ During the 1813 and 1814 seasons a return voyage from Montreal to Quebec was generally made once a week, totalling close to 60 round trips over these two years.

The journey by steamboat took about 48 hours down stream to Quebec, but somewhat longer on the return.¹² The vessel was capable

⁹The Honourable John Molson (1763-1836), born in England, founder of Molson's Brewery of Montreal.

¹⁰Molson's first steamboat Accommodation was built in 1809 and would appear to have gone out of service after the 1810 season, being replaced in 1812 by Swiftsure. In 1813 the Swiftsure began a regular service between Montreal and Quebec. See Merrill Denison, The Barley and the Stream - The Molson Story, Toronto, 1955, pp. 56-96; G. H. Wilson, "The Application of Steam to St. Lawrence Valley Navigation 1809-1840," M.A. Thesis, McGill University, 1961, pp. 10-48.

It may be noticed, however, that Joseph Bouchette in his description of Lower Canada, states that there were two steamboats operating on the St. Lawrence during war, while neither Denison nor Wilson offers any direct evidence on the breaking up of the Accommodation. See Bouchette, pp. 472-473. Molson, however, in his offer to the government, writes of one steamboat. See: P.A.C., R.G.8, C 1220, pp. 56, 174-175; C 117, pp. 19-20.

¹¹See W. H. Robinson to N. Freer, 9 February 1813; J. Molson to W. H. Robinson, 6 February 1813; N. Freer to J. Molson, 15 December 1812; N. Freer to W. H. Robinson, 13 February 1813 (P.A.C., R.G.8, C 117, pp. 18, 19-20; C 1220, pp. 56, 174-175).

¹²The upwards passage sometimes required two nights at anchor, the downward always one.

of carrying at least 400 officers and men, though her steerage was fitted up to accommodate only 150 persons comfortably.¹³ Besides regular army and navy personnel, the Swiftsure also provided transport for militia units, American prisoners of war and, of course, civilians. From the warrants issued, it would appear that the vessel carried in total upwards of 8,000 troops during the war.¹⁴ This, in addition to the carriage of light stores such as clothing and camp equipage, was a significant contribution, especially on those "occasions of emergency" when troops had to be moved up from Quebec rapidly.¹⁵

By land, road travel between Quebec and Montreal was possible along both sides of the St. Lawrence and was made easier on the north shore by a line of post-houses.¹⁶ In addition, there were also daily stages, performing the journey in two long sixteen-hour days of driving, being somewhat quicker in winter when the coach body was mounted on a sledge.¹⁷ These were the normal arrangements which might accommodate the individual traveller, but the movement of troops by land through the lower province required the aid of the local inhabitants, especially when the forwarding of baggage was involved.

¹³Montreal Herald, 13 August 1814; Wilson, p. 27.

¹⁴Denison, p. 105.

¹⁵Bouchette, p. 473.

¹⁶The post road along the north shore was the usual route for travellers.

¹⁷G. P. de Twenebroker Glazebrook, A History of Transportation in Canada, Toronto, 1938, p. 140; Bouchette, pp. 471-472.

To facilitate such a movement, a commissary of transport was resident in each of the districts of Quebec, Three Rivers and Montreal, while further provision was also made to have field commissaries of transport accompanying the main body of the army.¹⁸ Acting through the government's ordonnance regulating the corvée service, the commissary of transport was to provide any carriages or bateau men required by the Commissariat¹⁹ and the Quartermaster-General's Department. To obtain them, he was to make application to the officers of the sedentary militia in his district and was to pay for all corvées, at stipulated rates,²⁰ by requisition on the Commissariat. In order "to keep up the Chain of Communication without extraordinary delays or disappointments" the commissary was to make regular reports to his fellows on all trains leaving his district and was to inform the ranking military officer of any of his requisitions being improperly carried out, that delinquents could be brought to justice. Complete registers, made up from the annual militia returns, were kept

¹⁸The position of commissary of transport was established in 1787. He was not a member of the Commissariat, acted under civil authority, and was the only person empowered to issue orders to the captains of militia to call out the inhabitants on corvée. Before the war it was not part of his duty to pay those employed on corvée but in 1813 he was given this task as well. The field commissaries of transport were employed only during the war, the position being abolished in 1816. See W. H. Robinson to N. Freer, 25 January 1815 (P.A.C., R.G.8, C 119, pp. 36-37).

¹⁹Normally only the Quartermaster-General's Department could make such requisitions but this was altered on Robinson's request due to the increased demands of the war.

²⁰See Appendix XVIII.

of all persons in the district liable to serve as bateau men or to furnish carriages, complete with the number of horses and of winter and summer vehicles owned by each.²¹

Troops might be ordered to move forward from Quebec to Montreal by both sides of the St. Lawrence and the magistrates and officers of the sedentary militia en route were warned to prepare themselves. When it was required, the commissaries of transport were to furnish a route of march through their respective districts and to make the necessary arrangements in each parish to lodge the troops and to provide carriage for their baggage.²² On "pressing occasions," when the troops themselves might be moved by carriage, the commissaries were to attend in person and were again to be "on the spot" to investigate any complaints or disorders.²³

Originally each of the three commissaries of transport was to have had one clerk but the work to be done soon proved overwhelming. At Montreal Lieutenant-Colonel Hypolite Saint Georges Dupré,²⁴ the commissary of transport, found his office constantly "besieged with Officers, Sergeants, Soldiers, Corvée Men, Carters and Ferry-men" while

²¹Instructions for Conducting the Department of the Commissary of Transport in Lower Canada, during the Continuance of the War with the United States, 10 January 1813 (P.A.C., R.G.8, C 373, pp. 43-46).

²²See Appendix XIX.

²³Instructions for Conducting the Department of the Commissary of Transport, pp. 47-48.

²⁴Lieutenant-Colonel of the 3rd Battalion Select Militia, Montreal and vicinity.

his accounts were already more than seven months behind by February 1814. His establishment was wholly inadequate, especially as he and his clerk were frequently called away to attend to various transport matters.²⁵ To correct the situation, Dupré's staff was increased and finally included one commissary of transport, one assistant commissary of transport, four deputy-assistant commissaries of transport, three clerks stationed at Montreal, two at Chambly and two sergeant conductors of corvées.²⁶ In 1816 the commissary of transport establishments were again reduced but even then there were still wartime accounts not yet settled.²⁷

An inadequate staff produced difficulties, but how much worse would the situation become if the local population were unwilling to co-operate? Despite frequent comment on the general zeal shown by the Lower Canadians, it was obvious that as the burden of the corvée fell largely on "les habitants de compagnie," the transport service would be especially unpopular at the seeding and harvest times. But the commissaries of transport also complained of the difficulties of

²⁵Lieutenant-Colonel St. Georges Dupré to I. W. Clarke, 22 January 1814; W. H. Robinson to N. Freer, 11 February 1814; I. W. Clarke to W. H. Robinson, 31 January 1814 (P.A.C., R.G.8, C 373, pp. 123-124, 125-127, 128-130).

²⁶Statement of the Department of the Commissary of Transport at Montreal and Dependencies, established for the Period of the War, ca. February 1816 (P.A.C., R.G.8, C 374, p. 153). The conductors appointed were militia sergeants who were to take charge of the provisions, stores and other effects in transit, giving receipts and paying for the carriages used.

²⁷Charles Fremont to Major C. L. Foster, military secretary, 22 February 1816 (P.A.C., R.G.8, C 374, p. 162).

complying with requisitions for transport received at periods when the roads were known to be almost impassable - a regular occurrence every spring and fall.²⁸

In November 1813 Commissary-General Robinson was anxious over the manner in which the orders of the commissary of transport at Montreal were being received by the local inhabitants:

These orders are now treated with Contempt and the King's Service suffers. It is time the individuals became liable, in consequence of neglect, to a legal prosecution, but this is very little satisfaction at the moment, for six months may elapse before they can be convicted and then they are only liable to a small fine but the chance is that they escape punishment, from some unavoidable want of form in warning them which at this time, when almost all the Captains of Militia are from home, is very likely to be the case.²⁹

November was generally a time of bad roads, but with the first good fall of snow or hard frost things improved and the habitant was usually glad to make the extra money on corvée during the winter, when he usually had little to do and roads were good for sleigh travel.

The problems, however, were not only seasonal. It was always difficult to be fair to each individual who owed service. Still others claimed special exemptions. Dupré complained of certain militia officers who ignored his requisitions for vehicles on the grounds that they had been previously incorporated for active service

²⁸C. Fremont to C. L. Foster, 20 August and 7 November 1815 (P.A.C., R.G.8, C 374, pp. 100-101, 117-119).

²⁹W. H. Robinson to N. Freer, 14 November 1813 (P.A.C., R.G.8, C 117, pp. 183-184).

and were therefore exempt from any such obligation.³⁰ Another problem was finding boatmen to move troops from one side of the St. Lawrence to the other. Though it was often of great importance that such a passage be accomplished without any loss of time, the law allowed a two-day delay before departure on this service, while the commissary of transport could not force the professional boatmen, who resided in the Montreal area, to perform this essential service.³¹

Further disruptions were caused by officers who insisted on detaining corvée carts, which were engaged in moving provisions for the Commissariat, at their own posts often for several days at a time. Robinson reported one such officer who was holding up more than 50 carts, not allowing them to return to their depots or to go home.³² General orders also reprimanded individuals who were pressing carriages while treating the inhabitants "with improper and unbecoming violence, to enforce their wishes."³³

Though difficulties were felt because of the problems encountered in furnishing regular and proper land transport within the lower province, a protracted breakdown of the communication between

³⁰St. Georges Dupré to N. Freer, 6 December 1814 (P.A.C., R.G.8, C 373, pp. 232-233).

³¹Memorial of Lieutenant-Colonel St. Georges Dupré, 12 June 1815 (P.A.C., R.G.8, C 374, pp. 53-57).

³²W. H. Robinson to N. Freer, 14 November 1813 (P.A.C., R.G.8, C 117, pp. 185-186).

³³General Order, 14 October 1812 (P.A.C., R.G.8, C 1168, p. 306).

the two Canadas would have been a crippling blow to the British defence of Upper Canada. For without the security of communications between Montreal and Kingston the troops, seamen, warlike stores and provisions which made defence possible could not reach the upper province. But from Montreal westward, the defenders of the Canadas were "formed to a flank," protecting a frontier and a line of communication which were in fact one and the same, the entire length being exposed to direct enemy attack. In C. P. Stacey's words:

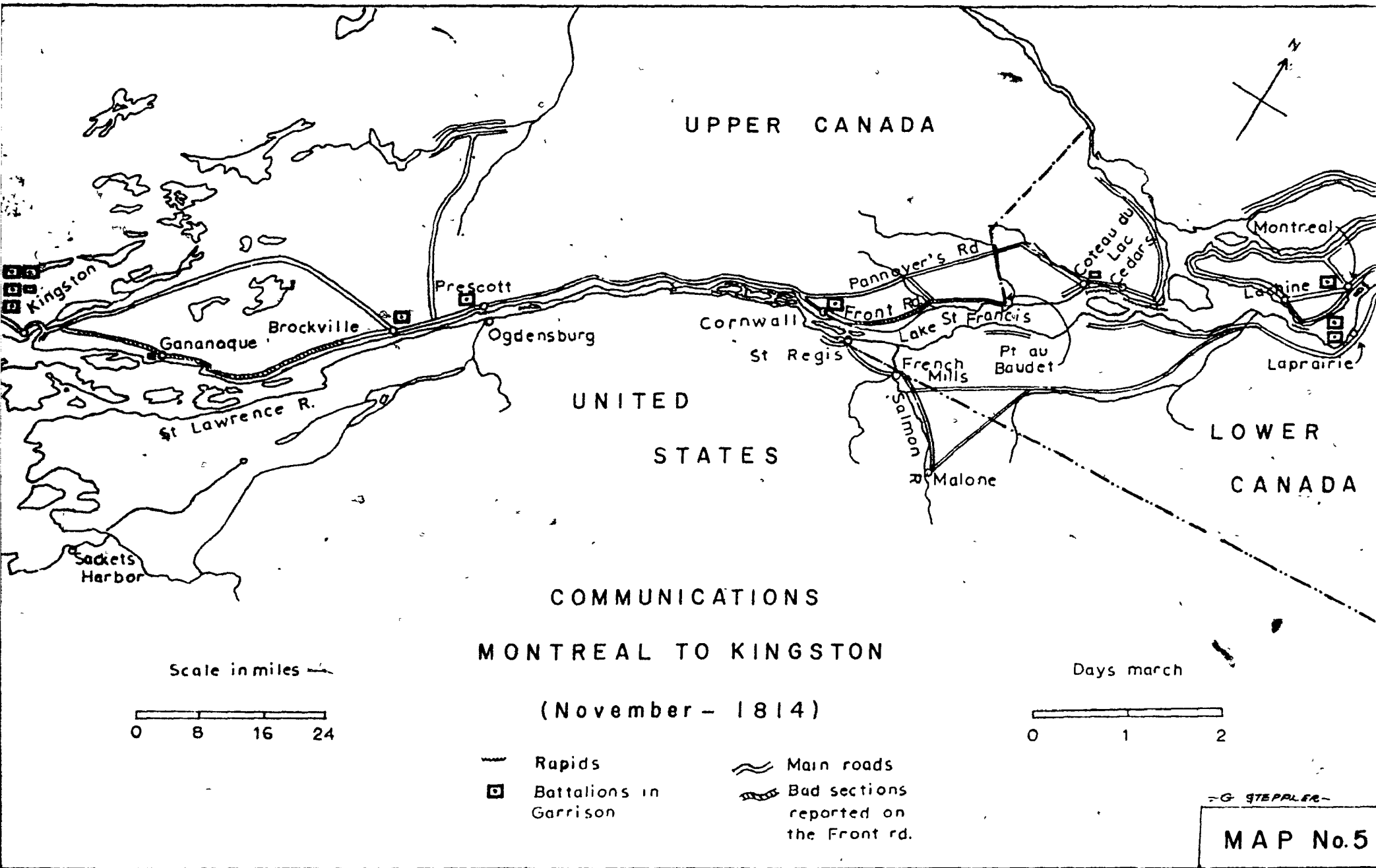
. . . the Americans had only to cut those communications to cause the whole of Upper Canada west of the point of severance to fall into their hands at an early date. The capture of Montreal would have given them the entire province, and they ought to have made Montreal their supreme objective from the beginning.³⁴

Commissary-General Robinson referred to Kingston as "the Key to the Upper part of the Province [of Upper Canada]"³⁵ and though American commanders toyed with the idea of assaulting it, the project was continually put off.³⁶ Instead, American resources were expended

³⁴C. P. Stacey, "Naval Power on the Lakes, 1812-1814," Mason, p. 50.

³⁵W. H. Robinson to J. C. Herries, No. 160, 18 August 1813 (P.A.C., W.O. 57/14).

³⁶Even before the war General John Armstrong had urged the American secretary of war William Eustis to direct all effort at severing the St. Lawrence. (See J. Armstrong to W. Eustis, 2 January 1812, John Armstrong, Notices of the War of 1812, New York, 1840, I, pp. 240-241.) When Armstrong later became secretary of war himself, he again insisted on the destruction of Kingston as the first objective for both the 1813 and 1814 campaigns. In 1813 Dearborn and Chauncey excused themselves from attacking Kingston on the grounds that it was too strong. Instead they proposed attacking York, then proceeding to



farther to the west on operations which even if successful could only achieve more limited results. For the British, the realities of their strategic position dictated the absolute need to cover Kingston and the communication with Montreal. It was a concern of the first importance, being clearly reflected in the fact that posts along this line were progressively strengthened as the war went on. Nor were reinforcements, drawn from Kingston and points east, sent westward until they could be replaced by troops moving up from Lower Canada [see map No.5].

In practical terms of spanning the distance between Montreal and Kingston it was the St. Lawrence River which became the "sole artery of supply." An alternative route using the Ottawa and Rideau Rivers was studied before the end of the war, and although Lieutenant-Colonel Macdonell was convinced that it could be made to function effectively, there were grave doubts. The area was without settlement and the local resources seemed unequal to the task of maintaining

Fort George on the Niagara and finally, almost as an afterthought, assaulting Kingston. How they could be in a better position to take Kingston after their trip around Lake Ontario was not explained. In any event the attack on Kingston did not materialize. Later that fall Wilkinson's campaign on the St. Lawrence came to naught and again in 1814 Brown declined an attack on Kingston for the same reasons as Dearborn and once more the main American effort ended up on the Niagara, though Armstrong had only wished such an operation to be a diversion. (See Reginald Horsman, The War of 1812, New York, 1969, pp. 89-91, 117-118, 130; A. T. Mahan, Sea Power in its Relations to the War of 1812, Boston, 1905, II, pp. 278-281.) American plans to sever the St. Lawrence in 1815 may have proved more effective but came too late." (See C. P. Stacey, "An American Plan for a Canadian Campaign," American Historical Review, XLVI, 1940-41, pp. 348-358.)

communication along it. In any case Macdonell's scheme was never attempted³⁷ and throughout the war the St. Lawrence remained:

. . . the only high way to the Upper Province, because there are no Roads, at least none capable of transporting heavy stores, except in Winter upon the Snow, nor are there horses, carriages, or provender in the Country sufficient for the purpose, even if they were practicable at other seasons.³⁸

The post road from Lower to Upper Canada actually came to an end about seven miles short of the border with the upper province. From that point to the border about four and three quarters miles were regularly covered with water, in some places two feet deep. The actual connection between the Canadas was usually made by ferry along the St. Lawrence.³⁹

³⁷At the end of December 1814 Prevost wrote to Drummond telling him to implement Macdonell's plan as far as was practicable, if it appeared that the Americans were going to cut communications between Montreal and Kingston. Prevost was fully aware of the difficulties involved and felt that Macdonell may have underestimated them. See Sir G. Prevost to Sir G. Drummond, 29 December 1814 (P.A.C., R.G.8, C 1222, pp. 242-243).

The Rideau Canal became the central project of the post-1815 efforts to secure the defence of the Canadas. Not approved until 1826, it was finally completed in 1834 at a cost of over a million pounds sterling - the singularly most expensive military work undertaken by the British government in North America.

³⁸Lieutenant-Colonel George Macdonell, "The Topography of the Canadas," April 1817, cited by George Raudzens, "'Red George' Macdonell, Military Saviour of Upper Canada?" Ontario History, LXII, December 1970, p. 206.

In 1808 a stage ran regularly between Montreal and Kingston during the winter and by 1819 it also travelled the route in summer. It was not until 1810 that a regular fortnightly courier service was started between Montreal and Kingston (Spelt, p. 34-35).

³⁹Heriot stated that a way for travellers on horseback had been cut through the woods but that it was scarcely practicable for wheeled vehicles (Heriot, I, p. 127). A road, known as Pannoyer's, running inland from Coteau du Lac and roughly parallel to the "front road" along the St. Lawrence, did actually connect the two provinces, but its value as a military route was questioned.

See Appendix XX.

Westward to Kingston road conditions were variable and of course could change from season to season. From Cornwall to Brockville the road was described as "very good,"⁴⁰ but "Six miles above Brockville the woods commence; the roads here are unpleasant, long stretches of corduroy bridge the swamps and low grounds, bridges remarkably solid, some long and lofty, span creeks and fairly wide rivers."⁴¹ Efforts to improve the roads on both sides of Gananoque, and in other places, in the summer of 1813 came to nothing as the sedentary militia assigned to the task were preoccupied with the harvest. In fact, road repair generally was more neglected during the period of the war than might otherwise have been the case.

Though stores and provisions could be moved overland in winter by sleigh, the cost was enormous. This again emphasized the fact that a major reliance had to be placed upon "a judicious water carriage."⁴² Yet, apart from its general strategic vulnerability, the upper St. Lawrence presented certain obstacles to easy navigation. From

⁴⁰ J. Strachan, A Memorandum For the use of Col. Bruere, 3 February 1813, Spragge, p. 34.

⁴¹ Jacques Viger, Reminiscences of the War of 1812, Kingston, 1895, p. 5.

⁴² According to Macdonell, "The expence of transport of every Twenty four pounder Gun taken by land from Quebec to Amherstburg in the late War, amounted to, I understand, at least six hundred pounds, exclusive of its ammunition!! The saving to be made by a judicious water carriage may be estimated from this circumstance and the generally understood fact, that the Contractor for the Winter transport of 1814, cleared a profit of E30,000, on the road from Montreal to Kingston alone." (Macdonell, pp. 206-207).

Montreal to Prescott there were several bad rapids, the worst stretch being between Lake St. Louis and Lake St. Francis, where the river dropped 84 feet in eight miles. In 1814 a captain of the Nova Scotia Fencibles described the method of navigation westward from Montreal:

. . . here [Montreal] the rapids commence and the only water carriage is in batteaux which are towed along the shore where the current is strong, but generally rowed, three of the worst rapids are avoided by means of Canals with locks - if the rope breaks in passing these rapids the boat is lost and those on board perish, such accidents sometime happen; a batteau is generally eight days in going from Montreal to Kingston, a distance of 200 miles, but if the wind blows fresh ahead they are much longer. All the Guns and Stores for the Ships of War must be brought up in these batteaux it is not an unusual thing for an hundred to arrive here [Kingston] together as they wait for a Convoy of Gun boats to protect them from the enemy.⁴³

Stores sent upstream from Quebec arrived at Montreal as originally packed in England, but not infrequently had to be repacked for the journey to Kingston and other posts in the upper province.⁴⁴ The small flat-bottomed bateaux which navigated the upper St. Lawrence had an average carrying capacity of 30 or 40 barrels of flour (three to four and a half tons), and were particularly well adapted to the difficulties encountered enroute to Kingston.⁴⁵ From Montreal the stores had first to be carted overland some seven miles to the depot

⁴³C. Armstrong to Lieutenant-General Hugh Swayne, 1 September 1814, cited by C. P. Stacey, "Upper Canada at War, 1814: Captain Armstrong Reports," Ontario History, XLVIII, winter, 1956, p. 40.

⁴⁴W. H. Robinson to J. C. Herries, No. 479, 4 December 1815 (P.A.C., W.O. 57/15).

⁴⁵See Appendix XXI.

at Lachine,⁴⁶ in order to avoid the St. Louis [Lachine] Rapids. The cargo was then loaded into bateaux and sailed westward across Lake St. Louis to the Cascades where the bateaux were locked past the rapids. Most of the cargo was then removed and carted to the head of the Cedars, the bateaux being dragged up the Split Rock and Cedars Rapids.

The boats were then reloaded and upon reaching Coteau du Lac avoided the worst of the rapids there by means of another canal and locks, eventually passing into Lake St. Francis. Above Cornwall there were two locks in the Long Sault and between Milles Roches and the head of these turbulent rapids, it was again necessary to remove cargo and have it hauled by wagon. Owing to the difficulties of the route the bateaux seldom covered more than 30 miles per day, even with a good wind behind. However, from Prescott the bateaux could proceed without difficulty to Kingston and Lake Ontario.⁴⁷

Even before the outbreak of war, Commissary-General Robinson had suggested that the government's bateau service be conducted "upon the principle adopted on other service for the regulation of Wagon Trains" and placed under a military officer with a number of sergeants to act as his conductors.⁴⁸ In peacetime the bateau employed on the

⁴⁶The King's Stores at Lachine was the "Depot for the shipment of all Stores and Provisions." Loaded bateaux might be sent to rendezvous at Upper Lachine but only Indian presents were to be embarked at that post (General Order, 15 October 1812).

⁴⁷Guillet, p. 51; Heriot, I, pp. 117-126.

⁴⁸W. H. Robinson to N. Freer, 23 April 1812 (P.A.C., R.G.8, C 116, p. 107).

upper St. Lawrence usually travelled in brigades of five to twelve, thus enabling the crews to aid one another in overcoming the various obstacles encountered. After war was declared, a convoy system was instituted in an effort to protect the bateaux brigades. Armed escorts were provided, the boats being held at Lachine until a sufficient detachment of either militia or regulars, bound for Upper Canada, could be found for the trip to Kingston.⁴⁹

At Prescott a military headquarters for the eastern districts was established and the flank companies from the Leeds, Grenville, Dundas, Stormont and Glengarry militia were stationed along the route to provide relay escorts for the bateau convoys, while also guarding arms and ammunition depots. Detachments were stationed at points where the river channel was narrow and where there were rapids. In addition, a troop of Provincial Dragoons was scattered along the main road by the river through Eastern and Johnstown Districts.⁵⁰ Fortifications, however, were noticeably lacking and in July 1812 local contractors began construction on a stockade and battery at Prescott, both to control the navigation and to deter any American attack from Ogdensburg. The works were steadily strengthened and other blockhouses were erected at Gananoque and later at Chimney or Bridge Island, commanding a narrow channel in the river near

⁴⁹See Appendix XXII.

⁵⁰Return of Dragoon Stations, 29 May 1813 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 688e, p. 79).

Mallorytown Landing.⁵¹ In the lower province the canal at Coteau du Lac was improved and its defenses much strengthened by the end of the war.

Staging points guarded by the militia flank companies were prearranged as overnight stops for the convoys. Several of these stops coincided with the beginning or end of rapids, the bateaux being particularly vulnerable to attack while being dragged through such rough waters.⁵² Boats, baggage and stores were to be secured and guarded each night, with even the smallest detachments furnishing sentries. The escorts were not to be employed in rowing and were warned to be "in readiness to use their Arms, at a Moment's Notice."⁵³

Yet the progress of the bateaux brigades struggling upstream to Kingston was slow and the opportunities for attack presented to the enemy were many. Apart from navigational hazards and its general strategic vulnerability, the route itself could be easily commanded at many points by properly placed batteries. According to Lieutenant-Colonel Macdonell of Glengarry, the situation was such that even without the enemy erecting fortifications, the St. Lawrence "ought never to be calculated upon in time of War, it is notoriously, for a great part of its course, completely under the command of Musquetry

⁵¹McKenzie, p. 61.

⁵²Hitsman, Incredible War, p. 95.

⁵³General Order, 22 September 1812 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 1168, p. 280).

from the thickly wooded banks on the American side of the River."⁵⁴ Nevertheless, despite such facts, no determined effort was made by the Americans to disrupt the all-important supply route along the upper St. Lawrence. The sporadic raids and occasional clashes which did occur with the bateaux convoys had little effect on the war.⁵⁵ And though Wilkinson's brief interruption of this line of communication towards the end of 1813 gave some indication of what the Americans might have achieved by such action,⁵⁶ it was not repeated.

The St. Lawrence, however, was only the first link of an inland line of communication which stretched westward eventually to remote posts on the upper lakes. Going west from Kingston, the line of supply

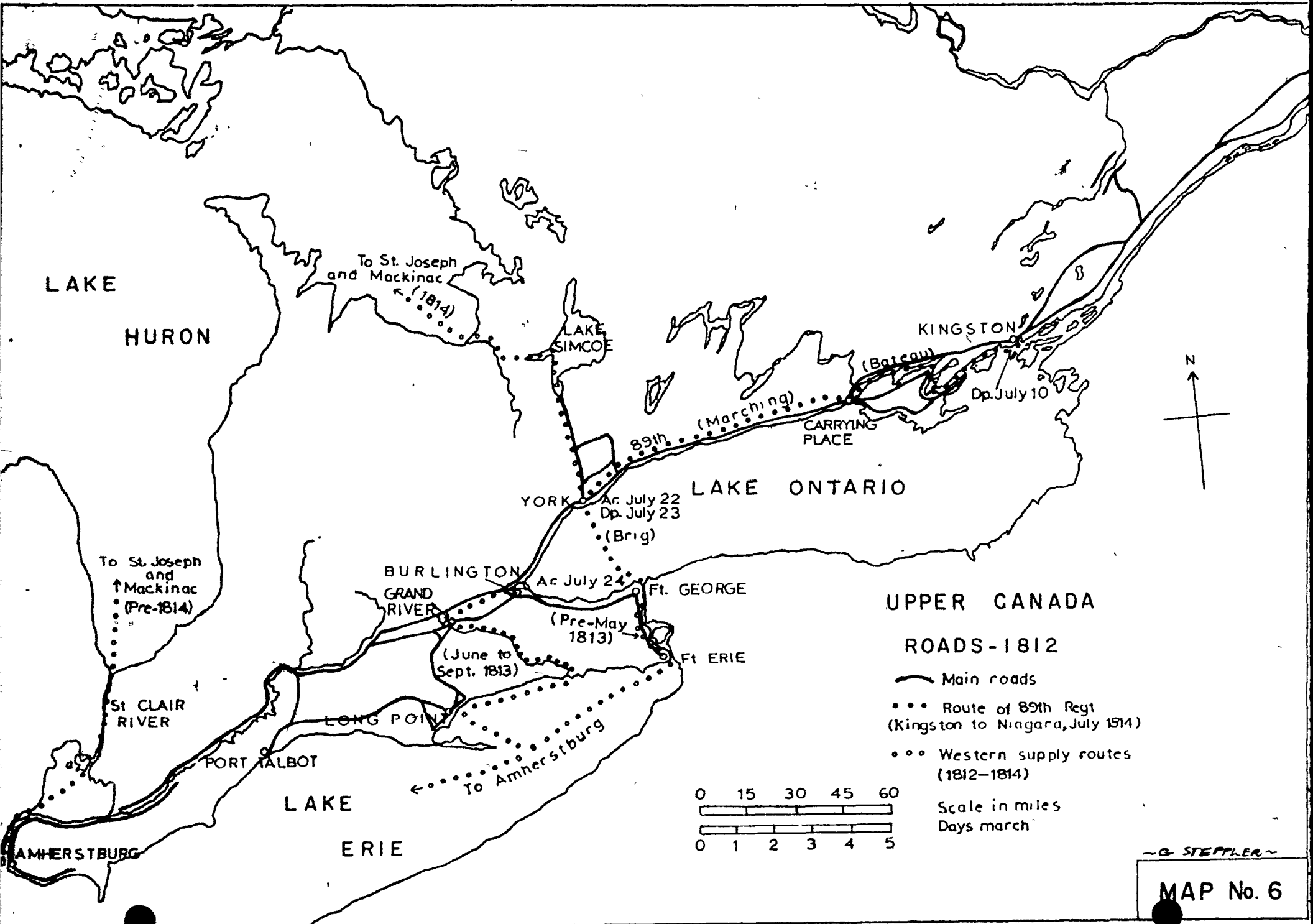
⁵⁴Macdonell, p. 206. The area between Cornwall and Prescott was particularly vulnerable.

⁵⁵On 16 September a bateaux convoy was unsuccessfully attacked a few miles below Prescott and later in the month Gananoque, the last staging point before Kingston, was raided, the local militia being easily overpowered. That October a detachment of Canadian Voyageurs was surprised at St. Regis. More serious was the American occupation of Ogdensburg, an ideal spot from which the bateaux convoys might be attacked while negotiating the last rapids only a few miles downstream. In February 1813, however, the small American force was decisively beaten and no subsequent attempt was made to regain the position (see Chapter Four, p. 80).

In 1813 it was found necessary to station three gunboats at each of Prescott, Gananoque and Kingston to give additional protection as American gunboats were reported to be fitting out for service among the Thousand Islands. That summer, however, the American gunboats did manage to capture a convoy of 15 bateaux and subsequently defeated an attempt to recover them.

American plans made the following year to occupy several posts along the St. Lawrence, from which some 15 gunboats would attack the bateaux convoys, were never acted upon.

⁵⁶See Chapter Four, p. 83.



~G STEPLER~

MAP No. 6

for British naval and military forces in Upper Canada became longer and more precarious with each mile travelled. At remote posts such as Michilimackinac, long periods of isolation were expected, particularly over the winter months. Severe weather could cut communications; transport was laborious and expensive and there were still many areas which had not been properly mapped.

Overland transport was slow and difficult. Roads in the upper province were few, some being little more than bridle paths [see map no. 6]. Even the best could be rendered virtually impassable to horse or carriage after heavy rains, while some sections might be constantly swampy, perhaps bridged by corduroy. Roads were at their best during the winter when freezing temperatures made the ground hard enough for sleighs.⁵⁷ Then land travel became comparatively easy and even as late as 1825, it was estimated that at least two-thirds of the farmer's yearly produce was moved to market at this time of the year. Long journeys were not uncommon and it was claimed that under excellent conditions one might make no less than ninety miles in twelve hours.⁵⁸ Indeed, in February 1813 Sir George Prevost covered the distance between Quebec and Prescott in only four days.⁵⁹ Following the winter thaw, however, the roads did not become good again until the ground

⁵⁷When sufficiently frozen, lakes and rivers would also serve as "winter roads."

⁵⁸Gray, p. 263.

⁵⁹Hitsman, Incredible War, p. 117.

had dried and, once more, in September, the autumnal rains would reduce them to little better than trails of mud.

Water transport was certainly preferred,⁶⁰ while in particular areas and at certain seasons it became indispensable. The land route between Kingston and the Niagara frontier passed through several areas considered to be impracticable, even in summer, for the movement of extensive supplies. As loaded wagons could not negotiate the route, land carriage was considered to be "out of the question."⁶¹ Even marching could be an ordeal and with heavy rains the movement of large numbers of men along this route was felt to be impossible. Garrisons at York, Burlington and along the Niagara were very much dependent on their water connection with Kingston for the arrival of supplies and reinforcements. Control of Lake Ontario was vital if Britain intended to maintain forces at these posts. Again, at the western end of Lake Erie, naval and military forces stationed at Amherstburg relied on water communications, as much of the land route to Burlington was

⁶⁰In 1807 Christopher Shultz recorded the various methods of transport he had used for a journey of some 572 miles through the United States:

New York to Albany,	160 miles, Steamboat,	1 1/2 days
Albany to Schenectady,	15 miles, Turnpike Rd.,	1 1/2 days
Schenectady to Utica,	104 miles, 5-ton keel boat,	5 days
Utica to Oswego,	104 miles, 5-ton keel boat,	3 days
Oswego to Lewiston,	172 miles, Lake sailing boats,	3 days
Lewiston to Black Rock,	17 miles, mud road,	1 1/2 days

(cited in Eric W. Hounsom, Toronto in 1810, Toronto, 1970, p. 18).

⁶¹Sir G. Prevost to Lord Bathurst, No. 187, 14 August 1814; W. H. Robinson to Sir G. Prevost, 27 August 1814 (P.A.C., C.O. 42/157, pp. 132-133, 167).

unsuited to wheeled vehicles. Command of Lake Erie was critical to British interests in this area and the importance of the inland lakes generally was recognized by both antagonists, tremendous effort being expended on the construction of naval squadrons, but particularly on Lake Ontario.

In peace time a transport service of small sailing vessels, known as the Provincial Marine, was maintained on the lakes by the Quartermaster-General's Department. These vessels, and those built during the war, were used extensively to carry troops and supplies.⁶² Even if control of the lake was lost and a squadron blockaded it was still possible to move some reinforcements and supplies along close to the shore in bateaux. This method, however, was hardly sufficient to create and maintain large depots and apart from the natural hazards of navigation on the lakes, the bateaux in these circumstances were thought ". . . a very unsafe Conveyance not only from the danger of the Enemy's Small Vessels which can approach the shore without difficulty, but also from the want of proper Steersmen, Pilots and Middlemen."⁶³

⁶²Sailing vessels had appeared on the Great Lakes as early as the Seventeenth century. The Provincial Marine's schooners not only moved men and supplies for the army, but also provided a commercial service for the fur trade. "A voyage from Kingston to the Niagara might take three days or even less than one if conditions were extremely good. A passage from York to the Niagara could be done overnight, but bad weather might delay a landing while adverse winds would, of course, slow all progress. See Sir James Yeo to Sir G. Drummond, 14 November 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 686), pp. 173-176).

⁶³W. H. Robinson to Sir G. Prevost, 27 August 1814 (P.A.C., C.O. 42/157, p. 166).

The British naval squadrons⁶⁴ on lakes Ontario and Erie were therefore the vital links in the transport system. Without their assistance operations west of Kingston foundered. In the late summer of 1813 while the Lake Erie squadron was unable to sail, and particularly after the loss of this squadron in September, the plight of Major-General Procter's forces at Amherstburg worsened to the point where Procter considered retreat inevitable due to the lack of provisions alone.⁶⁵ In 1814 the critical importance of the transport provided by Yeo's naval forces on Lake Ontario was amply shown through the difficulties experienced by British forces on the Niagara while Yeo was blockaded in Kingston. Again that September, Commissary-General Robinson was forced to rely on water communications to support the British advance into the state of New York, as sections of road proved impassable,⁶⁶ and when the British squadron on Lake Champlain was defeated the decision was taken to end offensive operations and retreat.

The vulnerability of the supply line west of Kingston was a constant anxiety. The repercussions of the American attack on York, in April 1813, were felt severely at Amherstburg, as naval stores and

⁶⁴On Prevost's suggestion the Admiralty was induced to take over command of all naval forces on the inland lakes of North America.

⁶⁵Major-General Henry Procter to Sir G. Prevost, 21 September 1813 (P.A.C., C.O. 42/151, pp. 217-218).

⁶⁶W. H. Robinson to [I. W. Clarke], 10 September 1814 (P.A.C., M.G.24, F 21).

guns destined for the squadron on Lake Erie were captured or destroyed. At the end of May the Niagara frontier was overrun and the normal route for supplies moving to Amherstburg, by way of the Niagara, was cut [see map no. 6]. The alternative route, overland from Burlington to the Grand River and Long Point, which was then forced upon the British was hardly satisfactory. Though a depot of provisions was established at Long Point it was not possible to move the more ponderous articles over this route and the heavy guns for the Lake Erie squadron, which had been landed at Burlington, went no farther.⁶⁷ As a result the Lake Erie squadron's new flagship had to be provided with a makeshift collection of guns taken from the ramparts of Fort Malden, while sails were taken from another vessel. On the day of battle with the American squadron the tubes and matches, which had to be provided from old stores at Amherstburg, proved defective.

The same disruption of communications between Lake Ontario and Lake Erie which so affected the outcome of the naval engagement on Lake Erie⁶⁸ (9 September 1813) also threatened the existence of the British post at Michilimackinac. An alternative route overland from York was found but the journey was one of extreme fatigue and privation, much of it being through unmapped territory. The small

⁶⁷E. A. Cruikshank, "A Sketch of the Public Life and Services of Robert Nichol, A Member of the Legislative Assembly and Quartermaster General of the Militia of Upper Canada," Ontario Historical Society Papers and Records, XIX, 1922, p. 30.

⁶⁸See Stacey, "Battle of Lake Erie."

relieving force which finally arrived at Michilimackinac by canoe in May 1814 had faced violent and hazardous storms on Lake Huron, which had continually threatened them with complete destruction. By the end of the war, however, a new road was being opened and plans made for a naval base on Lake Huron at Penetanguishene.

For the British, the exposed and vulnerable state of their extended line of communication posed a constant problem, to which the physical difficulties of the route itself added still more hardships. Yet these difficulties were further compounded by the chronic shortage of available manpower for labour and of sufficient and proper vehicles for land transport.

In the upper province the number of wagons and carts, with the horses or oxen to pull them, was limited. For this reason, not to forget the problem of bad roads, any extensive movement of provisions and stores during the summer by land was not possible.⁶⁹ Such facts frustrated the initial American plans for invading the Niagara in 1814⁷⁰ and again emphasized the importance of water transport. Sleighs, for winter travel, were more readily available but their individual carrying capacity was somewhat less than that of a good farm wagon.⁷¹ Nevertheless, sufficient numbers seemed to have been

⁶⁹Captain De Gaugreben, "Memoir on the Defence of Upper Canada," 10 November 1815 (P.A.C., M.G. 24, F 23, p. 34).

⁷⁰See Appendix XXIII.

⁷¹The carrying capacity of a sleigh was calculated at 1,000 lb., that of a two-horse farm wagon, over good roads, at 1,500 lb. A corvée horse could haul about 1,000 lb. on good roads, but only 300 to 400 lb. on bad roads.

available for most purposes, though at times it was found necessary to commandeer the sleighs of American smugglers to haul troops and supplies between Montreal and Kingston. In terms of actual figures, the number of sleighs in the Niagara, London and a part of Home District, was returned as about 1600, being a little more than twice the number of wagons listed. According to resource returns from the township of Woodhouse in London District only about half of the households registered had sleighs, while a third owned wagons or carts. Many apparently had neither.⁷²

In Lower Canada the situation was better as most habitants seemed to have owned at least one sleigh, though wagons and carts of a suitable type were not always to be found. Making use of such resources, however, was not necessarily straightforward and here again problems in Upper Canada were worse than in the lower province. The Commissariat experienced additional difficulties as there was no official in the upper province equivalent to Lower Canada's commissary of transport. Even under martial law, as applied in Upper Canada, it was necessary to act through requisitions on the local magistrates, who would issue warrants with which their constables could press the animals and vehicles needed for military use. The magistrates, however, were not always available as they were ". . . scattered about in distant parts." To make matters still worse there was not only

⁷²Resource Return of the 2nd Norfolk Militia, London District, Township of Woodhouse, ca. 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 1703, pp. 132-149). See Appendix XXIV.

resistance from the inhabitants, especially those of "Yankey principles," but complaint was also made that the magistrates themselves were often ". . . unprepared to act with that stimulus and exertion which the critical state of the Country absolutely requires."⁷³

The absence of a properly established military transport service was a considerable handicap. Local farmers pressed into service, or drivers hired by contract, could neither be counted on nor disciplined, save by civil authorities. On 13 November 1813, at a time when Montreal seemed very likely to be attacked, Commissary-General Robinson required two hundred carts to forward supplies in the threatened area, yet he could muster no more than fifty. The next day less than half of that number showed up. The situation with respect to transport pleased no one and a suggestion, made to Major-General Riall in 1814, that a corps of wagoners might be formed in Upper Canada and attached to the Commissariat there, came from local residents who wished to alleviate the burden on the farmers while at the same time benefitting the government. Though Lieutenant-General Drummond favoured the idea Commissary-General Robinson did not. Robinson felt that expenses would be increased while little advantage would actually be gained. Discipline, he thought, would still be a problem and the same men who were then being used by the contractors,

⁷³Deputy Commissary-General Peter Turquand to Major-General Stovin, 9 January 1815 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 119, pp. 7-8). See also Commander David Wingfield, "Four years on the Lakes of Canada in 1813, 1814, 1815 and 1816" (P.A.C., M.G. 24, F 21, pp. 44-45); James E. Janes, Pioneer Crimes and Punishments, Toronto, 1924, pp. 157-159.

would inevitably have to be employed again, while there seemed little chance of them taking any more care with government property than they did while in the service of individuals.⁷⁴

The problem of furnishing proper wagon trains remained and before the close of the 1814 campaign Commissary-General Robinson was again experiencing difficulties when called upon to provide a train for Sir George Prevost's expedition into the state of New York. Apart from sixty wagons purchased on the spur of the moment there was no regular wagon train available, and all of the carts used were on corvée. Little time was given to prepare and the train was not completely organized. On 10 September Robinson wrote from Chazy, New York:

It was most fortunate I determined on staying here a few days for I prevailed on the poor Canadians tho' it went to my heart, to proceed all the way to Plattsburg. They have behaved uncommonly well & their suffering have been great, but the fate of the Expedition depended on their going on, for Genl. Izard [American] had pressed all the Waggon, Horses, oxen etc. & our own Waggon Train was incompleat [sic], I purchased & hired as many of the Canadian-Carts and Horses as I could & every department did the same -- The roads are worse than you can imagine & many of our Waggon are broken down -- The road through the wood at Burtonville is impassible therefore our only dependance is upon the water communication from St. Johns & Ilse aux noix. . . . It has been an anxious, difficult moment for me & it is not yet over but I hope to get through it all -- my next anxiety is for the arrival of Provisions from England.⁷⁵

⁷⁴W. H. Robinson to N. Freer, 14 November 1813; Sir G. Drummond to Sir G. Prevost, 26 January 1814; W. H. Robinson to N. Freer, 12 February 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 117, p. 184; C 682, pp. 52-55; C 118, pp. 40-41).

⁷⁵W. H. Robinson to [I. W. Clarke], 10 September 1814 (P.A.C., M.G. 24, F 21).

The demand for manpower to carry on the all-important bateau service on the Upper St. Lawrence fell squarely on the farming population of Lower Canada. Local farmers, called out on corvée at the request of the commissaries of transport, were assembled at Lachine and prepared for the service. Besides those who came from the immediate area of Montreal, many were drawn from the Three Rivers district and in 1814 bateau crews were also being sent from Quebec. The arrangements, however, were not satisfactory, hurting both the farmer and the military. Delays were inevitable and farms were neglected, while the service itself could be particularly severe, especially in the autumn as the weather grew colder. Throughout the war the same problems kept re-occurring:

The time of 48 hours required by Law for the Militia Man, after receiving the order to prepare himself for the Service, and living perhaps at several Leagues distance, renders it impossible to send away a considerable number of batteaux on a sudden emergency. After the arrival of those ordered many of them may be found to be either novices in the business, or otherwise incapable; and it frequently occasions a further delay in ordering others to take their places, besides delays produced by mistakes committed by the Officers of the Militia, through whom the order must issue, from their ignorance, many of them not being able to read or write, and in some instances by refusal of the Militia to obey the order they receive.

You will readily suppose that, under these circumstances it was greatly to be desired that a Corps of able Batteau Men should be raised under the Militia Law of the Province.⁷⁶

⁷⁶W. H. Robinson to J. C. Herries, No. 133, 11 June 1813 (P.A.C., W.A. 57/14).

Efforts to establish a regular corps of bateau men were made soon after the war started. William McGillivray⁷⁷ undertook to raise a corps of voyageurs from the employees of the North West Company and at the beginning of October 1812 the corps was embodied, but only on the promise that it would be disbanded the following May. The companies of the Corps of Voyageurs were detached to various stations along the upper St. Lawrence from Lachine to Prescott and after the close of navigation were posted on the frontier doing various duties until disbanded in the spring of 1813. Though very unsuited to any strict military discipline, the voyageurs' ability and experience proved an asset to the transport service in the opening months of the war, yet the corps' existence was only of short duration.⁷⁸

By April 1813, however, a new corps, the Commissariat Voyageurs, was being raised "For the better Regulation and Conducting the Transport by Batteaux of the King's Troops and Stores, between Lower

⁷⁷William McGillivray had taken part in the capture of Michilimackinac in 1812. He and other fur traders had a vested interest in the war, especially in operations in the west. For his services he was appointed to the Legislative Council and was also made an honorary aide-de-camp to Sir George Prevost.

⁷⁸William McGillivray to Captain Loring, military secretary, 12 May 1815 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 374, pp. 46-47). Two companies were sent to Chateauguay, one company to each of Prescott, St. Regis and Lachine, while 50 men were detached to serve in the gun boats. On McGillivray's advice, part of the Indians at Chateauguay were also enlisted. An excellent contemporary description of the men who served in this corps is cited by Marjorie W. Campbell, McGillivray, Lord of the Northwest, Toronto, 1962, pp. 192-93.

& Upper Canada . . ." and to ease the burden on the local farmers.⁷⁹ This new corps was attached to the Commissariat and put at the disposal of the commissariat officer in charge at Lachine, with Assistant Commissary-General Clarke of Montreal being appointed as the corps' lieutenant-colonel superintendent. Despite attempts to make the corps attractive to recruits, by placing it under the militia law and allowing a furlough over the winter months,⁸⁰ the numbers enrolled were disappointing and fell far short of the projected establishment of 423 officers and other ranks. By June 1813 only about one hundred men had been raised and at the end of the year the situation was little changed. When an American army under Major-General Wilkinson threatened Montreal in November, Commissary-General Robinson was again in anxious need of bateau men to move supplies across the St. Lawrence from the commissariat store at Lachine.⁸¹

During the final year of the war the transport service to Upper Canada was put under increasing strain. Though the Commissariat Voyageurs proved "very serviceable in the most difficult parts," by

⁷⁹General Order, 8 April 1813 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 1170, p. 155). Shortly before the war all craft used for transporting troops and stores had been taken from the Quartermaster-General's Department and placed under the Commissariat.

⁸⁰The men enlisted were to serve eighteen months or for the duration of the war but the corps' military character was to be purely nominal, the men performing the duties of common labourers. Original plans to arm the corps were found useless and discarded.

⁸¹W. H. Robinson to J. C. Herries, No. 133, 11 June and No. 187, 14 December 1813 (P.A.C., W.O. 57/14); W. H. Robinson to N. Freer, 14 November 1813 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 117, p. 184).

the end of June 1814 Commissary-General Robinson informed Sir George Prevost that the continued necessity of forwarding provisions along with every type of naval and military store, together with the required transport for additional troops, baggage and clothing, would create a demand for bateau men which was beyond "our present Means and prospects." According to Robinson the numbers employed on corvée and in the militia had already "put a Stop to the usual occupations of this thinly Inhabited Country; and yet more Batteau Men are required, and by some Means, or other must be obtained, or every Military effort, I fear, will prove abortive."⁸² The only remedy the commissary-general could propose was the immediate detachment of one thousand men, to be taken from the Embodied Militia. Such a "bold" measure was, he felt, feasible as there was by then a "respectable" number of regulars in the Canadas, yet for the moment no action was taken.⁸³

Towards the end of September 1814 a very unexpected problem was added to the chronic difficulty of obtaining an adequate labour force.

⁸²W. H. Robinson to Sir G. Prevost, 29 June 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 373, p. 170).

⁸³Later in December 1814 a plan was again proposed by Captain R. Christie of the 4th Battalion of Embodied Militia for using a militia corps exclusively in the Commissariat's transport service along the upper St. Lawrence. The following February a board of officers reported on a plan to use the 4th Battalion of Embodied Militia on the bateau service. The Corps of Commissariat Voyageurs was to be attached to the 4th Battalion and the commanding officer of the battalion was to act as commandant at Lachine and as superintendent of all those employed in the bateau service. Bateau men were also to be drawn from the 104th Regiment and the Nova Scotia Fencibles. (See P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 118, p. 191; C 119, pp. 60-69, 85-90.)

Bateau men returning from Kingston gave alarming reports of ill-treatment received at the hands of Commodore Yeo's gunboat crews. Bateau brigades were being delayed, sometimes for several days, while the gunboat men were reportedly finding some sport in firing at the bateaux and generally molesting their crews. Assistant Commissary-General Clarke received word of stores being seized and of one bateau man having actually been wounded. Yeo himself, it was said, had sanctioned these attacks and with such rumors and complaints as were then being circulated, Clarke was very much worried that the bateau men would refuse to continue their efforts, bringing the movement of stores to Upper Canada to a complete standstill.⁸⁴

Difficulties continued to plague the transport system until the close of navigation and to the very end of the war Commissary-General Robinson remained uneasy over transport arrangements. In November 1814 he wrote to Sir George Prevost on the absolute necessity of making changes:

Although the Transport this year has by great exertion been effected to an extent which could not reasonably have been expected, it is not to be supposed that the increased demands for Supplies to Upper Canada can hereafter be complied with, unless the impediments in the transport be removed; or the Means of obtaining the labor necessary, be rendered more certain . . .⁸⁵

⁸⁴W. H. Robinson to N. Freer, 27 September 1814, enclosing I. W. Clarke to W. H. Robinson, 27 September 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 373, pp. 207-209). Earlier, in August, there had also been a report of a bateau crew being plundered by a gun boat, but at that time the complaint had been viewed with some skepticism.

⁸⁵W. H. Robinson to Sir G. Prevost, 14 November 1814 (P.A.C., W.O. 57/15).

The cartage from Montreal to Lachine was particularly burdensome, no less than fifteen to eighteen thousand loads of stores having been carted over the route during 1814. Bateau men, many coming from parishes sixty and ninety miles from Lachine, were absent for six weeks and more at a time and the service had become increasingly unpopular:

The Severity of this Service has induced many to refuse to obey the Orders of their Officers, and others to desert from the Batteaux on the route; particularly of late when not more than two thirds of the number ordered have performed the Voyage. As it is the opinion of the Crown Lawyer, that these men cannot legally be convicted and punished for their disobedience, it is evident on what precarious footing the Transport Service Stands.⁸⁶

Robinson wanted the bateau journey between Montreal and Kingston shortened by arranging for the transfer of cargos to larger vessels at Fort Wellington.⁸⁷ In addition he recommended building a canal from Montreal to Lachine, to save both the expense of cartage and the labour of local farmers, and further suggested that some effort be made to improve difficult passages in some of the rapids above the Cedars. Referring to the continual shortage of manpower he pointed out the necessity of either stiffening the law on corvées or of establishing a regular corps of bateau men of sufficient strength.

⁸⁶Ibid.

⁸⁷According to Boulton large vessels seldom went below Kingston, though the river was navigable for 70 or 80 miles, as the channel was too narrow "to admit of return without a tolerably fair wind." (Boulton, p. 37). Plans for 1815 included stationing some 100 Durham boats at Kingston and Fort Wellington.

See Appendix XVII and XXI.

Delinquents from the corvée went unpunished while even merchants, who were offering three times the wages paid by the government, were having trouble finding bateau crews.⁸⁸

Where possible, appropriate measures were authorized in accordance with Robinson's proposals.⁸⁹ As to strengthening the corvée law, however, Sir George Prevost entertained "no hope" of obtaining an amendment from the Provincial Legislature, nor did he consider it "politic or prudent in the present State of Affairs to agitate a question upon a Service the pressure of which upon the Agriculture of the Lower Province is so evident."⁹⁰

In retrospect it is difficult to see how such proposals as were made could have materially affected the transport situation had the war continued into 1815. Though the use of larger craft, with proportionately smaller crews, between Fort Wellington and Kingston and the improvement of certain rapids would have helped, a canal to Lachine obviously could not have been brought into immediate use, while finding any satisfactory solution to the shortage of labour was most unlikely. In fact, by the mid-summer of 1815, with the war over, enthusiasm for the corvée reached its nadir. The movement of naval and ordnance stores to Upper Canada by bateau was cancelled amid increasing

⁸⁸W. H. Robinson to Sir G. Prevost, 14 November 1814 (P.A.C., W.O. 57/15).

⁸⁹See Appendix XVII.

⁹⁰Sir G. Prevost to Lord Bathurst, No. 214, 17 November 1814 (P.A.C., C.O. 42/157, pp. 253-254).

opposition to the corvée. At Lachine men deserted, openly "bidding defiance," and no amount of pleading would induce the inhabitants to obey:

They have found out that there is no law to oblige them and appear well inclined to make all of it and it is becoming so prevalent among them that I fear that unlimited Patience will only tend to make Things worse, and the transport ere long be entirely stopped.⁹¹

Undoubtedly the return of peace had much to do with the immediate trouble of 1815. Nevertheless Montreal lawyers in particular gave it as their opinion that the "habitants de la Compagne" could not be obliged to go beyond the limits of Lower Canada and when Lieutenant-Colonel Macdonell wrote to Lord Bathurst in 1817 he considered a repetition of the bateau service of 1812-1814 to be impossible because of this attitude. Nor could Macdonell resist the speculation that there would have been no transport at all on the upper St. Lawrence during the war had this law been "discovered" earlier.⁹²

In the final assessment, however, it would appear that the bateau transport service had virtually reached its limit during the 1814 season. In peace time the government normally employed only twenty or thirty bateau on the upper St. Lawrence, but in June 1814 Commodore Chauncey reported to the American Secretary of the Navy that in one week two hundred bateaux had been counted passing

⁹¹Deputy Assistant Commissary-General Finlay to I. W. Clarke, 24 July 1815 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 374, pp. 80-81).

⁹²Memorial of Lieutenant-Colonel St. Georges Dupré, p. 56; Macdonell, p. 211.

Ogdensburg headed for Kingston.⁹³ Some 10,000 Lower Canadians served in the bateau brigades that year and the quantity of provisions and stores of all types which had been moved up the St. Lawrence exceeded the expectations of both Robinson and Prevost. Still it was not enough. In November 1814 Robinson concluded his letter to Prevost on the proposed improvements for the transport service in emphatic terms:

. . . even with the facilities I propose, it is a question whether the Army and Navy, at present in Upper Canada, can be regularly Supplied with the requisite Stores and Provisions; but under the present defective System I do not hesitate to assert that it is wholly impossible to Support the Force now in that Province, much less to provide the means of conveyance for all the Guns and Stores required in constructing more Ships, and for feeding additional Troops on an extended Line.⁹⁴

The limitations of the transport service made it impossible to forward to Kingston the frames of four vessels (two frigates and two brigs), sent out in pieces from England, as the task was simply beyond the capacity of the means available. It was the general opinion that moving the frames by water during the summer of 1814 could only have been "injurious to the service," particularly with respect to the construction of the H.M.S. St. Lawrence, the completion of which, in Commodore Yeo's opinion, would make the frames unnecessary for gaining naval ascendancy on Lake Ontario in 1814. Nor was any favour given to the idea of moving the frames by land during the winter:

⁹³Heriot, J, p. 118; Hitsman, Incredible War, p. 191.

⁹⁴W. H. Robinson to Sir G. Prevost, 14 November 1814 (P.A.C., W.O. 57/15).

With respect to transporting the frames in the Winter Season I see equal objections arise - for should the War Continue, the Additional Ordnance and Iron Work, which we cannot do without, would employ all the Sleighs, Horses and Oxen during the Season, and on the whole, I am fully of the opinion that building here [Kingston] is more beneficial to the Public Service, not to say a Word of the enormous expence that would be saved thereby.⁹⁵

Though one frigate frame and stores were finally sent on to Kingston⁹⁶ during the summer, the transport was provided by a private contractor who received no government assistance in men, boats or money. He was reimbursed for almost £12,600, but, as Prevost explained to Lord Bathurst, it would have been impossible by any other method.⁹⁷

Though moving the frames was not a necessity, the limited capacity of water transport between Lower and Upper Canada did have a direct effect on planning, curbing the execution of desirable strategies. In 1814 priority was given to the movement of naval stores and consequently it was not possible to build up a satisfactory stock of provisions at Kingston. By October 1814 it became necessary to redirect the efforts of the bateau brigades before the approach of

⁹⁵Sir James Lucas Yeo to Sir G. Prevost, 22 April 1814 (P.A.C., C.O. 42/156, p. 248). See also Report of a Board of Officers on the Subject of Conveying the Frames of two Frigates and two Brigs to Kingston, 6 April 1814 (P.A.C., W.O. 57/15).

⁹⁶The frame and stores of H.M.S. Psyche were moved by William Forbes. Transport started at the end of June and continued well into September, being accomplished where possible by water. Cartage from Cornwall to Prescott cost £3,320 (comprising 466 wagon loads at 80/- each and 238 loads at 125/- each), while stores moved by boat from Cornwall to Kingston cost about £2,660.

⁹⁷Sir G. Prevost to Lord Bathurst, No. 169, 12 July 1814 (P.A.C., C.O. 42/157, pp. 19-20).

winter put a stop to water communications. Transport had then to be given over exclusively to the movement of provisions to Kingston as there was not enough in store to supply the troops which would be stationed in the upper province over the winter.⁹⁸ What this meant in terms of actual limitations on military operations was made clear later in October when Sir George Prevost explained the delay in implementing instructions from London to destroy the American base at Sackett's Harbour:

An investigation of the State of the Stores at this Post [Kingston] proved that the Articles for the Armament and equipment of a Ship of the class of the St. Lawrence carrying upwards of one Hundred Guns, had absorbed almost the whole of the Summer Transport Service from Montreal, leaving the materials for an undertaking of the Magnitude of the destruction of Sackett's Harbour Still at the extremity of the Line of Communication, and now, by giving precedence to that Supply of Provisions and Stores without which an Army is no longer to be maintained in Upper Canada its removal is inevitably postponed until the Winter Roads are established.⁹⁹

Transport and communication problems dominated the conduct of all operations. The inability of the Canadas to provide all of the provisions and the warlike stores needed made importation from the British Isles a necessity. Yet the long journey across the Atlantic, though it was not without hazard, was much less of a problem than the movement of supplies in the Canadas themselves, especially between

⁹⁸Sir G. Prevost to Sir G. Drummond, 15 and 16 September 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 1222, pp. 191-194, 194-196); Sir G. Prevost to Lord Bathurst, No. 199, 11 October 1814 (P.A.C., C.O. 42/157, p. 251).

⁹⁹Sir G. Prevost to Lord Bathurst, No. 200, 18 October 1814 (P.A.C., C.O. 42/157, p. 261).

Montreal and Kingston and within the upper province. Bad road conditions and the prohibitive costs of land transport forced a particular reliance on water routes, the more so in Upper Canada where most communities were to be found along the rim of Lakes Ontario and Erie. Consequently naval power on the lakes rapidly became a vital concern which led to the construction of larger and larger vessels in an effort to gain ascendancy. Yet the transport available to move all of the materials required for such a building programme, in addition to the provisions and stores necessary for both land and naval forces, was limited and had to be used with care and forethought. Yet even then there was much which was simply beyond achievement.

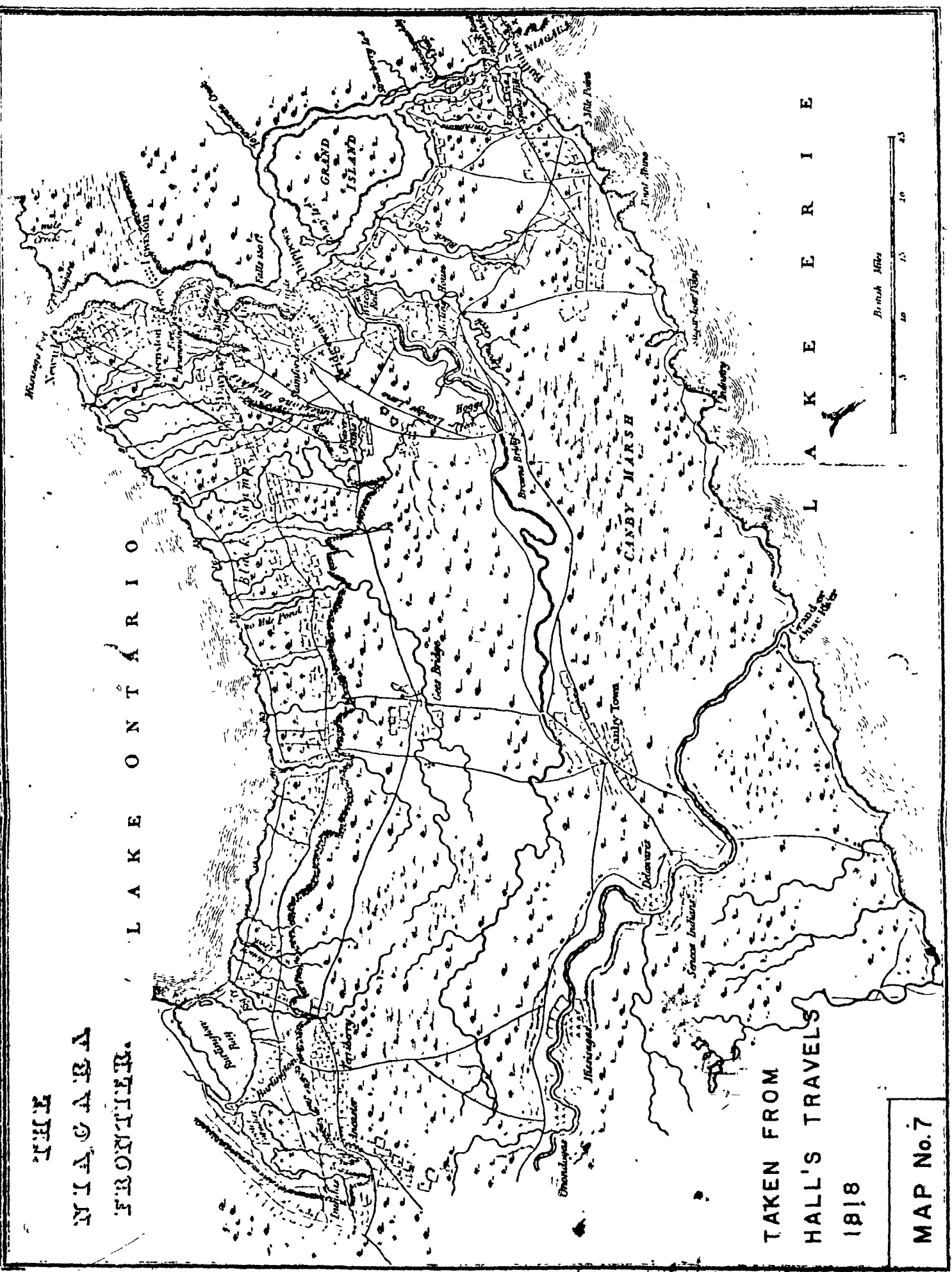
Canadian manpower was in critically short supply, but the demand for labourers to transport troops and supplies increased steadily as the war escalated and reinforcements continued to arrive in growing numbers. Dependence on local farmers to provide the necessary conveyances and labour, was neither an efficient nor a reliable method, yet the Treasury's reluctance to provide a regular transport service made it unavoidable. Inevitably relations between the government and the local inhabitants became strained as the war continued and the normal occupations, especially that of farming, were neglected. Transport and communication problems affected strategy and when offensive operations were attempted, such as that which ended at Plattsburg in 1814, these difficulties were felt all the more keenly. Nor should it be forgotten that behind everything lay the general strategic vulnerability of an extended line, which from its contiguity to the enemy, was constantly liable to direct attack.

THE
NIAGARA
FRONTIER.

L A K E O N T A R I O

TAKEN FROM
HALL'S TRAVELS
1818

MAP No.7



L A K E E R I E

CHAPTER SIX

NIAGARA 1814 - PREPARATIVE

Soon after the outbreak of war in 1812 the Niagara Peninsula of Upper Canada became fair plunder for invading armies and a focal point of repeated attacks. Despite past failures, American forces once again invaded the peninsula in 1814. This final campaign on the Niagara was stiffly contested and the ability shown by the American army that summer presented a serious threat to Upper Canada. Although the prospect of a successful conquest was more remote than ever, the invasion sorely tested British military resources in an area which was at an extremity of a line of communication that stretched back over Lake Ontario, down the St. Lawrence and ultimately across an expanse of ocean to the British Isles.

As it proved to be the final campaign on the Niagara frontier, and as General Drummond's army was the largest British force at the western end of these lines of communication, an examination of this campaign should not only illustrate the problems of supply at a critical time, but also show to what extent they had been overcome; or if in fact they had simply grown worse and were actually beyond an immediate and satisfactory solution. It will be clearly seen that the maintenance of Drummond's army was influenced by many factors. Local resources, the availability of specie, the attitude of the civilian population, the transportation facilities and the weather, all played

a part, while commanding a mixed force of regulars, militiamen and Indians posed a variety of unique and different problems.

By the beginning of 1814 some twenty months of war had subjected the Canadian frontier to a mounting number of American attacks. Yet the ebb and flow of battle had produced little in the way of a conclusive American victory. The defenders of the Canadas still held their ground along most of the contested border. In mid-July 1812, American general William Hull had crossed over at Detroit into Upper Canada and established himself at Sandwich. A little over a month later he had not only retraced his steps to Detroit, but had ignominiously surrendered to British Major-General Isaac Brock. Later that year Brock had been killed at Queenston, on the Niagara frontier, in the initial stages of a battle which had turned into yet another American defeat. Much farther to the east the first American threat against Montreal had ended dismally with the militia refusing to cross into Canada, while General Smyth's bombastic war of words on the Niagara that winter added little lustre to American arms, his "invasion" having dwindled into a military fiasco. Smyth's failure, besides encouraging the British, only gave further proof that the United States had achieved nothing on the Canadian frontier and had given little indication of being able to improve in the near future.

However, despite the poor showing in 1812, the United States had managed to achieve some measure of temporary success the following

year. In the west, the Right Division of the British forces in Upper Canada, centered on Amherstburg, checked the American advance until autumn when a British naval defeat on Lake Erie tipped the balance decidedly in favour of the Americans. In October the British Right Division was decisively beaten on the banks of the Thames River; yet the British position in Upper Canada did not collapse, though plans were considered to abandon the area west of Kingston. On Lake Ontario, that year's campaigning had opened in April with the first of two successful American attacks on York, followed shortly by a further American success at Fort George on the Niagara. Nevertheless, the American advance across the Niagara early in 1813 did little to affect the balance between the contending military forces in that area. The British had retreated in good order and were soon able to sally forth and gradually win back control of the ground between Burlington and Fort George, eventually evicting the invaders altogether by the end of the year.

In the closing months of 1813 the Americans again made an effort to take Montreal and again met with failure. The Detroit frontier excepted, the military might of the United States had still made no inroads on Canada. In fact, the American government's own possessions now seemed in danger. The hope inspired by the victories on Lake Erie and at the Thames had reverted to despondency by the year's end. American prospects for 1814 looked bleak. In Europe Napoleon was giving way and as France collapsed over the winter of 1813-1814, the American government could well begin to wonder about its own future.

In mid-December 1813 Lieutenant-General Sir Gordon Drummond was appointed as head of the government and commander of the military forces in Upper Canada, replacing Major-General de Rottenburg who had held the position since June of that year. Following quickly on the American withdrawal from Fort George in December 1813, Drummond, with characteristic energy, soon pressed forward an attack which devastated much of the American frontier along the Niagara. By the first of January, this brief winter campaign drew to a close as Drummond's troops recrossed the river, taking with them what provisions could be carried off. Behind them was left a trail of smoking ruins from Lewiston to Buffalo. Ostensibly retaliation for the burning of Newark by the Americans that December, it also deprived the enemy of winter cover along the frontier. The excitement and physical exertion of an active campaign over, Drummond took time to focus his attention on those problems, both civil and military, which he had inherited from his predecessors.

Like Brock, Sheaffe and De Rottenburg before him, Drummond found himself at the head of both the civil government and the military forces in Upper Canada. The appointment did not make for a clear separation between these two roles and the dualism implicit in such a position affected his course of action on many problems of a most pressing nature. Difficult questions on finance, recruiting, the imposition of martial law and the suspension of habeas corpus were provoked by military necessity, yet had to be tempered by a

responsibility for civil government. Still it seemed almost inevitable that military considerations must come first.¹

After Brock's death, the real effects of financial shortages, the scarcity of supplies, stores and men, discontent and disaffection, began to be felt. Under generals Sheaffe and De Rottenburg resort was made to the use of martial law to secure both subsistence for the troops and to curb treasonable behaviour by the inhabitants. In the Western District, Brigadier-General Procter had had recourse to martial law due to the reluctance of the local population in coming forward with provisions to alleviate his troops' food shortages. Brigadier-General Vincent, in the Niagara area, had been similarly empowered by Governor-General Prevost's express command. Yet the problems of supply and growing unrest had continued and eventually led to a general prohibition on the distillation of grains.

In November 1813 De Rottenburg had proclaimed a partial existence of martial law in the Johnstown and Eastern Districts in order to relieve food shortages at Kingston and to counteract disaffection to the government. As the war progressed in 1814, Drummond's problems, particularly with respect to supplies and the maintenance of order, would become increasingly acute. In view of these problems one of Drummond's first actions, upon taking command in Upper Canada, was to determine the available resources of the country and the means by which they could be gathered in.²

¹See Weekes, "The War of 1812: Civil Authority and Martial Law in Upper Canada," pp. 147-161.

²See Appendix XXIV.

The early months of the new year were spent in assessing the situation and in making preparations. Yet ascertaining the extent of Upper Canada's material resources was only a first step. Would they be made available to the government? On 25 January Drummond issued a proclamation rescinding De Rottenburg's declaration of a modified martial law for the collection of provisions and forage in the eastern districts. Learning that De Rottenburg's measure had created much discontent, Drummond was induced to hope that the onset of winter and the sleighing season, the time of year when produce was generally brought to market, would ease the situation and make martial law unnecessary.³ In this, however, Drummond was shortly disappointed.

Within two weeks a great deficiency in forage supplies was reported in the Kingston area. Oats were particularly difficult to obtain and though hay was more abundant, Drummond was faced with the spectre of military necessity and the pressing need to re-impose martial law. "The Farmers," he wrote, "hold back their stock on hand so very rigidly, that, although I am extremely averse to using such means [martial law], I believe I shall ultimately be under the necessity of issuing a Proclamation to that effect."⁴

The situation did not improve. Sir George Prevost and Commissary-General Robinson both expressed their regret over the

³Sir G. Drummond to Lord Bathurst, No. 6, 5 April 1814 (P.A.C., C.O. 42/355, pp. 49-50).

⁴Sir G. Drummond to Sir G. Prevost, 8 February 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 682, p. 105).

"precipitancy" with which De Rottenburg's proclamation had been revoked. Prevost felt that its retention for a few more weeks might have added to the army's magazines without attaching any discredit to Drummond's administration.⁵ Robinson was most explicit. The efforts of the Commissariat would be fruitless, unless coercive measures were adopted at Kingston and he advocated empowering Drummond to declare martial law "as far as related to procuring supplies for the King's Troops."⁶

Flour was also difficult to procure for the Kingston garrison and at one point the reserves in store sank to only 16 barrels, while some 5,000 rations were being issued daily at that post alone.⁷

Major-General Stovin, left in command at Kingston while Drummond attended the Legislature at York in February, was directed to issue, at his own discretion, a proclamation declaring martial law for the procuring of provisions and forage in the Midland and Newcastle Districts. At York Drummond was much disappointed at the decided refusal of the Legislature to consent in authorizing him, as the province's administrator, to proclaim martial law where and when it

⁵Sir G. Prevost to Sir G. Drummond, 28 February 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 1222, pp. 55-56).

⁶Sir G. Drummond to Sir G. Prevost, 29 March 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 118, p. 79).

⁷Sir G. Drummond to Lord Bathurst, No. 6, 5 April 1814 (P.A.C., C.O. 42/355, pp. 49-50).

became a necessity.⁸ He was, therefore, glad to find, upon his return to Kingston in March, that Stovin had found it unnecessary to declare martial law, as there seemed a reasonable chance of the local produce being brought to market without recourse to "so violent a measure."⁹ Drummond reasoned, ". . . that ultimately the produce of the Country must be offered to the Government, as there is no competition for so perishable an article as Flour."¹⁰ The proclamations, however, were retained for possible use in the future.

Sir George Prevost was pleased that the re-introduction of martial law had been averted, but by 5 April Drummond was lamenting "the most imperious necessity" which had by then forced him to re-impose martial law in the upper province.¹¹ In March the Provincial Legislature had passed a vote of censure on De Rottenburg's proclamation of martial law, considering it unconstitutional. Nevertheless, Drummond had pursued the issue. In mid-April proclamations were issued declaring martial law with respect to the procurement of provisions and forage and by the middle of summer a modified martial

⁸Sir G. Drummond to Sir G. Prevost, 14 March 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 682, pp. 200-201).

⁹Sir G. Drummond to Sir G. Prevost, 24 March 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 682, pp. 248-249).

¹⁰Sir G. Drummond to Sir G. Prevost, 29 March 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 118, p. 80).

¹¹Sir G. Drummond to Lord Bathurst, No. 6, 5 April 1814 (P.A.C., C.O. 42/355, p. 49). See also Sir G. Prevost to Sir G. Drummond, 31 March and 2 April 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 1222, pp. 77-79, 80-81).

law prevailed throughout Upper Canada. Prevost, though he was in agreement with this action, was somewhat surprised by Drummond's re-imposition of martial law and annoyed that his subordinate had acted in his capacity as military commander in Upper Canada rather than as the administrator of its civil government.¹²

Although in part there appeared to have been a misunderstanding, Prevost was clearly annoyed over the manner in which the repeal and re-imposition of martial law in Upper Canada had been conducted. Nor was it to be the only occasion of disagreement. This particular matter had found itself in the company of a rather sharp exchange over the removal of troops protecting communications between Montreal and Kingston. Prevost felt that Drummond had acted without his consent on several occasions, in areas beyond Drummond's authority, and had done so without just cause.¹³ Though Prevost was quick to assure Drummond of his confidence in him, the continuing threat of invasion and the need for more men and supplies was easily productive of friction, the more so as Drummond proved eager to take the offensive whenever the opportunity seemed to present itself. Yet the question of martial law was only a result of a broader problem - the shortage of supplies in Upper Canada.

¹²Sir G. Prevost to Sir G. Drummond, 20 April 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 1222, pp. 103-105).

¹³Sir G. Prevost to Sir G. Drummond, 10 April 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 1222, pp. 89-91).

Early in January, before leaving the Niagara frontier, Drummond had directed Major-General Phineas Riall, then left in command of the Right Division, to confer with several of the more prominent citizens of that area. Riall was to ascertain the extent of local resources with respect to provisioning the Right Division during the coming summer. Pausing at York, Drummond had already decided upon the necessity of again calling into force a provisional act, originally passed by the Legislature of Upper Canada in March 1813, for a temporary prohibition on the distillation of grains for alcoholic beverages. A proclamation to this effect was duly issued, coming into effect as of 16 January 1814, to continue until the 1 March, unless revoked by the Legislature.¹⁴ By the last week in January Riall had reported on the results of his investigations. It was the general opinion of those he had consulted that a sufficient supply of grain still remained in the country, but, it was emphasized that the collection of the resources of the Long Point area was of critical importance.

The crop of 1813 had been much reduced from those of the preceding seasons, but the prohibitions on distilling appeared to have saved the situation. Though the grain supply might be expected to last until the harvest of 1814 was gathered in, it was generally felt

¹⁴Proclamation prohibiting the distillation of grains for alcoholic beverages, 11 January 1814, E. A. Cruikshank, ed., The Documentary History of the Campaign upon the Niagara Frontier, 1812-14, Welland, Ont., 1896-1908, IX, pp. 107-108. In March the prohibition was extended until July.

that there would be a scarcity in meat supplies. The reserves of the local "Black Cattle" were already "a good deal exhausted." Very little pork had been cured owing to the difficulties of obtaining salt, and from the small number of hogs fattened in consequence of the poor crop yields. Assistant Commissary-General Edward Dance, responsible for provisioning the Right Division,¹⁵ was calculating on not being able to procure more meat than would suffice for 7,000 men for 86 days. Drummond wished to draw Prevost's attention "most thoroughly to the case" and requested his superior to direct the commissary-general at Quebec to send a supply of salt pork to the upper province.¹⁶

On the Niagara peninsula a mild winter had made sleighing difficult. Some four days were now required to haul flour from Forty Mile Creek to the Niagara as the sleighs were being forced over the escarpment because of the absence of snow on the lower road. Nevertheless, in spite of apprehensions, Drummond felt reasonably confident about the supply situation, at least for the moment. Towards the end of January he was happy to inform Prevost, "that the necessary quantity of Flour, and Fuel is getting into Fort Niagara, with tolerable expedition."¹⁷

¹⁵See Appendix XXV.

¹⁶Sir G. Drummond to Sir G. Prevost, 26 January 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 682, pp. 52-55).

¹⁷Ibid, p. 55.

The situation, however, was not long in changing. Soon Drummond was worried that the spring would bring with it the "greatest distress . . . if the most ample supplies are not received from below."¹⁸ Much of the trouble was the 3,000 Indians, the remnants of the western tribes that had served with Procter's army and the whole of the Six Nations from the Grand River, encamped near the army's lines at Burlington. While about two-thirds were women and children, it was reported that on the average they were consuming no less than 16 head of cattle and 25 barrels of flour, or close to 5,000 rations, daily.¹⁹ Drummond "delicately" suggested to the tribes of the Six Nations that they might return to their homes but was told this was not possible as they had no means of supporting themselves, their provision grounds having been completely neglected during the past season.²⁰

¹⁸Sir G. Drummond to Sir G. Prevost, 8 February 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 682, p. 105).

¹⁹Estimated on the basis of the standard "Treasury" ration. The "Field" ration and "Ration in One Species" could also be issued to the Indians (see Appendix VIII).

A barrel of flour is taken at 196 lb. and cattle at about 300 lb. of flesh meat per animal. Animal weights could, of course, vary considerably with the age of the individual. The recorded weights of live oxen and bullocks taken on board naval vessels off Chesapeake Bay during the war were notably less than 300 lb. - many less than half that amount (P.A.C., W.O. 57/37). An average of 300 lb. of flesh meat has been calculated on the basis of information contained in Couche's return of provisions with the Right Division, 16 May 1814 (see Appendix XXVI).

²⁰Sir G. Drummond to Sir G. Prevost, 26 January 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 682, pp. 52-55).

Having failed in this attempt, Drummond then turned to Prevost to see if a number of the Indians could not be removed from Burlington and employed in Lower Canada along the frontier. Prevost, however, was not impressed by the idea. His own experience had made him wary of such allies and the request was refused. The Indians would remain where they were, and Prevost assured Drummond that the commissary-general had taken measures to insure a supply of salt meat for the Right Division.²¹

By the last week in April the situation with respect to provisioning the Indians had not improved; rather, it was worse. Fresh meat was unavailable, little could be expected from fishing and "Indians of all descriptions" were now devouring 40 barrels of flour daily. Exclusive of the garrison at York and the militia, the total consumption of the Right Division was nearly 2,000 barrels per month. Troops along the Niagara frontier accounted for about 20 barrels a day. Assistant Commissary-General Dance brought this matter to Riall's attention in emphatic terms:

. . . without losing time by a consideration of the necessity or policy of this, I must repeat my positive conviction, that at the rate of our present issues to them (nearly 1200 barrels to Indians alone per month) no effort of human exertions can supply this Army many months' longer, for the Flour is not in the Country.²²

²¹Sir G. Drummond to Sir G. Prevost, 8 February 1814 and Sir G. Prevost to Sir G. Drummond, 17 February 1814 (P.A.C., C 682, pp. 104-108 and C 1222, pp. 48-50).

²²Sir G. Drummond to Sir G. Prevost, 26 April 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 683, p. 53).

Riall was very uncertain as to what action he should take with respect to the Indians. Both he and Drummond were certain that any reduction in the usual ration, without a substitute being made, would excite considerable discontent, even open defection. Finding provisions for the Indians was a task of major proportions, but it was not the only one to be faced by the Commissariat in Upper Canada. Homeless refugees from the Niagara frontier also clamoured for the government's aid.

Commissary-General Robinson was fully aware of the impending difficulties caused by the scarcity of meat, fresh or salt, in Upper Canada. Supplies were to be forwarded when navigation on the St. Lawrence resumed, but this still would be dependent on the availability of those provisions in the lower province.²³ On the last day of February, Prevost wrote to Drummond cautioning him about placing an over-reliance on supplies from Lower Canada. That same day Prevost had also agreed to the commissary-general's recommendation for reducing the issue of flour in the Montreal area. The turmoil of the previous autumn brought on by the threat of invasion had made it necessary to concentrate large numbers of troops near Montreal and had prevented the creation of a sufficient store of flour for the spring. As it was troops in garrison in the Montreal area were already going without their ration of pease.²⁴

²³W. H. Robinson to N. Freer, 12 February 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 118, pp. 39-42).

²⁴W. H. Robinson to N. Freer, 28 February 1814 and General Order, 28 February 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 118, pp. 43-44 and C 1171, pp. 199-200).

Prevost urged Drummond to limit his demands as much as possible by making every effort to collect and husband the resources of Upper Canada. British naval supremacy on Lake Ontario might be of short duration and Prevost thought it possible that the Right Division might have to subsist on those depots and magazines already established prior to the opening of the campaign:

You should take into your calculation, in addition to the serious expense, difficulty and inconvenience, inseparable [sic] from the transport of provisions from Lower Canada, the uncertainty of their arriving at their destination, and make corresponding exertions to be prepared against disappointment.²⁵

Drummond's demand, however, became sharper. It would be "totally, and absolutely impossible" to supply the Right Division from magazines which might be created before the start of the next campaign. Having recently returned from a personal inspection of the area west of Burlington, he was convinced that local resources would not sustain the Right Division. The scanty supply of salt pork had already been broken into:

And I must again beg to assure Your Excellency, that I conceive it will be totally impossible for the Right Division to hold its ground, on the Niagara Frontier, without a very ample supply of Provisions from the Lower Province.²⁶

Several days after the opening of the Legislature on 15 February at York, Drummond had set out for Burlington and the area

²⁵Sir G. Prevost to Sir G. Drummond, 28 February 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 1222, pp. 54-55).

²⁶Sir G. Drummond to Sir G. Prevost, 11 March 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 682, p. 195).

westwards, going as far as Delaware Town on the Thames and down to Long Point on the shore of Lake Erie. The settlements bordering on the Thames had been entirely drained of their resources:

. . . so much so, in fact, as to make it almost amount to an impossibility to support an adequate force for its' protection, without drawing all supplies for that purpose from the neighbourhood of Long Point.²⁷

The Long Point area, however, still possessed a "tolerable" quantity of flour and a few cattle. Drummond hoped he might receive sufficient troops to post a considerable force near Turkey Point, sending out detachments to cover the nearby mills and even as far as Oxford.

The steady reduction of Upper Canada's material resources was further aggravated by other problems. For while Drummond was at Burlington, it was revealed that commissary Dance had procured scarcely any flour for further consumption. The sleighing season was past and the flour, only just contracted for, was not yet in the Commissariat's magazines. Drummond immediately called for Dance's removal from the head of the Right Division's Commissariat. He wanted someone of more energy and talent as he was:

. . . thoroughly convinced, that such conduct would not have been pursued by any other person, in that Department, possessed of the smallest spark of energy, activity, or genuine zeal for His Majesty's Service.²⁸

²⁷Sir G. Drummond to Sir G. Prevost, 5 March 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 682, p. 163).

²⁸Ibid., p. 166.

Indeed, Commissary-General Robinson had had some misgivings over Dance's qualifications when he had been left in charge of the Right Division in the fall of 1813. Edward Couche, Dance's predecessor, was critical of his replacement's attitude, noting that he made much of the difficulties and his own efforts in overcoming them, throwing indirect reflections on those who had preceded him. In any case, the commissary-general expressed his gratification at the changes now made, stating his full confidence in Deputy Commissary-General Peter Turquand being sent to take charge of the Right Division. Robinson's other deputy commissary-general Edward Couche, would resume the overall superintendence of the Commissariat in Upper Canada, establishing himself at Kingston.²⁹

Prevost hoped these changes would improve Drummond's position but the pressure to find sufficient provisions continued. Though he was pleased when he learnt of Turquand's appointment, Drummond was still receiving distressing reports from the Right Division. Dance declared that it was "perfectly out of his power" to comply with Drummond's request that provisions for six months be laid in at Fort Niagara. The required quantity of salt pork alone was more than he had altogether. At the moment there was no flour to spare for such an object, nor were the roads from Burlington and Long Point in any

²⁹W. H. Robinson to Sir G. Prevost, 6 October 1813; E. Couche to W. H. Robinson, 4 February 1814; General Order, 18 March 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 117, pp. 138-143; C 118, pp. 36-38; C 1171, p. 212); W. H. Robinson to J. C. Herries, No. 225, 26 March 1814 (P.A.C., W.O. 57/15).

condition for such a movement of provisions. Riall was constantly urging greater exertions from Dance, but the stock of salt provisions was getting very small, while the supply of fresh meat had nearly ceased altogether.³⁰

On 7 April Drummond was somewhat relieved to report that, in accordance with new instructions, at least a three months' supply of provisions was to have been laid in at Fort Niagara during the last week of March.³¹ However, at the end of April the general situation had hardly changed, while information obtained from a former sutler with the American army, conveyed an ominous picture of the enemy's forces then concentrating along the Niagara. Once again realization of Drummond's worst fears seemed a distinct possibility:

Should this man's report be true; and should not the most ample supplies of Provisions, particularly Flour, be sent from the Lower Province, I feel strongly apprehensive that the Right Division will not be able to hold its ground even though the entire resources of the Country should be at our command.³²

Early in May there was some improvement, if only slight, with the capture of American provisions stored at Oswego. In terms of the total number of rations then being issued to the Right Division and at Kingston this acquisition was little enough. The capture of 800

³⁰Sir G. Drummond to Sir G. Prevost, 14 and 15 March 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 682, pp. 196-199, 202-209).

³¹Sir G. Drummond to Sir G. Prevost, 7 April 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 683, pp. 12-14).

³²Sir G. Drummond to Sir G. Prevost, 26 April 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 683, p. 52-53).

barrels of flour, 500 of pork and 500 of bread might extend flour and bread issues for almost two weeks, issues of pork for several days less than that.³³ The 500 additional barrels of salt taken could also be put to good use but the advantage gained at Oswego was soon offset, to some extent, by American depredations in the Turkey Point region. The destruction of the mills in that area, which supplied most of the upper part of the province, was the main objective of 800 enemy marauders who were landed by the American fleet off Patterson's Creek on the afternoon of 14 May. Besides three flour-mills, much private property was also destroyed. Though the flour, then at the mills, had nearly all been saved, having been already moved to safety before the attack, any cattle and hogs found were shot, crudely butchered, and the remains left to rot.³⁴

Since October 1813, counties in the Western and London Districts had suffered at the hands of American foraging parties, from Detroit, in search of provisions and plunder. In February 1814 Drummond had pushed out a small force of regulars, militia and Indians toward Oxford to "circumscribe the boundaries of the enemy and to collect what supplies there were."³⁵ Even if the supplies proved deficient, Drummond had

³³Statement of Ordnance, Naval Stores and Provisions brought off and destroyed at Oswego, 6 May 1814, Cruikshank, Documentary History, IX, p. 343.

Provision returns indicate that the Right Division and the forces at Kingston were consuming about 14,500 rations daily. Pork is taken at 200 lb. per barrel and bread at 100 lb. per barrel.

³⁴Cruikshank, "Norfolk in the War of 1812," pp. 29-33.

³⁵Sir G. Drummond to Sir G. Prevost, 8 February 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 682, p. 106).

hoped that this force would at least be able to provide for itself, but the scarcity of provisions and a defeat to the west of Delaware Town forced the British to withdraw. The American forces which landed at Patterson's Creek in May met no resistance.

On 6 June 1814, Deputy Commissary-General Couche noted that the Right Division had sufficient flour to last until the middle of October and enough meat for early September. The Right Division was issuing about 8,700 rations daily, over half of which were expended at Burlington, largely to non-combatants. Kingston, for the moment, was not as well off, its meat supply for both army and navy being expected to last only until 5 July.³⁶ However, at the end of the month Commissary-General Robinson was able to report to Sir George Prevost that the general supply situation in the Canadas seemed under control. He was confident that the supplies ordered from England would arrive in time and that additional quantities would be shipped for the reinforcements expected that summer. There would soon be an additional three months' consumption of provisions laid in at Kingston and fresh beef contracts for that post and for those in Lower Canada were arranged to start in August.³⁷

³⁶Return of Provisions with the Right Division, 16 May 1814, dated 6 June 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 683, pp. 262-263). See Appendix XXVI.

³⁷W. H. Robinson to [Sir G. Prevost], 29 June 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 373, pp. 166-173).

Since the opening of navigation in April, the bateaux brigades, laden with stores and provisions, had been moving between Lachine and Kingston, while Yeo's schooners conveyed men and supplies across Lake Ontario to the Right Division. Young Thomas Ridout, recently made a Deputy Assistant Commissary-General and given charge of the Commissariat at Cornwall, provided his father in York with a brief glimpse of the activity:

Every day twelve batteaux arrive here from Lachine on their way to Kingston, with provisions and naval stores, and we have troops stationed along the river to protect communication.³⁸

In retrospect the first four months of 1814 had been fraught with difficulties as Drummond strove to prepare his forces for the coming campaign. Besides making good shortages at Kingston, Burlington and along the Niagara, relief was also organized and sent to the garrison at Michilimackinac, with which communication had been severed in October 1813. Another problem of a potentially far more serious nature had arisen at the end of March when Commodore Sir James Yeo, commanding the naval forces on the lakes, was presented with a complaint expressing an alarming degree of discontent among his seamen. The trouble had been over rations, which the seamen protested were reduced as a result of a General Order issued in January. To Drummond the gravity of the situation had been abundantly clear. The reinforcement, indeed, the very subsistence of the Right Division, must depend to a crucial degree on Yeo's squadron on Lake Ontario, and

³⁸T. G. Ridout to his father, 1 May 1814, Edgar, p. 279.

Drummond's reaction had been prompt. An increase in naval rations was not long in coming, though it could only add to the problems of the Commissariat.³⁹

The prohibition on distilling had been extended and a further proclamation issued, forbidding the exportation of any grains, flour or meat from Upper Canada. To further alleviate some of the Commissariat's worries, enabling its staff to exert every effort in victualling his troops, Drummond had placed all bateaux in the upper province back under the charge of the quartermaster-general.⁴⁰ Yet all these measures did not lessen the irritation and anxiety which had been felt over the lack of ready specie. It was not simply that Drummond's own troops were paid erratically, frequently being far in arrears. In January Riall had been directed to investigate the claims of local people still not paid for services performed prior to May 1813. Late in February Drummond was dismayed to find many people in the area west of Burlington wanting payment for cattle and provisions furnished, taken or destroyed by the troops and Indians during Procter's retreat. Even debts incurred by Brock had not yet been settled.⁴¹

³⁹Sir G. Drummond to Sir G. Prevost, 2 April 1814 and District General Order, Kingston, 31 March 1814, Cruikshank, Documentary History, IX, pp. 276-277 and 270-271.

⁴⁰Sir G. Drummond to Sir G. Prevost, 5 April 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 118, p. 87). All bateaux had been in the care of the Commissariat since May 1812.

⁴¹Sir G. Drummond to Sir G. Prevost, 27 January and 5 March 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 682, pp. 59-62 and 163-169).

The resulting discontent had not only encouraged many farmers to withhold their produce from sale until former debts were satisfied, but had also led them to demand money down for any new purchases. They claimed to have no faith in the promises of the Commissariat, by which they felt they had been so often deceived in the past. Similar difficulties had also been experienced in obtaining materials to strengthen the various fortifications occupied by the Right Division. Contractors had been unwilling to come forward, yet the commissaries claimed that such problems were unavoidable as the necessary funds were just not in their possession.⁴² While the British regulars and the Canadian militiamen had grumbled over their arrears in pay, Drummond had written to Prevost on the plight of the Right Division:

. . . the absolute necessity there exists, for ample supplies of money being transmitted, to the upper part of this province, in particular; that not only the outstanding debts of the Service may be liquidated, but that the Commissariat may be enabled to procure such resources as the country affords before the credit of the Government be altogether destroyed.⁴³

Commissary-General Robinson forwarded a total of £231,500 in specie and notes to Upper Canada in the first few months of 1814 and when Couche arrived at Kingston to assume command of the Commissariat in that province, he brought with him an additional £10,000 in small notes and £5,000 in gold. In April another £10,000 in specie had been

⁴²Major-General Phineas Riall to Sir G. Drummond, 8 March 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 118, pp. 47-49).

⁴³Sir G. Drummond to Sir G. Prevost, 10 March 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 118, p. 45).

sent on to Kingston, but the demand remained insatiable. Again in June, Drummond pressed his superior in Lower Canada for another £82,000 which he claimed was "immediately necessary." The militia were becoming restless and the Commissariat at York was reported to be without any cash on hand.⁴⁴

While the internal problems of Drummond's command continued to evade any lasting solution the military situation along the Niagara frontier had begun to look increasingly worse. By April an American army was once again active in Buffalo. From a purely strategic standpoint, there should have been some satisfaction for the British in again seeing American efforts being wasted far to the west of Montreal and Kingston. Yet apart from the natural uncertainty over the enemy's true intentions, Prevost indicated to Drummond that he would prefer the main enemy attack to be directed against Lower Canada. He had no desire to renew the conflict along the Niagara "where we have experienced so much difficulty in forwarding the necessary supplies & from the total want of accomodation for carrying on the service."⁴⁵

As Drummond became more convinced that the main American effort was indeed to be made on the Niagara he pressed Prevost for

⁴⁴Sir G. Prevost to Sir G. Drummond, 22 March and 21 April 1814; Sir G. Drummond to Sir G. Prevost, 21 June 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 1222, pp. 67-69 and 105-107; C 118, pp. 109-111).

⁴⁵Sir G. Prevost to Sir G. Drummond, 5 January 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 1222, p. 15).

reinforcements. Those that were available were pushed on through Kingston to York and Burlington and at the beginning of July Drummond's Right Division could muster about 4,000 effectives, being spread along the Niagara, at Burlington, Long Point and York. Such scattered positions were cause for some concern yet Drummond was confident there would be ample time to concentrate his forces to meet any attack. Not only was it difficult to feed a large force assembled in one area for any length of time, but the presence of British regulars also helped to deter American marauders from destroying those resources which were available. Although Drummond did not like the idea of one of his most effective corps being "shut up" in Fort Niagara,⁴⁶ considerations of supply and reinforcement made its retention, in conjunction with Fort George and the new works started at Point Mississauga, important as it controlled the harbour at the mouth of the Niagara River. By the end of June, despite any wish of Prevost's to the contrary, another American invasion of the Niagara seemed imminent.

⁴⁶Sir G. Drummond to Sir G. Prevost, 2 July 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 684, pp. 12-18).

CHAPTER SEVEN

DRUMMOND'S NIAGARA CAMPAIGN OF 1814

In the early hours of 3 July an American army of some 4,500 men under Major-General Jacob Brown crossed the Niagara River above the falls and began the fourth and final American invasion of the Niagara peninsula. The next four months subjected the defending British Right Division to a drawn-out test of endurance. In an area whose resources had already been reduced by previous campaigns, subsistence presented a problem of serious difficulty. A sharp and sanguinary battle forced the invaders back but was followed by a dismal siege which found British resources dwindling in the face of determined opposition and growing enemy numbers. At the same time the loss of naval control on Lake Ontario made reinforcement a tedious and difficult task, while the problem of provisioning a British force in excess of 3,000 regulars appeared to have only one solution - the timely arrival of the British squadron from Kingston. For the British, the final crisis came in October, with the Right Division much reduced

¹The exact strength of Brown's army is not easily established. American strength returns do not appear to be conclusive evidence. Mahan, following Adams, puts Brown's total strength at 4,780, and Babcock estimates it at 4,500 as of 3 July. Hitsman, however, has stated Brown's strength to be "barely 3,500 regulars and volunteers," and Horsman establishes it at less than 3,400 "effectives," together with 600 Indians.

and in need of supplies of every kind. The results of the campaign were disappointing to both belligerents.

Initially the American invasion met with success. Fort Erie surrendered on the evening of 3 July and two days later a British force under Major-General Riall was defeated near the Chippawa. The American advance soon forced Riall to retire upon the forts at the mouth of the Niagara. The numbers of his sedentary militia and Indians dwindled rapidly, leaving him in need of skirmishers. The question of food supplies came to immediate prominence with the garrisons being placed on half allowance as a siege appeared very likely. The militia were directed to collect their cattle and re-assemble at Burlington, while officers of the Lincoln regiments were sent out with detachments to procure cattle for Fort George.² Fearing for his communications with Burlington, Riall soon resumed his withdrawal, leaving about 1,500 men to hold the forts. At Twenty Mile Creek he was joined by reinforcements from Burlington and while the Americans lingered at Queenston, a levy en masse of the Upper Canadian militia brought in upwards of 1,000 men to Riall's force. At the same time the Indians once again came forward.

Using the support of the militia and the Indians, however, presented several problems. In Kingston Drummond realized that such numbers as had turned out at Burlington could not be provisioned for

²Deputy Commissary-General Peter Turquand to Major David Secord, 8 July 1814, Cruikshank, Documentary History, II, p. 58.

long. To reduce the consumption of supplies and to improve the efficiency of the militia he wanted the more elderly and less active men, as well as the very young, to be dismissed. On the other hand, the immediate situation, to those present, seemed to require the militia's full support.³ By 17 July Riall could only wish that if Brown's army was going to attack, that it would be soon. Delay could only reduce Riall's strength. He was worried that the militia would not remain for long. Their hay was already receiving damage and the wheat crop was ripening quickly.⁴

On 20 July the main force of Brown's army moved to within two miles of Fort George, apparently intent upon commencing siege operations. Both Brown and the American Secretary of War expected Commodore Chauncey and the American squadron on Lake Ontario to show up off the mouth of the Niagara River. Brown was confident that with the support of Chauncey's ships he could easily secure the peninsula and even talked of taking Kingston.⁵ He not only wanted Chauncey to

³Sir G. Drummond to Sir G. Prevost, 15 July 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 684, pp. 101-104).

By 20 July Riall had managed to concentrate some 3,100 men (of whom about 1,400 were militia and Indians) ready to strike Brown's left flank should he attack Fort George. Riall, however, believed that he faced an American army in excess of 7,000 men, while the battle at the Chippawa had shown the Americans to be much steadier opponents than he had previously been led to believe.

⁴P. Riall to Sir G. Drummond, 17 July 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 684, pp. 134-138).

⁵Major-General Jacob Brown to Commodore Isaac Chauncey, 13 July 1814, cited by Louis L. Babcock, The War of 1812 on the Niagara Frontier, Buffalo Historical Society Publications, XXIX, Buffalo, 1927, p. 160.

supply him, but needed the heavy siege guns which the squadron was to convey to the Niagara frontier. Chauncey's squadron, however, did not put in an appearance and on 22 July the American army withdrew to Queenston and on the 24th fell back to Chippawa to draw provisions from Fort Schlosser. The lake squadrons of both nations were to effect a role of increasing importance in the movement of men and supplies to the very end of the campaign. For the moment, however, Brown, having given up the idea of a siege, now resolved to attempt a rapid march across the peninsula for Burlington.⁶

On the British side Drummond had been hurriedly pushing forward reinforcements to the Niagara. Riall's report of the action on 5 July by the Chippawa had reached him at Kingston late on the night of 8 July. The next day Drummond requested that the 6th and 82nd regiments be sent up to Kingston from Lower Canada. Arrangements were then quickly made to forward the 89th regiment and the flank companies of the 104th from Kingston to York, to be followed shortly by half of the De Watteville Regiment.⁷ Riall needed reinforcements but Drummond was ever anxious over the safety of Kingston. In consequence Yeo was asked to land 200 marines at Point Fredrick to strengthen the Kingston garrison until the arrival of the troops from Lower Canada. The

⁶Memoranda of Occurrences and some important facts attending the Campaign of the Niagara in 1814, E. A. Cruikshank, ed., Documents relating to the Invasion of the Niagara Peninsula by General Jacob Brown, In July and August, 1814, n.p., 1920, p. 79.

⁷Sir G. Drummond to Sir G. Prevost, 9, 10, 16 July 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 684, pp. 44-50, 59-64, 107-110).

remainder of the De Watteville Regiment was also to be held at Kingston, and not sent on to the Right Division until the 6th or 82nd regiments had come up. As a further measure five companies of the Canadian Fencibles were ordered to Kingston from Fort Wellington at Prescott.⁸

As soon as he was able, Drummond hurried to the Niagara and on 25 July he assumed personal command. The sanguine and bitterly contested battle of Lundy's Lane, which was fought that evening, continuing well into the night, effectively ended Brown's designs on Burlington. Brown himself was wounded and the American army withdrew, not across the Niagara River, but back to Fort Erie, still on the Canadian side. Although there was no immediate pursuit, Drummond did not expect much difficulty in driving the Americans off the Niagara and hoped that attention might soon be turned towards the destruction of Sackett's Harbour.⁹

After the losses which his army had sustained at Lundy's Lane, Brown was anxious that his army be reinforced,¹⁰ but such numbers as he might have hoped for were not available. Drummond, however, was

⁸Arrangements for Collecting a Force at Burlington (circa 13 July); Sir G. Drummond to Sir G. Prevost, 13, 16, 17 July 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 684, pp. 88-89, 90-93, 107-110, 120-123).

⁹Sir G. Drummond to Sir G. Prevost, 27, 31 July 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 684, pp. 235-245, 249-251).

¹⁰J. Brown to J. Armstrong, Secretary of War, 5 August 1814, Cruikshank, Documents relating to the Invasion of the Niagara Peninsula, p. 55.

able to draw on the garrisons of his forts and knew that reinforcements were on their way from Kingston. Even before the battle at Lundy's Lane he had resolved to order the 82nd Regiment up to the Niagara as soon as it arrived in Kingston.¹¹ Yet there was still cause for serious concern. For reinforcement not only meant an addition to the Right Division's battle strength, it also meant an added burden for its commissariat. Five days after the first clash between Brown and Riall at Chippawa, Drummond had been informed that commissary Turquand had fears of the Right Division's supply of flour proving insufficient. Though Riall had indicated that the forts were adequately stocked for the moment, there had been no transport available to forward any flour from Kingston.¹² Nor could the reinforcements, which had then been ordered to the Right Division, proceed without accompanying provisions. To support them, Yeo's two brigs, Star and Charwell, had sailed up the lake to Burlington some days later, loaded with flour and pork.¹³

During the period between the battles of Chippawa and Lundy's Lane, Drummond had wished to send on more reinforcements for the Right Division than he had been able to.¹⁴ Nor was the only consideration

¹¹Sir G. Drummond to Sir G. Prevost, 23 July 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 684, pp. 173-176).

¹²Sir G. Drummond to Sir G. Prevost, 10 July 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 684, pp. 59-64).

¹³Sir G. Drummond to Sir G. Prevost, 13, 15, 16 July 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 684, pp. 90-93, 101-104, 107-110).

¹⁴Sir G. Drummond to Sir G. Prevost, 15 July 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 684, pp. 101-104).

the necessity of keeping adequate forces at Kingston. It had already become imperative to reduce the Right Division's consumption of provisions. The number of non-effectives accompanying the Right Division had to be cut down and at last something was to be done to curtail the issues made to the Indians. Drummond explained:

I wish it were in my power still to encrease [sic] the numbers of the Right Division, either by forwarding the 6th or 82nd Regiment to the Frontier. But I feel afraid the Commissariat could not supply them. So much alarmed am I, even with regard to their present numbers, that I have directed all the Women, and Children, of the Troops, to be sent down from Niagara Burlington and York, and the families of the Indians to be placed on Half Allowance.¹⁵

It was necessary to push on two of the bateau brigades, which normally ran between Montreal and Kingston, with provisions for the Right Division. Yet even these supplies and those being hauled by the two brigs were felt to be insufficient.¹⁶ Nonetheless, the service rendered by Yeo's vessels was invaluable and Drummond clearly acknowledged it:

. . . without their valuable aid in the transport of troops and Stores, I certainly should not have been able to have attempted offensive operations so soon after my arrival. I feel infinite obligation to Sir James Yeo for his prompt acquiescence in my request to him to detach these vessels . . .¹⁷

¹⁵Sir G. Drummond to Sir G. Prevost, 16 July 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 684, p. 117). Actually, three women per company were allowed to remain, the rest being sent down to Lower Canada. See Sir G. Drummond to Sir G. Prevost, 23 July 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 684, pp. 173-176). It would also appear that little was done to reduce Indian issues as their consumption was still enormous even in August.

¹⁶Sir G. Drummond to Sir G. Prevost, 23 July 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 684, pp. 173-176).

¹⁷Sir G. Drummond to Sir G. Prevost, 12 August 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 684, p. 81).

While the brigs carried provisions up to Burlington and York, two schooners were busy ferrying troops and stores between York and the Niagara. During the last days of July and the first of August the De Watteville Regiment was assembled on the Niagara frontier.¹⁸ In the first week of August Drummond's army began the investment of Fort Erie. The futile siege which followed was to demonstrate with great clarity that the successful maintenance of the Right Division absolutely required secure water communications and the co-operation of Yeo's fleet, in order to overcome the lack of local provision supplies and the poor conditions of land travel.

Immediately after the battle at Lundy's Lane, Drummond disbanded the sedentary militia, sending them home to look after the harvest, while at the same time reducing his own ration issues. At the beginning of August Drummond's force of regulars opened the siege of Fort Erie. Any immediate assault was postponed and when finally attempted on 15 August it met with a bloody repulse. Prior to the assault Drummond had managed to collect a force well in excess of 3,000 regulars in front of Fort Erie, but the casualties suffered in the assault were extremely heavy. The killed, wounded, missing and prisoners amounted to about 900. Fortunately for Drummond, he was able to draw on reinforcements already close at hand, or on their way

¹⁸Sir G. Drummond to Sir G. Prevost, 17 July and 4 August 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 684, pp. 120-123 and C 685, pp. 38-42); Sir G. Prevost to Lord Bathurst, 5 August 1814 (P.A.C., C.O. 42/157, pp. 105-106).

from Kingston. The 82nd Regiment had arrived at the head of the lake and the 6th Regiment was marching for York, this latter having been called up after the battle at Lundy's Lane.

Early in August Drummond had complained that several of his units then on the Niagara were wholly unfit for field service, but now there was little chance to replace them as the new reinforcements would have to make good his recent losses, enabling him to continue the siege. On 24 August the 82nd Regiment arrived at Drummond's camp and was followed nine days later by the 6th Regiment.¹⁹ Once again, as in the early weeks of July, Drummond wished that more could be done:

I had intended to order another Regiment from Kingston; but from the badness of the roads, since the recent rains, I could not calculate upon their arrival here, before our Squadron will be ready to take the lake. And, as, even at present, a diminution of our Stores, and Provisions, is beginning to be felt, I entreat Your Excellency will impress upon the Com-
modore the necessity of conveying to the Right Division, the very first moment the Squadron can leave Harbour, a full
Supply of each, as well as a reinforcement of Troops . . .²⁰

On 1 August the American squadron had left Sackett's Harbour, appearing off the Niagara on the fifth - too late to co-operate directly with Brown's army, but quite able to harass Drummond's water communications. After driving ashore one of the vessels attached to Drummond's army, Chauncey had left three of his brigs to blockade the

¹⁹Sir G. Drummond to Sir G. Prevost, 23 July, 4, 8, 16, 24 August and 2 September 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 684, pp. 173-176 and C 685, pp. 38-42, 47-50, 101-107, 134-137, 164-167).

²⁰Sir G. Drummond to Sir G. Prevost, 16 August 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 685, pp. 106-107).

mouth of the Niagara while he himself had sailed with the main fleet to take up a station just outside of Kingston. The prospect of Yeo's coming to the relief of the Right Division began to look more remote as the month of August progressed and Drummond finally decided to order fresh reinforcements to proceed by land.²¹ Chauncey's dominance on Lake Ontario was having a decided effect on the movement of men and supplies to the Right Division. Prevost explained the situation to Lord Bathurst, the Secretary for War and Colonies, in London:

The naval ascendancy possessed by the enemy on Lake Ontario enables him to perform in two days what our Troops going from Kingston to reinforce the Right Division required from Sixteen to Twenty of severe marching to accomplish; their Men arrived fresh whilst ours are fatigued and with an exhausted equipment; the route from Kingston to the Niagara Frontier exceeds Two Hundred and Fifty Miles and passes in several places through a tract of Country impenetrable for the conveyance of Extensive supplies.²²

This same despatch went on to assure Bathurst that the Right Division "has been placed beyond the apprehension of any material want before the period fixed by Sir James Yeo for taking the lake with his augmented fleet." In Drummond's camp, however, discussion on this very matter was far more animated and soon took on an air of urgency.

Since leaving Kingston in July to assume the command of the Right Division, Drummond had been under the impression that the division's provision supply would be adequate until 1 October, and

²¹Sir G. Drummond to Sir G. Prevost, 30 August 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 685, pp. 158-160).

²²Sir G. Prevost to Lord Bathurst, No. 187, 14 August 1814. (P.A.C., C.O. 42/157, p. 132).

even for a week or two beyond that. Now, on the morning of 18 August, he was informed by his chief commissariat officer, Peter Turquand, that the most recent provision returns indicated that there remained in store only 33 days of flour for 6,000 men, 30 days of salt pork and but 12 days of salt beef. Independent of waste, the remaining quantities would not be sufficient for Drummond's forces for another month. Though issues to the Right Division had been reported in early June as amounting to about 9,000 rations daily, including Indians, it now appeared that some 14,000 rations were being devoured, one half of them going to Indians and their families.²³

The situation appeared even worse as the season of the year was unfavourable for procuring any further local supplies of flour. That of the current harvest was not yet available, while enemy marauders had made a point of destroying mills in the most westerly areas of the upper province. American depredations, along with those of the Indians, and the constant demand for cattle, had reduced the province's supply of fresh meat to an almost negligible amount. Towards the end of August Commissary-General Robinson informed Prevost that the quantity of provisions then in store with the Right Division did not, "admit of a hope that the army can, with every exertion of the Commissariat attached to the Right Division, be victualled beyond the middle of next month."²⁴

²³Sir G. Drummond to Sir G. Prevost, 18 August 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. '8, C 118, pp. 141-143).

²⁴W. H. Robinson to Sir G. Prevost, 27 August 1814 (P.A.C., C.O. 42/157, p. 164).

It was obvious to Drummond, as indeed it was to Prevost and Robinson, that Yeo's squadron, then cooped up in Kingston awaiting the completion of its latest and largest vessel, was going to be the decisive factor in sustaining the Right Division. The same day that Turquand told him of the impending supply crisis Drummond wrote to Yeo:

I feel it incumbent on me to represent to you that in consequence of the operations of this Division of the Army being by the late unfortunate events protracted so much beyond the period which had been expected, and the consequent necessity which exists for bringing forward to this position a greater force than was intended, its wants wants [sic] in Provisions, Ammunition and Stores of every kind have become so alarmingly great and urgent, that nothing but the assistance of the whole of His Majesty's Squadron on Lake Ontario, can enable it to continue its operations against the Enemy, or even to retain its present position on this frontier.²⁵

It seemed absolutely impossible that "an adequate or timely Supply" could be brought up from Kingston while Chauncey was supreme on the lake and his three vessels blockaded the mouth of the Niagara. Drummond urged Yeo to complete his new ship and to sail for the Niagara the moment he was ready with all the stores and provisions he could carry. Prevost was requested to further "impress on the Commodore's mind, that the Right Division, after its disastrous misfortune of the 15th Instant, depends almost entirely on his prompt, and vigorous exertions, for its relief, may perhaps even for its safety."²⁶

²⁵Sir G. Drummond to Commodore Sir James Yeo, 18 August 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 685, p. 121).

²⁶Sir G. Drummond to Sir G. Prevost, 18 August 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 118, p. 142).

In the meantime it was essential that some action be taken immediately. Lieutenant-Colonel Robert Nichol,²⁷ the quartermaster-general of the Upper Canadian militia, was summoned to Drummond's headquarters and told of the situation. Nichol possessed a considerable knowledge of the local countryside and had been employed earlier that year in compiling a return of the resources to be found in the London, Niagara and a part of the Home Districts. He and another militia officer were now sent out to use their personal influence in inducing the farmers to thresh their grain earlier than usual. They were also armed with special powers from Drummond and the commanding officers of the Lincoln militia in particular were instructed to see that their subordinates enforced a quota, if required, of five to twelve bushels of wheat from each farmer known to have such a quantity to spare beyond the requirements of his own family. It was hoped that coercion would be unnecessary and high prices were offered for any grain and flour that might be available.²⁸ Drummond was hopeful that such efforts might enable the Right Division to hold out until Yeo's squadron appeared, but, he reminded Prevost, it must be "at best but a precarious dependence."²⁹

²⁷Commanding the 2nd Norfolk Regiment.

²⁸Militia General Order, 25 August 1814 and Memorial of Lieutenant-Colonel Robert Nichol, 24 September 1817, Cruikshank, Documentary History, II, pp. 187 and 358. On the basis of other evidence, the claims made in Nichol's memorial would appear to be rather exaggerated.

²⁹Sir G. Drummond to Sir G. Prevost, 24 August 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 685, p. 135).

At Kingston, Deputy Commissary-General Couche, acting under Drummond's instructions to forward what supplies he could to York by bateaux, whatever the risk, managed to send out 24 of these small boats, loaded with flour and pork. Quite apart from their safe arrival being uncertain, it was clear that such a "feeble means of transport" could never build up sufficient depots to maintain the Right Division. Drummond wished that all small craft available at Kingston be loaded and held in constant readiness to run for the head of the lake at the first opportunity.³⁰

Commissary-General Robinson was greatly alarmed at the Right Division's situation and assured Prevost that every effort would be made to push on supplies from Montreal to Kingston. The exhausted state of Upper Canada's resources meant that provisions of every nature had to be moved up from the lower province before navigation on the St. Lawrence and Lake Ontario became impracticable. Yet the commissary-general had to report that he was unable to send on any more salt meat to Kingston, as he had already reduced the magazines in Lower Canada as far as he dared. Anxious eyes were now turned to Quebec and the expected arrival of the June convoy from Great Britain. The convoy was already late, but Lord Bathurst had indicated that it would carry sufficient provisions for 10,000 men for six months. Meanwhile on the Niagara Drummond continued to be plagued by supply problems. In

³⁰Sir G. Drummond to Sir G. Prevost, 18 August 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 118, pp. 141-143).

addition to provisions he required ammunition and barrack stores of every description, and requested stoves in particular, for the winter months. There were abundant supplies of all these articles in Kingston and Major-General Stovin had ample supplies of ordnance stores ready to go, but all must wait until Yeo's squadron could get under way. Small quantities had been sent with the bateaux but at the end of August there was no hope that the squadron could sail before the first week in October.³¹

After the failure of the 15 August assault, the contending armies settled down to play out the continuing siege of Fort Erie. In the last days of August a new siege battery was completed and opened fire with somewhat better effect than previously. Despite this, Drummond's gunners were now forced to conserve ammunition until the army might be prepared to attempt another assault and would require a breach in the enemy's works. By 5 September another battery was completed and armed but it did not open fire. Ammunition supplies were so low that it had become necessary to husband every remaining round. Drummond decided to wait for a small supply of ammunition to be brought up from Fort George and until he could add the 97th Regiment to his forces. Though he still mentioned the possibility of another assault in his despatches to Prevost, it was clear that

³¹Sir G. Prevost to Lord Bathurst, No. 190, 27 August 1814 and W. H. Robinson to Sir G. Prevost, 27 August 1814 (P.A.C., C.O. 42/157, pp. 156-158 and 164-167); Sir G. Drummond to Sir G. Prevost, 21 August 1814 and Stovin to N. Freer, 29 August 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 685, pp. 123-128 and 157).

Drummond was having serious doubts about undertaking it at all. American strength seemed to be increasing daily, while sickness had already made an appearance in his own camp, particularly with the recently arrived 82nd Regiment.³²

Drummond expected the 97th Regiment to arrive at York on 8 September and in the absence of Chauncey's blockade ships he was able to send over his remaining brig and the two schooners to meet it there. He had wished for a stronger corps such as the 90th Regiment, but the 97th Regiment had been sent instead, forced to march along the shoreline because of the enemy's dominance on Lake Ontario. Hopes of moving the regiment from York to the Niagara frontier by water, however, were dashed when Chauncey's brigs suddenly reappeared off the Niagara. The 97th Regiment arrived in York only on 10 September and was accordingly forced to continue its fatiguing march to Drummond's camp on 12 September. By this time wet weather was seriously disrupting all travel by road and Drummond estimated that another week would be required before the regiment could arrive at Fort Erie. He was sorely disappointed. His batteries were almost silent even before the torrents of rain began to fall. The disposable ammunition from Fort George arrived on 11 September but was not to be used until the 97th Regiment arrived, in order to take best advantage of any breach which might be made.³³

³²Sir G. Drummond to Sir G. Prevost, 30 August and 2, 8, September 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 685, pp. 158-160, 165-167, 179-183).

³³Sir G. Drummond to Sir G. Prevost, 16, 30 August and 2, 8, 11, 14 September 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 685, pp. 101-107, 158-160, 164-167, 179-183, 192-195, 197-203).

The opportunity for another assault never presented itself. On the afternoon of 17 September an augmented garrison sallied forth in strength from Fort Erie, taking the British by surprize. Drummond's newest batteries were overrun, guns were spiked and ammunition destroyed. Drummond's total losses were just over 600 killed, wounded and missing - effectively nullifying any advantage which might be gained by the arrival of the 97th Regiment.³⁴ As far as the siege was concerned it was virtually the last straw for Drummond's army. By 19 September the 97th Regiment was finally assembled at the British camp but the siege guns and mortars were already being dragged back through the mud towards the Chippawa.³⁵

Rain continued to fall incessantly, day after day. Sickness increased considerably, the earthworks at Fort Niagara began to collapse, seriously weakening that position, while the roads on the peninsula were reduced to rivers of mud. Drummond's men were without tents and their makeshift huts incapable of providing adequate shelter. The camp, situated about one mile back from the batteries on flat open ground, was flooded with water. Neither clothes nor bedding could be kept dry, and in Drummond's words the camp literally resembled "a Lake in the midst of a thick wood."³⁶ The list of hardships was a lengthy one:

³⁴Upon its arrival in Canada in 1814, the 97th Regiment was returned as having a strength just under 600 rank and file.

³⁵Sir G. Drummond to Sir G. Prevost, 19 September 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 685, pp. 218-226).

³⁶Sir G. Drummond to Sir G. Prevost, 21 September 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 685, p. 228).

The late heavy falls of Rain have rendered the Roads almost impassable, and at this late Season there is little chance of their again becoming good - and when Your Excellency considers that I have no Depot of Provisions, or of any other description of Supplies nearer than Fort George, that the forage of the surrounding Country to the distance of upward of ten Miles has been exhausted, that even if I could feed them, I have not a sufficient number of cattle to enable me to move one third of the heavy Ordnance which I have in the Batteries - Should any unforeseen circumstances render a sudden movement necessary, the difficulties of my Situation will be Sufficiently apparent to Your Excellency.³⁷

With the arrival of the 97th Regiment the 8th Regiment and the battalion companies of the De Watteville Regiment were sent down to the British forts at the mouth of the Niagara. But the new reinforcements could do nothing to prolong the siege. The American sortie had disabled three of Drummond's six siege guns and destroyed their ammunition. The material wants of the Right Division had increased and more men were needed if an assault was to still take place. The siege was all but over:

Until supplied with Ammunition and Guns by the means of the Squadron (for to no other means of transport can we look for the next three months) Your Excellency will perceive the utter impossibility of any further operations against Fort Erie being undertaken by this Division . . . As no further offensive operations can be undertaken for the present, I propose leaving the Command of this frontier . . . and returning shortly towards the Lower part of the Province.³⁸

Sickness, rain, failing provisions, dwindling stores and the continued non-arrival of the British squadron finally culminated in

³⁷Sir G. Drummond to Sir G. Prevost, 14 September 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 685, pp. 197-198).

³⁸Sir G. Drummond to Sir G. Prevost, 19 September 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 685, pp. 225-226).

withdrawal. After tattoo was sounded on the evening of 21 September, Drummond's columns of enfeebled redcoats fell back towards Frenchman's Creek and bivouaced under yet another downpour. The following day the withdrawal continued and in the next few days the Right Division was moved into new and more comfortable cantonments. The men were to be given a few days to rest and re-equip for active service. Arms and ammunition were to be checked and shoes distributed where needed.³⁹

By 24 September Drummond had once again posted the Right Division along the Niagara frontier from Fort George to within a few miles of Fort Erie. Advanced videttes of the 19th Light Dragoons were posted at Frenchman's Creek to maintain contact with the enemy. To support them the Glengarry Light Infantry, Incorporated Militia and Indians were about five miles back at Palmer's. Stronger forces were available at Black Creek and behind the Chippawa River. Drummond felt that these new dispositions would not only allow the Right Division to concentrate rapidly on either flank but would also enable him to masque preparations for any attempt he might make along the American side of the river.⁴⁰ [See Map No. 7.]

Strategy, however, was not the only reason for such an extended line of defence. At the beginning of September the provisions and

³⁹Sir G. Drummond to Sir G. Prevost and Lieutenant-Colone John Harvey to Major-General Louis de Watteville, 24 September 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 685, pp. 266-269 and 288-290).

⁴⁰Sir G. Drummond to Sir G. Prevost, 24 September 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 685, pp. 266-269).

stores sent from Kingston by bateaux in mid-August had passed York safely and had arrived at Fort George during the absence of Chauncey's brigs. But the plight of the Right Division was hardly changed and Drummond's deputy adjutant-general, Lieutenant-Colonel Harvey, now issued specific instructions to the head of the Right Division's Commissariat:

I am directed by by [sic] the Lieutenant General Commanding, to call your attention to the very advanced and extended positions which the Troops at present occupy and which have been taken up chiefly with a view of securing the resources of the Country between the Chippaway and Frenchmans Creek, and to enable your department fully to avail itself of the opportunity for withdrawing them for the use of this Division.⁴¹

Accordingly, commissariat posts were established between Black Creek and Street's Creek, and between the Chippawa and Lundy's Lane. The Commissariat was to work quickly, as Drummond was somewhat apprehensive over the enemy's intentions and to aid them Major-General De Watteville was directed to provide assistance from the Incorporated Militia. It was also essential that a large forage depot be formed on the frontier and that lumber be procured for winter quarters. Nor did Drummond have any wish for a repetition of the consternation which had been occasioned by Turquand's unexpected report of 18 August on the Right Division's provision supply. This time Turquand was to make regular weekly reports of all provisions in store and the number of rations issued daily on the immediate frontier and at Burlington. Drummond also wanted to be informed of all contracts made for flour and pork.⁴²

⁴¹J. Harvey to P. Turquand, 25 September 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 685, p. 291).

⁴²Ibid., pp. 291-292.

During the last week of September detachments of the Incorporated Militia were employed in threshing out the local farmers' grain and in collecting produce for the army's use. The inhabitants themselves drove their cattle over Black Creek and were then asked to move them on to safer ground behind Lyon's Creek and the Chippawa. Drummond, however, was still worried:

Notwithstanding every effort however which it may be possible to make, I can not divest myself of the greatest degree of alarm on the Score of Provisions, etc. and I have earnestly to hope that nothing may happen to retain the Sailing of the Squadron for our relief very early in the ensuing month . . .

Besides our grand wants of Provisions, Ammunition and Guns, we are in want of Entrenching tools and Carpenters' tools, Boards, Nails, Stoves, etc., etc. before we can either repair our Forts or cover our troops for the Winter.⁴³

Nor were the commissariat personnel attached to the Right Division adequate for the task of driving the resources of the immediate countryside:

I begin to feel very sensibly the want of an efficient "Field" Commissariat - I mean inferior Officers of that Department accustomed to use great personal exertions in discovering and collecting the resources of a Country. If any such have accompanied the troops from Europe they would be invaluable - In the mean time I must employ the Officers and Men of the Incorporated Militia and pay them for their labours.⁴⁴

At the same time that Drummond complained to Prevost of the inadequacies of the Commissariat he also reported that the enemy had

⁴³Sir G. Drummond to Sir G. Prevost, 28 September 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 685, pp. 293-294).

⁴⁴Sir G. Drummond to Sir G. Prevost, 2 October 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 686, p. 4).

received considerable reinforcements, under Major-General Izard, from Sackett's Harbour. On the morning of 6 October Izard's encampment was sighted on the heights opposite Queenston and shortly afterwards Izard's force moved up the river, making camp at Black Rock. In the meantime Drummond was doing his best to strengthen a defensive position along the Chippawa, but the situation appeared bleak. Drummond's own force consisted of about 2,500 effectives while he estimated the enemy strength at not less than 8,000, while some reports indicated as many as 10,000.⁴⁵

The whole of the sedentary militia from the surrounding countryside was called out to defend the Chippawa, but Drummond scarcely expected many to show up. The reported strength of the enemy and the decided numerical inferiority of the Right Division had already induced many to abandon their homes and property. Nor was there to be any help from the Indians. When Drummond's army had fallen back from Fort Erie and gone into cantonments, they had departed for the head of the lake. Yet, when the American army did finally appear before the British works on 15 October, there was no immediate attempt to storm Drummond's lines.⁴⁶

⁴⁵Sir G. Drummond to Sir G. Prevost, 6, 10, 11 October 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 686, pp. 5-7, 9-12, 19-22). Throughout the campaign Drummond was prone to over-estimating his opponent's strength and although these figures were also an exaggeration, the threat was nonetheless very real. Izard and Brown together could now put in the field about 6,300 men, of whom some 5,000 were regulars.

⁴⁶District General Order, Niagara Falls, 11 October, and Sir G. Drummond to Sir G. Prevost, 11, 15 October 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 686, pp. 13-14, 19-22, 31-33).

With Izard's army poised for the attack the long awaited news that Yeo's squadron would soon be ready arrived in Prevost's despatch of 11 October. In fact, Yeo was already under way by the time Drummond received the letter. To Drummond, however, the news was read with very mixed feelings. According to Prevost's letter there was some question as to whether the 90th Regiment would be embarked or not. Yeo objected to taking reinforcements on board as he feared being brought to action by Chauncey at a disadvantage.⁴⁷ The many frustrations and disappointments of the preceding months did little to curb Drummond's indignation:

Should the 90th Regiment (or some strong Regt.) and the requisite supply of provisions and Stores, not come up in the Squadron, and should any disaster happen to this Division (in consequence) and above all should Commodore Chauncey (as is probable) decline an Action, His Majesty's Naval Commander will in my Opinion have much to answer for.⁴⁸

After a reconnaissance of Sackett's Harbour showed that Chauncey's fleet had left the Lakes, Yeo had consented "with difficulty" to take on board half of the 90th Regiment while the remainder marched overland to York. He did, however, agree to make another run to the Right Division, after his return to Kingston, in order to take over additional reinforcements, provisions and stores. For, despite representations that the condition of the roads between

⁴⁷Sir G. Prevost to Sir G. Drummond and Sir G. Prevost to Lord Bathurst, No. 199, 11 October 1-14 (P.A.C., C.O. 42/157, pp. 256-257 and 250-252).

⁴⁸Sir G. Drummond to Sir G. Prevost, 15 October 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 686, pp. 32-33).

Kingston and York was impracticable for extensive troop movements or for transporting any adequate quantity of provisions, the stowage in Yeo's new ship, the St. Lawrence, was not filled to capacity. Yeo already felt that she drew too much water, and did not wish to risk her any further.⁴⁹

In the meantime Drummond's alarm over the shortage of provisions continued, but even before he received this latest news, he had begun to wonder if even the arrival of the squadron would suffice in easing his position. As to the timely arrival of reinforcements, he was no longer counting on Yeo, though he hoped they might make good his losses in the coming clash with Izard. Once again, in the absence of more substantial means, bateaux brigades laden with flour and pork were sent on to York, creeping along the shoreline of Lake Ontario.⁵⁰

By the Chippawa, Izard continued to make a show of his infantry columns, but was careful to keep out of the range of Drummond's batteries. Failing to outflank the British position and having little desire to attempt a frontal assault he made one final show of force on 21 October and then withdrew towards Fort Erie.⁵¹ With the weather

⁴⁹Sir G. Prevost to Lord Bathurst, No. 200, 18 October and Sir G. Prevost to Sir G. Drummond, 11 October 1814 (P.A.C., C.O. 42/157, pp. 260-262 and 256-257).

⁵⁰Sir G. Drummond to Sir G. Prevost, 24 September and 11 October 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 685, pp. 257-260 and C 686, pp. 19-22); Sir G. Prevost to Sir G. Drummond, 11 October 1814 (P.A.C., C.O. 42/157, p. 258).

⁵¹Sir G. Drummond to Sir G. Prevost, 23 October 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 686, pp. 85-91).

bad, his equipment inadequate for siege operations, and his own health poor, Izard could see little to be gained even if he did succeed in turning Drummond's position on the Chippawa. Like Brown, he threw the blame on Chauncey's retirement to Sackett's Harbour, which, he wrote, "defeats all the objects of the operations by land in this quarter."⁵² To make matters worse, the British squadron was now off the Niagara.

Five sail had been sighted on 18 October, but for three days violent winds prevented any communication with Yeo's squadron. Drummond was extremely disappointed to learn that only five companies of the 90th Regiment had been brought up, while the other half of that corps had been left to struggle over the roads between Kingston and York. He asked Yeo to land his marines but the request was refused as the commodore still felt there was the possibility of an action with the American squadron. Nevertheless, Drummond issued orders for the brigading of a force to pursue Izard, though they were soon cancelled as the weather worsened, while available intelligence on the American army was poor and uncertain. In any event, by the end of the month Drummond received word that Izard's army had gone into winter quarters on the American shore, leaving a garrison at Fort Erie, while a column under Brown had departed for Sackett's Harbour.⁵³

⁵²Major-General George Izard to J. Armstrong, 16 October 1814, Cruikshank, Documentary History, pp. 254-256.

⁵³Sir G. Drummond to Sir G. Prevost, 18, 20, 23, 30 October 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 686, pp. 34-38, 77-81, 85-91, 114-116).

Though disappointed over Yeo's failure to bring up the whole of the 90th Regiment, Drummond immediately requested that two further battalions be sent to the frontier. One would be sent to Burlington to cover that position and the area to its west, while the other would be posted to Fort George allowing the remnants of those battalions which had seen extended service on the frontier to be sent down to Lower Canada. The squadron sailed for Kingston again on the night of 22 October with the remains of the 8th Regiment and the flank companies of the 104th Regiment, but Drummond remained most anxious that the Royal Scots, De Watteville, 100th, 41st and 103rd Regiments also be removed from the Right Division.⁵⁴ When it was learned that Prevost did intend to forward the 9th and 37th Regiments to the Niagara it became even more urgent that the exhausted corps be removed. Reference to the weekly commissariat returns indicated that almost 8,000 rations were being issued daily on the Niagara frontier alone. Any hesitation on Yeo's part to remove the worn battalions would, Drummond said, result in famine.⁵⁵

Early in November Yeo returned, landed the 37th Regiment at Fort George but quickly departed for York with a brigade of nine-pounder field guns still on board.⁵⁶ Some 400 of the least effective

⁵⁴Sir G. Drummond to Sir G. Prevost, 20 and 23 October 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 686, pp. 77-81 and 85-91).

⁵⁵Sir G. Drummond to Sir G. Prevost, 30 October 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 686, pp. 114-116).

⁵⁶Sir G. Drummond to Sir G. Prevost, 5 November 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 686, pp. 121-129).

men of the 41st Regiment and the light company of the 8th were also embarked with the squadron but Drummond demanded "most pointedly" that more men be taken back to Kingston:

I consider it incumbent on me to State distinctly to you that there is neither means of covering or of feeding the number of troops at present on this frontier and that unless the two Regiments above mentioned (103rd and 41st) are received on board the Squadron, I must (dreadful as the alternative will be at this Season of the Year) order them to attempt to march to Kingston.⁵⁷

Drummond regretted losing the 41st Regiment, as he felt it would be a strong and effective battalion in the spring, but the 103rd was disease ridden and otherwise inefficient, nothing but "useless mouths." It was hoped that by removing these corps ration issues would be considerably reduced, while the Right Division's effective strength would be altered very little. Drummond further noted, "Enough will I hope remain for any Service which it may be found proper or practicable to undertake before the return of the Vessels from Kingston and far more than we could feed if left during the Winter."⁵⁸

The "Service" mentioned, referred to Drummond's suddenly renewed hope to attack and destroy Izard's army as it lay encamped on the American frontier. Prevost had urged another attempt against Fort Erie but Drummond rejected the idea as there seemed little chance of a coup de main being successful, while the poor state of the roads and

⁵⁷Sir G. Drummond to Sir J. Yeo, 4 November 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 686, p. 132).

⁵⁸Sir G. Drummond to Sir G. Prevost, 5 November 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 686, p. 126).

the destruction of bridges made it impracticable to move up siege artillery. The Right Division was still without proper camp equipage and the area immediately adjacent to Fort Erie was barren of any protection from the weather. But apart from these objections, recent intelligence suggested that the Americans would abandon the fort shortly, destroying the works themselves. Instead, Drummond proposed a combined operation against Izard using some of Yeo's seamen and boats. Drummond considered that the naval co-operation was vital, but after discussion with Yeo the plan was dropped. The commodore expressed his anxiety over the uncertainty of the weather at that late season while still insisting that there was yet a danger of Chauncey appearing.⁵⁹

Before leaving the Niagara peninsula on the morning of 6 November to discuss his plans with Yeo at York, Drummond was informed that Fort Erie had been abandoned and its works levelled. The good news, however, was quickly followed by bad. Word was received from Burlington of yet another "invasion" from Detroit. Drummond did not appear overly concerned at this, but another despatch, from Kingston, received a short time later, indicated that a major enemy force was concentrating at Sackett's Harbour, apparently intent on taking the offensive. Drummond wished Yeo to sail immediately for Kingston, where he arrived on the morning of 10 November, only to

⁵⁹Sir G. Drummond to Sir G. Prevost, 5 November 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 686, pp. 121-129); Sir G. Drummond to Sir G. Prevost, 9 November 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 686, pp. 144-151).

learn that the alarm was false. Rather, it was the other news of an "invasion" to the west of Burlington which proved to be the more serious.⁶⁰

On 23 October American Brigadier-General Duncan McArthur had led a force of over 700 mounted Kentucky volunteers and Indians out of Detroit. Moving rapidly to the north he skirted Lake St. Clair and reached Baldoon on 27 October. Among the avowed aims of the expedition was the prevention of a British advance on Detroit that winter. This was to be accomplished by destroying all the mills in the area west of Burlington. McArthur also hoped he might be able to create a diversion in favour of the American army on the Niagara, eventually taking Burlington and joining forces with Izard.⁶¹ Drummond received confused reports of McArthur's force shortly after it left Detroit and also reports of a landing at Grand River. Though the officer commanding at York was quite perturbed, Drummond was certain the invaders were only small plundering parties and by the end of the month these reports had been discounted as being false alarms.⁶²

⁶⁰F. P. Robinson to Sir G. Drummond, 4 November and Sir G. Drummond to Sir G. Prevost, 9 November 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 686, pp. 144-151).

⁶¹Alex R. Gilpin, The War of 1812 in the Old Northwest, East Lansing, 1958, pp. 254-256; Deputy-Assistant Quartermaster-General Chambers to L. De Watteville, 10 November 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 686, p. 187).

⁶²Colonel Tucker to the Adjutant-General at Kingston, 27 October and Sir G. Drummond to Sir G. Prevost, 26 and 30 October 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 686, pp. 112-113, 106-109, 114-116).

On 6 November, however, a fresh report indicated that the post of Burlington was indeed threatened. Estimates of enemy strength ran from 1,000 to 1,500 mounted riflemen. Drummond directed Major-General De Watteville to march on Burlington at once with the 37th Regiment and two field pieces. But British counter measures were unavailing in preventing the wholesale destruction of flour mills west of the Grand River. A detachment of militia, Iroquois and regulars from the 41st Regiment blocked any further advance, but were mauled by McArthur's rearguard. Learning of Izard's retirement, McArthur gave up the idea of pressing on to Burlington and diverted his course to Malcolm's Mills where a defending militia force was surrounded and defeated on 6 November. By 17 November McArthur was back at Sandwich after a 26-day excursion which had covered some 650 miles.⁶³

The right wing of the 37th Regiment arrived at Burlington only on the afternoon of 10 November and De Watteville prepared to move on part of this corps to Long Point "provided The Commissary can make the Necessary arrangement for the subsistence of the troops."⁶⁴ McArthur's raid had destroyed five flour mills, but there was still a chance that two of the mills in the area might have escaped undamaged. The Long Point area was of particular interest to both Drummond and Yeo as they were again giving serious consideration to the establishment of a

⁶³Sir G. Drummond to Sir G. Prevost, 9 November 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 686, pp. 144-151); Gilpin, p. 256.

⁶⁴L. De Watteville to J. Harvey, 10 November 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 686, p. 182).

naval station at Turkey Point. On 11 November, Assistant Commissary-General Edward Dance reported that only Tisdale's and Backhouse's mills might be left standing, but even these would not suffice. The former was too small and the latter too far from the lakeshore to be of use. In Dance's opinion transport problems, quite apart from loss and wastage, made any idea of taking the grain to be milled at Ancaster "perfectly Chimerical."⁶⁵ It therefore appeared that the only solution was to rebuild the ruined mills at government expense. No individual could, or would, risk it.

Upon receiving Dance's report Drummond wrote to Yeo, again requesting the aid of the squadron:

Having just received an Account of the destruction by the Enemy of all the Resources (and the Mills) of the Country to the Westward of the Grand River, from which we had calculated upon deriving the principal part of the Supplies destined to support the Regular Troops and Indians during the approaching Winter, it becomes absolutely necessary that the means of feeding them should be forwarded from hence [Kingston] before the close of the Navigation. - I can not exactly State the quantity of Transport which will be required, but I can without hesitation say that nothing less than the aid of the whole Squadron will be sufficient to relieve the Urgent wants of the Right Division of the Army . . .

In anticipation of your assent to a proposal which is so immediately connected with the preservation of an important part of the Province and which must be absolutely evacuated by the Troops unless I am provided with the means of conveying relief to them, I have directed the Deputy Commissary General to be prepared to put on Board the Ships every Barrel of Provisions which can possibly be spared from the Stores of this Depot.⁶⁶

⁶⁵E. Dance to C. L. Foster, 11 November 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 118, pp. 183-185).

⁶⁶Sir G. Drummond to Sir J. Yeo, 13 November 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 686, pp. 170-172).

Yeo's reply was negative. He considered the weather to be too hazardous to risk the whole squadron.⁶⁷

The proposed naval establishment on Lake Erie was suspended for the moment, not only because of the lack of provisions which must result from the destruction of the mills, but also because it now appeared that there were not sufficient guns and naval stores available for such an undertaking. Nevertheless, a detachment of Canadian Fencibles and Sappers and Miners was ordered to proceed to Turkey Point and commissary Dance, in the company of an officer of the Royal Engineers, was requested to look into the possibility of reconstructing Union Mills.⁶⁸

The British, however, were not the only ones experiencing difficulties. In the Detroit area the American garrisons were placed on short rations and had to make do without bread. On 5 November a proclamation was issued ordering the residents in the adjacent area of western Upper Canada to bring forward all surplus grain and flour for sale to the American garrisons. To enforce these demands foraging detachments were sent out into the neighbouring countryside.⁶⁹ Counter-measures were considered by the British, but the condition of

⁶⁷Sir J. Yeo to Sir G. Drummond, 14 November 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 686, pp. 173-176).

⁶⁸Sir G. Drummond to N. Freer, 14 and 19 November 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 686, pp. 177-179 and C 118, pp. 181-182).

⁶⁹Colonel Thomas Talbot to J. Harvey, 7 December 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 686, pp. 222-225).

the roads proved unfavourable and preparations were cancelled upon learning that the American foraging parties had withdrawn.

Drummond attributed the success of McArthur's raid to the absence of a strong corps at Burlington. During the summer and fall of 1814 there had been a number of raids by American marauders operating out of Detroit and at the end of the year, in December, American foragers were still at work collecting grain along the Thames River, while McArthur was contemplating yet another punitive expedition for 1815. The British Right Division still held its original positions along the Niagara frontier, but the difficulty of securing adequate provisions remained a crucial problem which limited the number of troops which could be kept in the area. The destruction of the flour mills was being felt by both soldier and civilian alike, while at Ancaster the Indian tribes were apparently running desperately short of provisions and talked of leaving if the Commissariat did not feed them.⁷⁰

The successes of Brown's army on the Niagara in 1814 had achieved nothing, save to detract Drummond's attention and resources from an attack on Sackett's Harbour, while Brown himself had lost the opportunity of striking at Kingston and the upper St. Lawrence. The American invasion had failed, yet Drummond had been frustrated in every attempt to deliver the final, decisive blow he so much desired. By the end of 1814, even after much desperate fighting, the relative

⁷⁰Caldwell to James, 1 December 1814, Wood, III, pp.733-734.

positions of the opposing armies in Upper Canada remained little changed from those held at the beginning of the year. The problems of supply and movement had not been overcome. Local resources had been depleted further, more mills had been destroyed and provisions from external sources were now needed more than ever.

Lieutenant-General Drummond had experienced an exhausting contest against both a determined enemy and the relentless pressure of supply problems. He described the campaign as one

. . . marked throughout its progress by difficulties of the most embarrassing nature, and privations of the most trying kind to the Troops, and not without circumstances of disappointment; to which, especially in a Country like this, so circumscribed in means and resources, the operations of war are liable.⁷¹

In the months before the opening of the campaign on the Niagara the problem of securing adequate provisions for the forces in Upper Canada had been a constant anxiety. Once the American invasion began in July the shortage of provisions operated as a check to the number of reinforcements Drummond felt it prudent to send on to the Niagara. Two questions came to immediate prominence. Could sufficient reinforcements be moved up in time and could they be fed?

The available means of reinforcement proved inadequate to cover the contingencies of the campaign. Assuming the availability of disposable forces near Kingston or in the lower province (and this meant reliance on the arrival of British regulars from overseas, the

⁷¹Sir G. Drummond to Lord Bathurst, No. 20, 20 November 1814 (P.A.C., C.O, 42/355, p. 124).

more so as Sir George Prevost made it clear that he did not wish to entrust the defence of Lower Canada to "provincials and militia"), the process of moving troops up to the Niagara was difficult and time-consuming, and much worse if the enemy controlled Lake Ontario. In the time before his arrival on the Niagara Drummond had resolved to forward the 82nd Regiment, only recently arrived from Bordeaux, to the threatened area. One month later, on 24 August, the regiment finally arrived in Drummond's camp before Fort Erie. In the intervening time, however, the situation on the Niagara had changed considerably. Drummond had fought two major engagements and suffered more than 1700 casualties.

Although there were pointed remarks over the supposed parsimony with which Prevost had forwarded reinforcements to Upper Canada in 1814, it is clear from Drummond's own correspondence that additional strength would have been to little advantage. In September Drummond replied to a suggestion by Prevost for future operations in the upper province:

. . . it may be Sufficient for the present to observe that with regard to Amherstburg the difficulty probably consists more in the deficiency of provisions and Transport than of any other means - the same difficulty must be equally applicable to every other operation in this Country as it prevents the collection at any point, of an adequate force for any object - these difficulties we must continue to experience until Our Squadron appears Superior on the Lake and even then the transport which Commodore Sir James Yeo may think it prudent to afford the Departments will I fear prove very inadequate to the relief of all the wants of this Division - ⁷²

⁷²Sir G. Drummond to Sir G. Prevost, 24 September 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 685, pp. 257-258).

Reinforcements had to be called up far in advance of immediate needs, yet the vagaries of battle, unexpectedly heavy casualties and ill fortune, had to remain uncertain elements. At Lundy's Lane Drummond was unable to achieve a complete victory, while the assault on Fort Erie failed despite his concentration of superior numbers against it. With this failure the best opportunity for a decisive British victory passed. The American squadron's control of Lake Ontario slowed the arrival of reinforcements and in the end made it impossible for Drummond to make another assault. Such reinforcements as did arrive after 15 August did little more than replace casualties already sustained, while sickness began to make new inroads on Drummond's forces. Any significant augmentation in effective strength did not take place and when fresh enemy forces appeared with Izard in October, Drummond's effective numbers were decidedly inferior to those of the enemy.

Throughout the campaign the supply of stores of all types was a persistent difficulty:

. . . it was not Troops alone that were necessary; our Ammunition and Stores of every description were very much reduced, and consequently our operations greatly retarded, and I was latterly constrained to husband the little that was left for occasions of the most pressing necessity.⁷³

Failing ammunition supplies finally rendered Drummond's siege batteries silent and though ample ordnance stores were ready at

⁷³Sir G. Drummond to Lord Bathurst, No. 20, 20 November 1814 (P.A.C., C.O. 42/355, p. 124).

Kingston they could not be forwarded until the British squadron could regain control of Lake Ontario. Food supplies seemed likely to run out, while local resources on the Niagara were much depleted, the area in the immediate vicinity of Fort Erie being particularly barren. Yet even local flour supplies could not be ready until the current harvest had been threshed, milled and then transported over roads which were already becoming impassable even before the middle of September. A large supply of provisions was required from Kingston, but its arrival was also dependent on the British squadron.

The Niagara campaign of 1814 clearly demonstrated the importance of naval power on the lakes. Co-operation between navy and army was essential if the difficulties of supply were to be overcome, yet friction was inevitable. The dilemma was clear. The army needed the Lake Ontario squadron as a transport service yet Commodore Yeo could not consent to his vessels being used in any way which might endanger them. This meant that their use as transports had to be limited, for although there was criticism over the extreme caution with which Yeo handled his squadron, it was clear that the security of the whole British position from Kingston westward rested with the safety of his vessels. If the British squadron had been defeated, Drummond's position on the Niagara would certainly have become untenable. As it was, Drummond was only deprived of an opportunity to resume the offensive, while there was no repetition of the disastrous retreat of Procter's forces which had followed the

British defeat on Lake Erie. Nevertheless, the army was not satisfied. By the end of 1814 Sir George Prevost wanted changes in the navy's overall command structure on the Canadian lakes, while Drummond wished "a proportion" of vessels to be built on Lake Ontario as troop transports, to be handled exclusively by a Transport Department, which it was suggested, would be under the army's control.⁷⁴

Drummond's Right Division did not run out of provisions, yet it is clear that its effectiveness was much reduced by failing supplies, most dramatically by the shortage of proper ammunition for the siege guns. The limitations on movement by land, even in the immediate area of operations, had a direct effect on the outcome of events. Without free access across Lake Ontario to Burlington, York and Kingston, Drummond's operations on the Niagara were eventually neutralized, while even the movement of supplies from Fort George to Fort Erie became extremely difficult once the rains started.

American operations were similarly affected. In October, Major-General Izard felt there was little to be gained if the American squadron on Lake Ontario could not support him. Without this support he would not be able to sustain his army in a march on Burlington. The roads were too poor and there was not adequate transport to supply him overland from Lake Erie. Drummond's forces

⁷⁴See Sir G. Prevost to Lord Bathurst, 19 November 1814 (P.A.C., C.O. 42/157, pp. 360-361); Sir G. Drummond to Sir G. Prevost, 30 October 1814 and F. Kempt to Sir G. Prevost, 11 November 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 373, pp. 214-216, 220-222).

blocked any passage over the Chippawa, while roads around the extreme right of the British position were found to be impassable for wheeled vehicles. Izard's final decision was to retreat, ultimately withdrawing to American territory, ending more than two years of continual struggle for the Niagara peninsula.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE EXPERIENCE OF WAR - REMARKS ON THE ROLE OF THE COMMISSARIAT

Despite the many physical problems encountered in supplying the forces in the Canadas, it is certain that some of the hardships and frustration experienced by the British Right Division in 1814 were due in part to negligence. In August 1814, with the American squadron supreme on Lake Ontario, Drummond discovered that by some "extraordinary mistake" all of the battery and field guns on the Niagara had been supplied with only 200 rounds each. Drummond wanted James Gordon, commissary of ordnance on the frontier, removed and replaced by a "proper" officer. Indeed, a month before, Major-General Riall had also made strong complaints about Gordon's irresponsible behaviour.¹

Drummond's criticism of the Ordnance Department, however, brings to mind another question. How effective was Robinson's commissariat staff in overcoming the problems of supply and movement? Early in 1814 Drummond had found the conduct of Assistant Commissary-General Edward Dance to be unsatisfactory and command of the Right Division's Commissariat had been given to Deputy Commissary-General

¹Sir G. Drummond to Sir G. Prevost, 21 August 1814 and P. Riall to Sir G. Drummond, 17 July 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 685, pp. 123-128; C 686, pp. 134-138).

Turquand., At the end of October 1814 District General Orders gave official notice of Drummond's "entire approbation" of Turquand's conduct during the Niagara campaign, but less than three months later Drummond wanted Turquand to be removed from the upper province altogether ". . . as I am throughly convinced, on that Officer's assuming charge of the Department [Commissariat], by the absence of Mr. Couche, that I shall not be able to transact that part of my duty connected with the Commissariat with any degree of satisfaction to myself."²

Disparaging remarks on the Commissariat, generally, were common in the early nineteenth century and certainly Commissary-General Robinson was well aware of the fact that many officers were only too willing to lay blame on his department. In September 1814 he closed a letter to Commissary Clarke at Montreal with this remark, ". . . I would not refuse the Navy any thing - for if the big ship [H.M.S. St. Lawrence] should not be ready in time, blame will fall somewhere and the Commissariat is always attacked."³ Criticism, however, was not to be averted. Clarke did his best to forward materials for the Lake Ontario squadron but early in 1815 Commodore Yeo visited western Upper Canada and became most irritated over the

²Sir G. Drummond to N. Freer, 4 February 1815 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 119, pp. 45-46). See also Sir G. Drummond to Sir G. Prevost, 21 January 1815 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 119, pp. 21-23).

³W. H. Robinson to [I. W. Clarke], 10 September 1814 (P.A.C., M.G. 24, F 21).

conduct of the Commissariat at Long Point. During the previous autumn he had continually received the "most pressing messages to proceed with the squadron to the relief of the Troops on the Niagara Frontier who were represented as reduced to a few days allowance of provisions" and now Yeo was certain that it was the Commissariat's neglect in collecting the local resources which had been at fault.⁴

In discussing the effectiveness of the Commissariat, attention must first be called to the broad scope of its duties. In the Canadas Commissary-General Robinson assumed responsibility for the provision of food, forage, fuel, light and transport, as specified in his instructions, for all departments of the army, the regular regiments of the line, including fencibles, naval forces employed on the lakes, embodied militia and certain corvées, and Indian allies. The further responsibility of government finance and disbursements, civil and military, also fell to his department. For all his actions he was accountable to the Treasury in London, yet any one of his subordinates could be removed from his assigned post at the insistence of a general officer commanding.

In Prevost's words, the construction of naval squadrons on the lakes increased the labours of the Commissariat to a "Magnitude Scarcely to be described,"⁵ while covering militia expenditures came

⁴Colonel Thomas Talbot to C. L. Foster, 20 February 1815 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 119, pp. 106-107). See Appendix XXIV.

⁵Sir G. Prevost to Lord Bathurst, No. 159, 19 May 1814 (P.A.C., C.O. 42/156, p. 318).

as an additional and rather unexpected burden. In the realm of "flour and forage," however, it was the Indians who caused considerable problems. Throughout the war the Commissariat's difficulties in Upper Canada were made far worse by the need to feed large numbers of Indians and their families. In 1814 the Indians present with the Right Division on the Niagara were devouring as much and more than the rest of Drummond's forces, yet the Indian contribution to the campaign was negligible. To obtain a proper perspective, it must be remembered that the Indian alliance was of great importance to Upper Canada at the beginning of the war and proved decisive in the opening moves of 1812. Subsequently, however, the real value of such allies became more questionable. Strategists in London insisted on the importance of the Indian alliance and while British commanders such as Procter, at Amherstburg, needed Indian support, they found the tribes extremely difficult allies to work with.⁶

The task of Deputy Assistant Commissary-General Robert Gilmor, serving with Procter's forces in 1813, was made almost impossible because of the large numbers of western Indians which attached themselves to the British forces. Indian support was essential in maintaining a position on the Detroit frontier, yet Gilmor's small staff was confronted with the awesome task of trying to feed a total of some 15,000 people, of whom less than one-tenth were actually

⁶See Reginald Horsman, "The Role of the Indian in the War," Mason, pp. 60-77; George F. G. Stanley, "The Indians in the War of 1812," Canadian Historical Review, XXXI, June 1950, pp. 145-165.

British soldiers.⁷ The agricultural community in the Detroit area could not feed such numbers, while cattle had to be sent forward from settlements far to the east of Amherstburg. To make matters worse, Gilmor found himself at the western extremity of the upper province's lines of communication.

Procter's position was irretrievably overturned in the autumn of 1813 and though the Indian tribes had provided positive assistance, their behaviour was not consistent, at times being detrimental. West of Lake Michigan the Indians continued to be the decisive factor until the end of the war. Yet, giving due credit to the successes which were achieved in Upper Canada in 1812 and 1813, it is nevertheless clear that the effort required to maintain the Indians on the Niagara in 1814 was out of all proportion to their worth as military allies with Drummond's Right Division. Their presence made the work of Turquand's commissariat staff twice as difficult as it might otherwise have been, the more so as Indian depredations on farms in the Burlington area only wasted valuable resources, while greatly straining relations with local farmers. The same thing had occurred at Amherstburg and certainly, to the Commissariat, the Indian appeared only as a necessary evil, a hindrance more than a help.

The overall efficiency of the Commissariat, however, must in part rest with its own organization. Administrative problems affect efficiency and Commissary-General Robinson had a full share of them

⁷See Appendix XXVII.

in Canada. To modern eyes much of the administrative structure and many of the procedures used by the British army in the early nineteenth century seem illogical, inconsistent and, at times, confusing. By 1812 some reforms had been made, but the basic organization of the army's supply services has been frequently criticized. Nevertheless, in order to retain an overall view of the Commissariat's relative merits, it should be said that the American system, if anything, was worse than the British,⁸ while contemporary French supply arrangements frequently left much to be desired - at times collapsing completely.

In the British service, fragmentation of responsibilities and overlapping spheres of control easily produced friction among the various civil departments and between them and regular army officers. Responsibility could at times be hard to define. Many were quick to throw blame onto other departments, disclaiming responsibility for one duty, while jealously protecting some supposed prerogative in another area. Supply arrangements were further encumbered by the need to adhere to particular procedures as laid down by the Treasury and though military officers frequently showed impatience with the Commissariat over such matters, it must be remembered that strict adherence to Treasury regulations was the commissary's only protection when his accounts came to be audited. Nor could this and

⁸See Erna Risch, Quartermaster Support of the Army, Washington, 1962, pp. 135-180.

the fact that irregularities were paid for out of his own pocket have encouraged the commissariat officer to take on responsibilities beyond those clearly defined in his instructions. In a confidential report, made to Sir George Prevost on conditions at York in the summer of 1813, Justice W. D. Powell remarked that, "The Commissary is laborious and well acquainted with the resources of the Country, but the habits of his department restrain in some Degree of the energy of personal Character by its rigid regulations to ensure Economy & Accuracy."⁹

To hamper further their efforts, officers of the civil departments of the army not infrequently ran into a certain prejudice on the part of combatant officers. Lieutenant-Colonel Pearson, commanding at Prescott in the fall of 1813, expressed a disdain for the Commissariat which was not uncommon. Having laid a number of petty and unsubstantiated charges against the deputy-assistant commissary-general at his post, he appealed to Sir George Prevost to ". . . check that spirit of insubordination in the Commissariat, which has so pointed a tendency to pervert the military discipline of the army," and complained of the "encroachments of the Commissariat . . . levelled against military authority."¹⁰ Pearson ordered a

⁹W.D. Powell to Sir G. Prevost, 28 June 1813 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 679, p. 149).

¹⁰W. Green to W. H. Robinson, 25 October 1813 and Lieutenant-Colonel Thomas Pearson to N. Freer, 28 October 1813 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 117, pp. 170, 175-176).

subordinate to arrest the commissary in question and similar measures were considered by Major-General Stovin when Deputy Commissary-General Turquand expressed a sharp dissatisfaction and apparent intransigence over providing transport on the Niagara during the winter of 1814-1815.

Clashes of personality were undoubtedly involved, and while commissaries complained of the treatment they received at the hands of some regular army officers, the reverse was also true. Wellington himself remarked on the lack of respect shown to the commissaries, but while such wrangling was certainly unpleasant and at times actually destructive, it must not be over-emphasized. The question of proper training, experience and adequate numbers of commissaries was of far more importance, and a concern which bore directly on the Commissariat's ability to carry out its duties.

In Commissary-General Robinson's estimation, his establishment's strength was never sufficient for the duties expected of it. Numerous posts were created during the war and he was at times forced to resort to the expedient of placing inexperienced clerks in positions of responsibility which should have been held by commissioned commissariat officers. In a similar way, officers of junior rank had to be given important posts in which they felt inexperienced. Deputy-Assistant Commissary-General Gilmor found himself in such a situation when placed in charge of the Commissariat at Amherstburg. His work won Procter's praise, but not all were able

to discharge their new responsibilities with success, and the problem of communications alone made replacement difficult. "Disposable" officers were in constant demand for field duties, especially with the embodied militia, yet Robinson rarely had any available.

A proper "field" commissariat, to scour the Canadian countryside and bring in the local food resources, was noticeably lacking, but was obviously essential in an area of sparse settlement and often scanty production. In Upper Canada officers of the militia staff were employed on such work, making out resource returns, collecting cattle, finding transport and encouraging farmers to co-operate with the government. In Lower Canada, all corvées for transport were handled through the commissaries of transport, yet these officials and the militia staff in Upper Canada were not responsible to the Commissary-General, though their activities were obviously important to the success of the Commissariat. In this respect it should also be noticed that the lake squadrons, in their crucial role as transports, were also beyond the Commissariat's control. Success had to depend on co-operation.

Training in the Commissariat consisted largely of learning on the job, though previous commercial experience was certainly helpful. Traditionally, most commissaries were only employed in time of war, and many of those who entered service with Wellington at the beginning of the Peninsular War were new and inexperienced, their work suffering accordingly. The new regulations on promotions in the Commissariat,

laid down in 1810, were meant to amend the situation, yet improvement could only be gradual, while the need for more commissaries was pressing and immediate. In Canada, when Commissary-General Robinson found Thomas Ridout to be a young man of ability, and one who was also a native of Upper Canada, he promoted him to deputy-assistant after only a brief apprenticeship under Couche on the Niagara. In this instance, contrary to regulations, Ridout rose over the heads of eighty-nine clerks in only seven months.¹¹

William Coffin, in his account of the War of 1812, lavished unqualified praise on the men of the commissariat staff - one of the few historians of the war to make even a reference to their work.¹² At the other extreme, the outspoken and often caustic Dr. William Dunlop, who had himself served on the Niagara in 1814, writing of the army generally, felt that only the "rubbish" deemed unfit for the Peninsular War had ended up in Canada.¹³ As might be expected, the truth lay somewhere in between. Obtaining men of ability who also possessed a good local knowledge was essential, especially as the scattered nature of a war fought on remote frontiers necessarily left much to individual initiative. The impression left by Coffin, however, is misleading: "Fortunately Sir William [Robinson] found

¹¹T. G. Ridout to his father, 6 January 1814, Edgar, p. 268.

¹²Coffin, pp. 168-172

¹³Dunlop, p. 63. Dunlop was especially critical of the Engineer Department and it should be noted that Drummond also expressed dissatisfaction over the engineers present at Fort Erie in 1814.

in the country a class of men made to his hand, who possessed these requisites."¹⁴ As examples, Coffin referred to the services of such men as Isaac W. Clarke of Montreal, a man who had seen long service in North America and was of United Empire Loyalist background. Clarke's contribution to the war must not be underestimated, yet the kind of man that Coffin described cannot be considered as typical of all those who served in Robinson's Commissariat.

A lack of local knowledge was an obvious handicap for any commissariat officer who was expected to utilize the resources of the surrounding countryside, yet to meet the demands of war and the increased requirements of an army in the field it was necessary to send personnel to the Canadas from other stations - particularly from the West Indies and Great Britain. Naturally many found Canadian conditions to be a new experience. The fact that Assistant Commissary-General Dance had arrived from the West Indies and had been little more than six months in the Canadas may in part explain his failure as head of the Right Division's Commissariat. Commissary-General Robinson noted that Dance was unused to a position of such responsibility, the whole situation being completely "novel" to him.¹⁵

Deputy Commissary-General Turquand had also been sent to the Canadas from the West Indies, and while his services were acknowledged

¹⁴Coffin, p. 170.

¹⁵W. H. Robinson to J. C. Herries, No. 225, 26 March 1814 (P.A.C., W.O. 57/15).

very favourably, prior to the trouble which erupted in 1815 over transport, it is doubtless less than coincidence that it was commissaries such as Crookshank at York and Clarke at Montreal who won consistent praise from military officers and civilians alike. Both of these men had seen long service in the Canadas and possessed a considerable knowledge of local affairs which they were able to put to excellent use during the war.

With respect to clerks, the Treasury insisted on sending out all of those needed in the Canadas from England, yet the "press of business" made it necessary to fill vacancies immediately. Robinson, however, experienced considerable difficulties in obtaining competent clerks, on a temporary basis, from the local population.¹⁶ The salaries paid by the Commissariat could not compete with those offered by merchants and traders, while the price of every "Article of life" rose considerably with wartime inflation. Deputy Commissary-General Couche wrote to Robinson frequently concerning these problems and by the end of 1814 expressed fears that the Commissariat would lose every valuable person in its employ by the spring unless the situation was rectified.¹⁷ But quite apart from clerks, even

¹⁶J. C. Herries to W. H. Robinson, No. 2, 11 October 1811 (P.A.C., W.O. 58/65); W. H. Robinson to J. C. Herries, No. 3, 30 January 1812 (P.A.C., W.O. 57/14).

¹⁷W. H. Robinson to J. C. Herries, No. 309, 15 December 1814 (P.A.C., W.O. 57/15).

competent conductors¹⁸ were hard to find in the Canadas:

. . . where the lower class are most generally incapable of doing the requisite duty from not having learned to either read or write - I regret this circumstance the more as in this province [Lower Canada] a Knowledge of the French Language is very desirable, yet as I cannot obtain a sufficient number to complete the Twenty [conductors] you were pleased to authorize, having only as yet found Four, I shall be much obliged by your sending out as early in the Spring as possible Six Conductors and I will endeavour to procure the ~~rest~~ here.¹⁹

The Commissariat's efficiency was certainly affected by the problem of obtaining a sufficient staff of ability with a good local knowledge, but it was also very much dependent on the nature of the relationship which was maintained with the surrounding population. The introduction of a modified form of martial law, for the collection of food and forage in Upper Canada, caused much heated debate and no small amount of criticism was directed at the Commissariat, whom one critic claimed, had used the opportunity ". . . to tread down the people."²⁰ Commissariat officers in Upper Canada complained of the ". . . perverse disposition of the Inhabitants, and their disinclination to come forward and serve the Government . . ." despite the

¹⁸"Conductors (conducteurs d'equipages, Fr.), are assistants to the commissary of stores, to conduct depôts or magazines, from one place to another: they have also the care of the ammunition wagons in the field: they report to the commissary, and are under his command." C. James, An Universal Military Dictionary, London, 1816, p. 121.

¹⁹W. H. Robinson to J. C. Herries, No. 190, 15 December 1813 (P.A.C., W.O. 57/15).

²⁰Cruikshank, "Public Life and Services of Robert Nichol," p. 55.

liberal prices offered.²¹ Many Upper Canadians, however, felt that the only fault lay with the Commissariat's own indolence and poor arrangements.²²

In practice the procurement of provisions and forage under martial law, as proclaimed in Upper Canada, allowed the Commissariat to take any surplus produce, beyond the farmer's own needs, without the owner's consent, though commissariat officers were specifically instructed to proceed with the "utmost delicacy." All produce, however, was paid for and Drummond hoped that by having local magistrates, who were usually farmers themselves, set the prices, much trouble might be avoided. Nevertheless, commissariat officers were stigmatized as "robbers," and farmers who felt such arbitrary measures to be illegal wanted prosecutions and sued for damages.²³ The government naturally had no desire to see such suits succeed, and apprehension was felt over the decisions which the local juries might render. As for the commissary, who was ordered to make such a seizure, he was placed in the unenviable position of being liable to

²¹p. Turquand to Major-General Stovin, 9 January 1815 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 119, p. 5).

²²Anonymous letter of 1816 cited by Cruikshank, "Public Life and Services of Robert Nichol," pp. 37-38.

²³Lieutenant-Colonel Macdonell claimed such actions were undertaken because many Upper Canadians did not understand the extent of the Crown's prerogatives in cases of emergency. He himself was being sued for two thousand five hundred pounds damages. Macdonell, p. 212.

civil prosecution by the farmer, yet certain of punishment by his superiors if he refused to obey orders.²⁴

The controversy over martial law brought forth very different opinions. Was it really necessary or had the Commissariat simply done a poor job? Commissary-General Robinson was convinced that martial law was essential if his department was to operate effectively:

. . . as far as relates to procuring Supplies it has ever been my opinion there is but one remedy - that is, to establish Martial Law in Upper Canada to the furthest Extent.

The Commissariat may be goaded and partial Measures adopted but without Coercion [sic] the Avarice of most of the Inhabitants, and the disaffection of many, cannot be overcome - Where, the means of Subsisting the Right Division must always be precarious for I need not inform His Excellency that it is wholly impossible to convey from Quebec all the Supplies necessary for the Troops above Kingston.²⁵

Lieutenant-General Drummond, however, came to the defence of Upper Canadians, leaving little doubt as to his own sentiments:

I cannot subscribe to Mr. Robinson's opinion with regard to the Proclamation of Martial Law in a Country, whose Civil Liberties I am bound to protect. And I cannot omit observing that I consider it an unfair assertion, that the avarice and disaffection of this Province cannot, without coercion be overcome. - With reference to the letter, in particular, it ought not to be forgotten, that this Province might not now have been an Appendage to the British Crown, were it not for the blood shed by the Inhabitants in its defence, nor would the late Major General Sir Isaac Brock have reaped the Laurels he did, were it not for their aid and assistance. Every atom of its Produce, beyond the scanty pittance the

²⁴Sir G. Drummond to Lord Bathurst, No. 14, 28 May and No. 20, 20 November 1814 (P.A.C., C.O. 42/355, pp. 82-84, 124-130); Sir G. Drummond to N. Freer, 10 May 1814; E. Couche to Foster, 6 May 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 118, pp. 95-96, 97-100).

²⁵W. H. Robinson to N. Freer, 25 January 1815 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 119, p. 33).

people themselves of necessity require, is consumed by the Troops. - Not a grain is taken out of the Province: I should be happy to learn, what more can be expected.²⁶

Drummond's retort, for all its eloquence, does not reveal the whole truth, though it cannot be doubted that many did give what little surplus they had. Drummond's remarks, which it would appear, were in part prompted by an obvious pique over correspondence involving the Commissariat and the matter of transport arrangements,²⁷ do, however, call attention back to the general state of agriculture in Upper Canada - yet they also infer the success of the arrangements by which the local resources were collected. Drummond regretted the use of even a modified form of martial law, but he knew very well that there was disaffection and disloyalty in certain areas of Upper Canada. Though he felt that a majority of Upper Canadians was well-affected and loyal, he himself had observed that it was ". . . a matter of general notoriety that of all the Districts of this Province [Upper Canada], the Johnstown District is, I am sorry to say, the most disaffected and disloyal."²⁸

If Robinson's view seems rather too harsh it should be remembered that it was estimated that over half of the white

²⁶Sir G. Drummond to N. Freer, 16 February 1815 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 374, pp. 20-21).

²⁷It may also be considered that Drummond had been born at Quebec and had served as a major-general in Canada from 1808 to 1811.

²⁸Sir G. Drummond to Lord Bathurst, No. 22, 2 January 1815 (P.A.C., C.O. 42/356, p. 4).

population of Upper Canada were Americans.²⁹ Certainly the lack of specie and the inability to make prompt payments lowered government credit, creating dissatisfaction and distrust, but even in peacetime there had been deliberate attempts to force prices up by withholding produce.³⁰ One of Commodore Yeo's officers felt that some coercion ". . . was absolutely necessary, for in some of the districts the inhabitants were of such Yankey principles that, without resorting to this method [impressment] no sleighs would have been got to convey Officers, men, baggage or any sort of Stores however urgent the occasion might be, and as it was, in many places every obstruction was thrown in the way."³¹ John Richardson, a Montreal merchant, even went as far as to suggest that there had been a deliberate conspiracy in the eastern districts to foil the efforts of the Commissariat and starve the troops.³²

On the whole, Robinson's position was not without justification, though it must be admitted that throwing blame on the obstinacy of the local inhabitants could easily be used as an expedient to cover one's own inadequacies. Nor is this to suppose that there were not many farmers who simply did not have much in the way of a surplus

²⁹M. Smith, p. 79. He estimated that six out of ten Upper Canadians were Americans or their children born in Canada

³⁰Jones, "History of Agriculture in Ontario," p. 26.

³¹Commander David Wingfield, "Four Years on the Lakes of Canada in 1813, 1814, 1815 and 1816" (P.A.C., M.G. 24, F 21, p. 45).

³²[John Richardson], The Letters of Veritas, pp. 79-82

to offer. Edward A. Talbot claimed that he knew a farmer who had lived more than twenty years in the eastern districts of Upper Canada and who maintained that on an average of ten years, few farmers in that area even succeeded in raising enough of the "bread-stuff" for their own consumption, and consequently never thought about cultivating any for market.³³

Nor was the Commissariat without fault. Departmental correspondence does reveal cases of arrogant misbehaviour towards the local population by certain individuals, but it also indicates Commissary-General Robinson's ardent desire that such subordinates be disciplined or removed altogether.³⁴ And, at a time when those in the commissariat service were frequently under suspicion for dishonesty, both by the Treasury and in the popular imagination, Robinson was at least able to report that his own staff in the Canadas were honest men. In May 1814 two temporary employees, an issuer and a clerk, were ordered to be imprisoned at Montreal, having been found guilty of fraud, but this was the only case of intentional deception which came to light during the war.³⁵ Though there were

³³Talbot, I, pp. 162-163. See Appendix XXIV.

³⁴See correspondence on Deputy Commissary-General F. Drennan's treatment of Major Salmon of the 2nd Norfolk Militia and the behaviour of a Mr. Clark of the Commissariat in dealing with farmer Simon Mabee. P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 119, pp. 102-125 and 173-189.

³⁵Immediately after the war, in the summer of 1815, a clerk who had previously served in Spain absconded with 10,000 pounds while negotiating government bills in the United States. An assistant commissary-general gave chase and pursued the clerk from Albany to

occasional dismissals for drunkenness and incompetence among inferior grades of personnel, Robinson found the situation to be rather remarkable, the more so considering his difficulties in finding competent help locally.³⁶

As to the leadership of the Commissariat, Robinson's personal efforts in conducting the operations of his department did not go unnoticed. During the retreat from Plattsburg, Major-General Frederick P. Robinson, even allowing for some family prejudice, paid the head of the Commissariat a deserved compliment: "The Depts. are all jumbled together, and nothing goes right but in the Commissariat. My Brother, who is the Chief you know, is all intelligence and activity, but he cannot keep others from displaying the most consummate ignorance, and of our suffering thereby."³⁷ Sir George Prevost, also, thought the efforts of his commissary-general worthy of special mention to his superiors in London. He found Robinson ". . . attentively zealous in Supplying the wants of the Army on the extensive frontiers of the Canadas . . ." and Prevost himself had

Baltimore, on to Norfolk, Virginia and finally to Philadelphia where the clerk sailed for Bordeaux. The chase was then resumed in France. See Proceedings of a Board of Officers relative to the desertion of Commissariat Clerk Shaw, 30 August 1815 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 119, pp. 71-113).

³⁶W. H. Robinson to J. C. Herries, No. 239, 1 June 1814 (P.A.C., W.O. 57/15).

³⁷F. P. Robinson to William Merry, 22 September 1814 (P.A.C., M.G. 24, F 21, p. 6).

". . . been witness to the great exertions of all classes of his department in following up the judicious arrangements he has instituted."³⁸

The establishment of proper provision depots was an essential in North America, and British operations along the Canadian frontier were conducted within a close proximity of those depots.³⁹ The distances to depots in Upper Canada were prodigious and the Commissariat's task was an awesome one. Yet, apart from remote posts such as that of Michilimackinac, the supply lines seem to have failed seriously only once, at Amherstburg in 1813, where the Commissariat ran out of flour and was forced to substitute potatoes for four or five days.

Admittedly, British soldiers were subsisted on no delicately balanced diet. Daily issues varied from time to time depending on circumstances and even the basic regulation ration was often found insufficient, being supplemented with whatever might be at hand.⁴⁰

³⁸Sir G. Prevost to Lord Bathurst, No. 159, 19 May 1814 (P.A.C., C.O. 42/156, p. 317).

³⁹Even Procter's furthest operations were only about 50 miles from Amherstburg, and most of that distance was across Lake Erie. During Prevost's advance on Plattsburg Robinson's depot at Chazy was connected by water to St. Johns and Isle aux Noix, while he also drew on Champlain Village and LaColle. The distance from St. Johns to Chazy is just under 30 miles. From Chazy to Plattsburg is about 14 miles.

⁴⁰See Antony Brett-James, Life in Wellington's Army, London, 1972, pp. 107-120. Ridout, when on the Niagara in 1813, writes of stealing apples, pears and peaches "at a great rate," while also foraging for onions, bird eggs, and melons. He also mentions occasional raids on the fowl and livestock of neighbouring farms. See Appendix VIII.

Certainly there were periods of duress experienced in the Canadas, particularly in the upper province, yet provisions did not give out entirely, though the situation often looked grim. The arrangements by which the Commissariat secured provisions from the enemy's own territory must be given credit and in the all important matter of finance, imagination and resourcefulness were again evident in the introduction of Army Bills in the Canadas and the clandestine negotiation of government bills in the United States. Altogether, it would not be inappropriate to cite a few lines from one of Wellington's veterans who wrote in 1816: "It is true we were sometimes badly off for biscuit, but taking everything into consideration no army could be supplied better. Indeed it is a mystery to thousands how we were supplied so regular as we were."⁴¹

Despite the fact that the Duke of Wellington laid particular emphasis on American inexperience, difficulties and the failure of their strategy during the war, he did commend highly the efforts of the British forces in North America and the success of the British defence of the Canadas cannot be gainsaid. Nor can there be any doubt but that William H. Robinson, as head of the Commissariat, played a key part in the successes which were achieved by British arms. The role of the British regular, the Canadian militiaman and the North American Indian has been acknowledged, but that of the war commissary has been virtually ignored. Even in his own day, the work

⁴¹Cited by Brett-James, p. 111.

of the "bread soldier" was too often taken for granted, the credit for victories being given solely to those military officers who commanded the forces engaged. Logistical problems dominated the conduct of the War of 1812, yet for all the effort expended on such "arduous duties" the Commissariat still receives but scant mention in histories of the war. Even the name of Prevost's commissary-general is all but forgotten.

A former deputy-assistant commissary-general, considering the labours of his own career with the army, concluded that:

Feats of this kind are usually buried in oblivion; but when the magnitude of the difficulties overcome, and the importance of the results achieved, give them the stamp of grandeur, history is bound to preserve them, if only for the encouragement of those who may find themselves in similar circumstances.⁴²

⁴²August Ludolf Schaumann, On the Road with Wellington, edited and translated by Anthony M. Ludovici, London, 1924, p. xiv.

CHAPTER NINE

CONCLUSION - LOGISTICS AND THE WAR

The scarcity of local resources was the fundamental condition which affected all military and naval operations along the Canadian frontier during the 1812-1814 war. The provision of adequate food, the basic logistical task, was a matter of constant concern. As the Canadas' peacetime garrison of 5,600 regulars was reinforced, reaching as many as 30,000 by the summer of 1814, the anxious efforts of the Commissariat took on a heightened importance. For although there was certainly a surplus available for export in good years, Canadian agricultural production was still at times barely sufficient for the 347,000 white civilian inhabitants of the Canadas. Canadian resources simply could not feed the local population and at the same time provide the Commissariat with the provisions required by an augmented wartime establishment, with its increased number of troops and seamen, not to mention the Indian allies and their families. Even in the years immediately following the war crop failures in Lower Canada brought many families to the threshold of starvation.¹

Yet some reliance had to be placed on local produce, for as Commissary-General Robinson pointed out, the transport system established within the Canadas was not capable of forwarding all of

¹See Ouellet, pp. 219-221.

the provisions, as well as every other article, which might be needed by the military and naval forces. Local grain production was expected to supply some of the flour needed, even if consistently abundant harvests were not to be counted upon. Less was to be expected from local meat supplies, which were chronically short, much being imported from the United States. War, however, much aggravated the normal situation. Any prolonged disruption of the farmer's usual activities seriously jeopardized yields and as the war progressed such difficulties increased. The only solution was large-scale importation, a partial answer being found in smuggling which brought in produce from the United States - a trade which rapidly became the chief source of supply for fresh meat. Trading with the enemy, however, could not be considered reliable or safe, nor were the quantities sufficient for all needs. Reliance was therefore placed on the arrival of provisions from the British Isles, while at one point consideration was also given to drawing some supplies from the West Indies. But the need to import provisions, in turn placed an added importance on communication and transportation arrangements, especially within the Canadian theatre of operations. Yet transport was also needed to move an ever-increasing volume of military and naval stores, for here again it was necessary to import almost all of the "warlike stores" from Britain.

Though the journey across the Atlantic was accomplished with relatively little difficulty, transportation in the Canadas themselves was another matter. Most of the Canadian-American

frontier was still an area of extensive forests with thinly scattered and isolated settlements. Roads being few, frequently bad, and often unusable in wet weather, it was the waterways which provided the vital links in communication. Yet the cold snows and freezing temperatures of winter, which so impressed many Europeans, though they allowed travel by sleigh, put an effective end to water navigation for some five months of the year. Even in peace time the problem of communication over long distances created considerable difficulties for the Commissariat, while the garrisons of the more remote outposts could expect hardships and long periods of isolation. The farther west that British forces were posted the more tenuous and vulnerable became their line of communication and supply.

Reinforcements, provisions and stores arriving in the St. Lawrence could be moved with relative ease as far as Montreal, but from that point westward transport became markedly more difficult. The bateau journey along the upper St. Lawrence was laborious and slow but movement west from Kingston to York, Burlington and the Niagara, using Lake Ontario, was comparatively easy. After negotiating the Niagara River, Lake Erie provided a convenient route to Amherstburg. In all, the journey from Quebec to Fort Malden covered over 700 miles, and beyond that point it was still another 300 miles to the post at St. Joseph's.

Besides the immediate physical difficulties and the great distances to be travelled, the lines of communication were also in

constant danger of being cut by the enemy. Use of the lakes depended on maintaining a naval dominance. When this was lost, the only alternative was the land route. That along the northern rim of Lake Ontario was unsuitable for extensive transport and exposed to attack. Much of the upper St. Lawrence actually formed the border with the United States and could be easily commanded by hostile forces. As Upper Canada relied on the St. Lawrence for its military and naval stores, provisions and reinforcements, the potential danger was great, yet to the amazement of British officers, the Americans made incredibly little effort to disrupt this important line of communication.

Movement, however, was also affected by the lack of Canadian resources. In the upper province there were not adequate numbers of vehicles or animals available for extensive land transport. Forage was often difficult to procure, especially in the more "exhausted" areas and by the end of the war Drummond was expecting a serious shortage the following spring.² On the upper St. Lawrence the bateau service required an ever-increasing number of local men to maintain it. This service provided the vital link between the upper and the lower provinces and was absolutely essential for the maintenance of military and naval forces in Upper Canada; yet its very existence seemed in jeopardy from a lack of manpower.

²Sir G. Drummond to Sir G. Prevost, 14 February 1815 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, pp. 108-113).

Obtaining Canadian labourers was always difficult, and the extravagant demands for manpower made during the war threatened to disrupt the whole economy, bringing ruin to agriculture. The bateau service alone employed literally thousands of Lower Canadians, called from their farms on *corvée*. The tentative plans for 1815 would have required the continual employment of a minimum of 3,100 men at any one time to keep bateaux and Durham boats along the upper St. Lawrence in constant service.³ Rotating this duty by means of the *corvée* would have affected many times that number, yet even before the expansion of the bateau service in 1814, the assembly of Lower Canada had petitioned for relief. The situation was much worsened by the fact that the bateau service itself became increasingly unpopular, while the *corvée* was never a satisfactory way of obtaining the necessary labourers.

Here, again, the resources of the Canadas were limited. Canadian manpower was not inexhaustible. If an extensive transport service was to be maintained by using local men, agriculture must suffer accordingly. Mobilizing the population for active field service in the militia could only worsen an already awkward situation. In 1814 the arrival of heavy reinforcements of British regulars seemed to offer the only solution. Men from the battalions of Select Embodied Militia of the lower province could be employed exclusively on transport while in a similar way most militia duty could be

³See Appendix XVII.

dispensed with and farmers returned to their normal activities. Yet the basic dilemma remained - there was not enough Canadian manpower to satisfy both the needs of agriculture and the demands for government service in wartime.

The many problems of supply and movement in the Canadas had a marked effect on the course of the war. For commanding generals, real success was an elusive object. The Duke of Wellington, when asked to accept a military command in North America, agreed, but replied that he did not promise himself much success there.⁴ Wellington was undoubtedly too modest, but his remarks on the possibilities for future operations against the United States, addressed to Lord Bathurst in February 1814, came directly to the very heart of military problems on the North American continent:

But even if we had that superiority [on the lakes], I should doubt our being able to do more than secure the points on those lakes at which the Americans could have access. In such countries as America, very extensive, thinly peopled and producing but little food in proportion to their extent, military operations by large bodies are impracticable, unless the party carrying them on has the uninterrupted use of a navigable river, or very extensive means of land Transport, which such a country can rarely supply.

I conceive, therefore, that were your army larger than the proposed augmentation would make it, you could not quit the lakes; and, indeed you would be tied to them the more necessarily in proportion as your army would be large.⁵

Major-General Frederick P. Robinson, writing in the midst of the British retreat from Plattsburg in September 1814, was convinced

⁴Hitsman, Incredible War, p. 234.

⁵Ibid., cited on pp. 188-189.

of the futility of extended offensives in a country such as North America, for, he wrote, "This is no field for a military man above the rank of a Colonel of Riflemen . . . nothing but a defensive war can or ought to be attempted here . . ." ⁶ As in previous North American wars, the need to maintain and protect long lines of communication determined the rapidity and strength with which force could be exerted at the ends of those lines and the same factors which so cramped British operations also affected American plans. Indeed, Captain De Gaugreben, a German engineer who had served with the British on the Niagara, was certain that it was the extensive tracts of undeveloped frontier which had largely decided the issue of the war:

This very extent, in a state of nature, was during the war, the Cause that prevented the Americans from making a long stand on any point of our frontier and obliged them to fall into their own Country. We have seen this in the Campaign of 1813 when General Harrison drove our Troops from Detroit to Burlington Heights. He was stopped in his marching to Burlington Heights by the long and bad road, and on account of his not being able to be supplied with provisions, ammunition etc. etc. Further General Brown in the Campaign of 1814, was forced to give up his Conquest and to retreat to Fort Erie and from thence into the United States on account of not having the necessary military supplies at hand; and to obtain them out of the United States was accompanied with very great expences and difficulties on account of the bad roads leading from the American resources through that extent of Wilderness. ⁷

⁶ Major-General Frederick P. Robinson to Merry, 22 September 1814 (P.A.C., M.G. 24, F 21, pp. 6, 8).

⁷ Captain F. De Gaugreben, "Memoir on the Defence of Upper Canada," 10 November 1815 (P.A.C., M.G. 24, F 23, pp. 32-33). His remarks on the Niagara campaign of 1814 gloss over the actual events,

The glory which Brock's defence of Upper Canada attracted to itself at the beginning of the War of 1812, was soon replaced by a continuing conflict which seemed to produce no conclusive winner. The generals who commanded the armies of both nations during the war have frequently been criticized - the more unfortunate held up to ridicule for their shortcomings. Yet the traditional emphasis on battles won and lost, on military blunders and brilliant strokes, has clouded some elementary truths about the nature of warfare in North America. Certainly, there were those who must be held culpable for their failures, but the immense logistical problems they faced are too often minimized or even forgotten.

Geography created problems of communication and supply so great that the principal task of generalship was in simply moving a force of moderate size into contact with the enemy. The armies of the Canadian War of 1812, although huge in terms of logistical effort, were indeed small by contemporary European standards and miniscule in terms of the ratio of manpower to space. Map strategy might be fairly simple, but the great difficulty of moving even these small armies over enormous distances made strategy all too susceptible to the imponderables of weather, timing and pure accident. The tedium of "administrative" problems, the organizational difficulties which

but as an overall observation on the campaign are essentially correct. De Gaugreben concluded his memoir with a proposal to maintain a sufficiently wide barrier of wilderness along the frontier as a deterrent to any further American plans to invade the Canadas.

were encountered in mounting any operation, consumed much energy and effort long before the day of battle finally arrived. An all too short encounter with the enemy could shatter the careful labour of months while the continual pressure of acquiring and transporting supplies and reinforcements across an extended and little developed frontier, soon reasserted itself as the smoke of battle cleared and the casualties were counted.

Logistical difficulties proved decisive in the campaigns fought along the Canadian-American frontier. The effectiveness of both belligerents was blunted by the tremendous problems of supply and movement. Compared to the marches undertaken by Wellington, from his bases on the Portuguese border, British operations along the Canadian frontier did not stray far from the permanently established depots, yet it must be considered that the initial distances covered, in order to move supplies to depots in the Canadian interior, were already enormous. Offensive operations in North America, carried on for any distance across the frontier into the territory of the enemy, failed consistently. Water communications were vital and success demanded control of the water routes. Without this prerequisite, offensive designs were too easily compromised, while even defence became largely a matter of endurance.

Attaining the necessary naval ascendancy on the lakes, which was so critical to military operations, was in turn dependent on the ability of each side to compete in an ever escalating contest of ship construction. The logistics involved in moving the necessary

materials to the inland naval bases placed a most severe strain on the transport system. In H. F. Landon's words, "This was the miracle of the War of 1812 on the Northern New York frontier, the miracle of construction, transportation and supply."⁸ On the British side Commissary-General Robinson handled this burden, and those other duties charged to his responsibility, with commendable energy and foresight, yet it proved impossible to do everything which might have been wished for. At the beginning of the war Robinson's Commissariat Department numbered only thirty-three officers and clerks and in the course of the conflict his establishment was increased to about two hundred. The perseverance of Robinson's staff, seconded most noticeably by those Lower Canadians employed on the bateau service, provided the essential logistical support, which despite the tremendous difficulties, made possible a successful defence of the Canadas. For although Lord Bathurst's more sanguine hopes for the campaign of 1814 were not realized, Wellington, at least, appreciated the magnitude of the achievements of the British forces in the Canadas - and it should not be forgotten that these achievements were at all times dependent on the continuous and effective functioning of the supply services.

Yet, despite the obvious influence of logistical problems on the course of events, the size of the Commissariat's staff, and the transport arrangements allowed by the Treasury, were never adequate

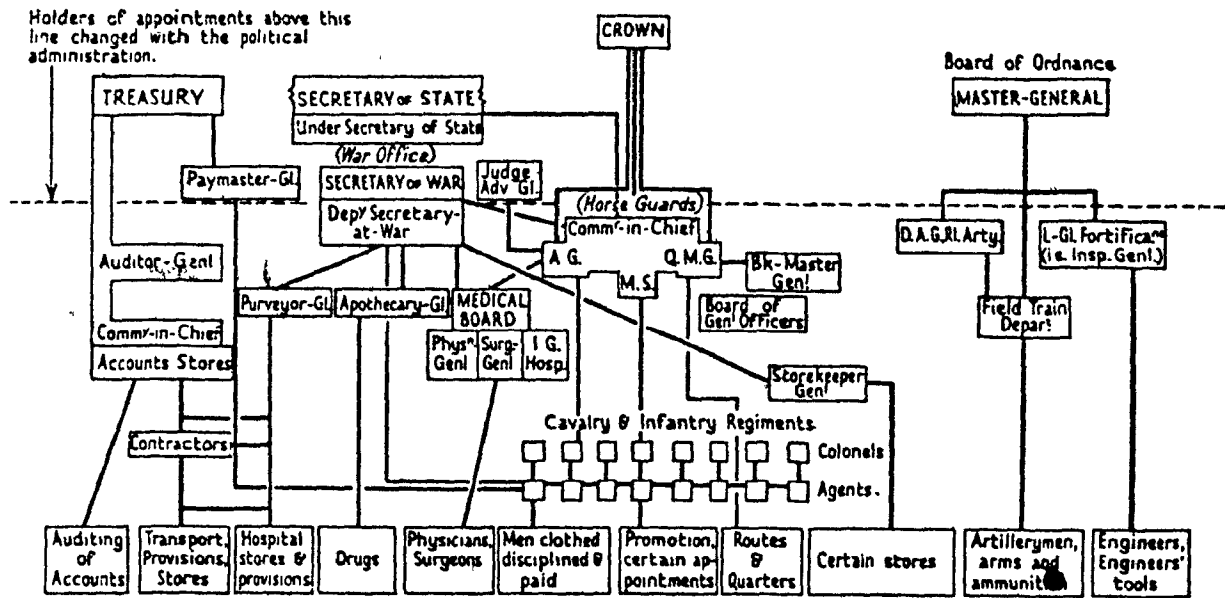
⁸ H. F. Landon, Bugles on the Border, p. 2.

to satisfy the Commissary-General, nor to completely fulfil the duties expected of his department. Nevertheless, whatever the shortcomings of the army's "civil administration," Commissary-General Robinson could feel justified for some pride in the work of the Commissariat - even if others paid little attention to such accomplishments. In a war which was little distinguished, after the death of Brock, by spectacular military exploits, the logistical achievements of the British Commissariat in the Canadas were impressive.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

OFFICES OF THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE ARMY, c. 1812



(From S. G. P. Ward, Wellington's Headquarters, p. 7) —

APPENDIX II

Allotment of Commissaries on Field Service
in the Peninsula War

Commissary-General	to Headquarters
Deputies Commissary-General	to a corps
Assistants Commissary-General	to a division
Deputy-Assistants Commissary-General (or an experienced Clerk)	to a brigade or an individual regiment

The proper post of each of these commissaries was with the Headquarters of his respective unit.

Allotment of Commissariat staff at the various
Depots in the Canadas, December, 1815

River St. Lawrence

Quebec	1 Deputy-Assistant Commissary-General 3 Clerks 1 Storekeeper 1 Issuer 2 permanent Laborers
Three Rivers	1 Storekeeper 2 Issuers
William Henry	1 Deputy-Assistant Commissary-General 1 Clerk 1 Storekeeper 2 Issuers

River Richelieu

Chambly	1 Assistant Commissary-General 3 Clerks 1 Storekeeper 1 Issuer
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St. Johns	1 Deputy-Assistant Commissary-General 1 Clerk 1 Storekeeper 1 Issuer
Lake Champlain	
Isle aux Noix	1 Deputy-Assistant Commissary-General
Island of Montreal	
Montreal	1 Deputy Commissary-General in charge of the district 1 Assistant Commissary-General 4 Clerks 2 Storekeepers
La Chine	1 Deputy-Assistant Commissary-General 2 Clerks Conductors
South Shore	
La Prairie	1 Clerk in charge 2 Issuers
North Shore (Upper St. Lawrence)	
Coteau du Lac	1 Deputy-Assistant Commissary-General 1 Clerk 1 Issuer
Cedars	1 Storekeeper 1 Issuer
Fort Wellington	1 Deputy-Assistant Commissary-General 1 Clerk 1 Issuer

Lake Ontario

Kingston
(Point Henry
and Gananoque)

1 Deputy Commissary-General
in charge of Upper Canada
2 Deputy-Assistants Commissary-General
3 Clerks
2 Storekeepers
4 Issuers

York

1 Assistant Commissary-General
1 Clerk
1 Storekeeper
1 Issuer

Falls of Niagara

Fort George

1 Assistant Commissary-General
1 Deputy-Assistant Commissary-General
2 Clerks
2 Storekeepers
1 Issuer

Queenston

1 Storekeeper

Chippewa

1 Deputy-Assistant Commissary-General
1 Clerk
1 Issuer

Fort Erie

1 Deputy-Assistant Commissary-General
1 Clerk
1 Issuer

Lake Erie

Amherstburg

1 Assistant Commissary-General
1 Deputy-Assistant Commissary-General
2 Clerks
1 Storekeeper
2 Issuers

Lake Huron

Drummond's Island
and St. Joseph's

1 Deputy Assistant Commissary-General
2 Clerks
1 Issuer

(From a Return of Commissariat Depots, 4 December 1815 in
P.A.C., W.O. 57/15)

APPENDIX III

Sample Abstract Forms

REQUISITION for Encamped at		INFANTRY.						Days' Bread, Meat, Wood, Straw, and Forage, for the from to 18				Regiment of both Days inclusive.				
No. of Companies.	Signature of Officers draw in g. forage.	Rank.	No. of Effective Horses to be inserted by each Individual Officer.	Sergeants.	Drummers.	Rank and File.	Servants and Soldiers.	Women.	Total.	Bread, Leaves of Oats.	Pounds of Meat.	Wood, Rations of 12 lbs.	Straw, Trusses of 24 lbs.	Forage.	Straw, Rations of 4 lbs.	
										No. of Leaves per Horse consumed. Officers, Drummers, and Privates.	No. of Pounds for Servants and Soldiers, & Washer Women.	Total Number of Leaves.	No. of Pounds for non-commissioned Officers, Drummers, and Privates.	No. of Pounds for Servants and Soldiers, & Washer Women.	Total Number of Pounds.	
WOOD																
Colonel or Commanding Officer.....																
Field Officers.....																
Officers of Companies.....																
Pay-Master.....																
Adjutant.....																
Quartermaster.....																
Surgeon.....																
Assistant Surgeon.....																
Straw for Rear & Quarter Guard																
Sick in Hospital.....																
Total.....																
Total.....																
I certify the above Quantities of Wood and Straw drawn for the Sick in Hospital are necessary.										Signature of the Surgeon. Signature of the Colonel or Commanding Officer.						
Received by an Order on the Contractors, the under-mentioned Supplies Bread, Leaves of 8 lbs. Pounds of Meat. Wood, Rations of 12 lbs. Straw, Trusses of 24 lbs. Forage, Rations of 12 lbs. Oats, and 14 lbs. Hay. Forage, Rations of 8 lbs. Oats, and 14 lbs. Hay. Straw, Rations of 4 lbs.																
Signature of the Quartermaster.																

(From General Regulations and Orders for the Army, London, 1811, pp. 177, 184).

INFANTRY.

GENERAL RECEIPT.

Camp at

RETURN of SUPPLIES delivered to the _____ of
 from the _____ to the _____
 18 ____ both Days inclusive.

Number and Period of Deliveries.		Bread, Loaves of lbs.	Pounds of Meat.				Wood, Rations of 12 lbs.	Straw, Trusses of 36 lbs.	Forage, Rations of 10 lbs. Oats, and 14 lbs. Hay.	Forage, Rations of 6 lbs. Oats, and 11 lbs. Hay.	Straw for Artillery Horses, Rations of 4 lbs.
No.	From	No. of Loaves for Non-commissioned Officers, Drummers, and Artificers.	No. of Loaves for Sergeants, Soldiers, and Washer Women.	Total Number of Pounds.	No. of Pounds for Non-commissioned Officers, Drummers, and Privates.	No. of Pounds for Sergeants, Soldiers, & Washer Women.	Total Number of Pounds.				
Total											

I say, Bread, Loaves of 6 lbs.
 Pounds of Meat.
 Wood, Rations of 12 lbs.
 Straw, Trusses of 36 lbs.
 Forage, Rations of 10 lbs. Oats, and 14 lbs. Hay.
 Forage, Rations of 6 lbs. Oats, and 14 lbs. Hay.
 Straw, (for Artillery Horses) Rations of 4 lbs.

Which I certify to have been actually delivered in kind by _____ for the use of _____

for the above-mentioned period, in conformity to the Regimental Requisitions signed by the Commanding Officer, given in to _____ and corresponding Orders of Delivery issued by the said _____ on the said Contractor, now taken up and destroyed in my Presence in exchange for this General Receipt.

*Signature of the
 Quarter-Master.*

*Signature of the
 Commissariat Officer.*

Paid by the Regimental Pay-Master..... { Stoppages for Bread delivered to Servants not Soldiers, and Washer Women, at 5d. per loaf } £
 Ditto for Meat ditto ditto at 6d. per lb.

Total.....£ _____

(From General Regulations and Orders for the Army, London, 1811, pp. 177, 184)

APPENDIX IV

Commissariat Establishment* in the Canadas, 1812-1815

	25 Jan. ¹ 1812	1 Mar. ² 1813	14 Jan. ³ 1814	4 Dec. ⁴ 1815
Commissary-General	1	1	1	1
Deputies Commissary-General	1	3	3	2
Assistants Commissary-General	1	5	4	5
Deputy-Assistants Commissary-General	7	24	30	14
Commissariat Clerks	?	62	83	29
Acting Deputy Storekeeper- General	1	1	1	
Storekeepers	11	10	12	15
Issuers	?	22	29	24

¹Return of General and Staff Officers, British North America, 25 January, 1812 (P.A.C., W. O. 17/1516, p. 1).

²J. C. Herries to W. H. Robinson, No. 129, 12 July 1813 (P.A.C., W.O. 58/64, pp. 127-133). Concerning Robinson's establishment list of 1 March 1813.

³Return of Persons to be employed in the Commissariat in the Canadas for the Year 1814, 14 January 1814 (P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 118, pp. 22-35).

⁴General Return of the present Commissariat Depots in the Canadas, 4 December 1815 (P.A.C., W.O. 57/15).

*Labourers, coopers and conductors omitted. Their numbers fluctuated considerably and were not always returned.

APPENDIX V

The Practice of Farming in the Canadas, c. 1812

The traditional farming methods of the habitant in Lower Canada were frequently criticized:

The Canadian farmer is not sufficiently aware of the value of manures, and of artificial grasses: nor does he seem to reflect, that it is more advantageous to have a small farm of good land in high cultivation, than a large farm half laboured or neglected. - He ploughs the same field, and sows in it the same sort of grain, twenty times over; he does not think of a routine of crops, nor does he renovate the exhausted soil by the addition of manures; the only remedy he knows for land so exhausted as to yield little or no return, is, to let it lie fallow for some time. It is in vain to endeavour to convince him of his error: nothing but example will produce any good effect. - This they begin to have. Some of the farmers are a little more enlightened than the generality of them: they have ventured to listen to reason, and to reflect upon the comparative value of different modes of treating their lands; and they begin to make innovations in their ancient systems of farming.¹

In 1816 a special committee of the Legislature of the lower province presented a report which concurred with such opinions and condemned the farming practices which had been in use for generations. Diminished returns were blamed chiefly on the habitant's lack of care in choosing good seed, the absence of proper crop rotation, the want of manure, of weeding and of new implements. In fact, by 1815 the primitive tillage methods then in use were not only considered ineffective, but had already exhausted lands in many of the areas

¹Gray, pp. 137-138.

once considered as "the granaries of Lower Canada." Similar areas seemed headed towards the same end.²

The committee was no better impressed with the manner in which livestock were handled. The habitant seemed reluctant to increase the number of his beasts, while the absence of selective breeding and the lack of improved pasture land did not improve the stock on hand. Natural meadows provided the habitant with all of his hay, but in most cases this was insufficient to winter all of his livestock. This, and limited stabling facilities, resulted in the slaughtering of the greater part of the cattle and hogs as soon as the frost set in. Thus provision was made for meat over the next six months and the opportunity was also taken to transport any surplus to market while in a frozen state. On the whole, however, the habitant's livestock husbandry, though far from ideal, was ahead of his field management and did not in fact compare unfavourably with methods commonly used at that time in the northern United States.³

Down to the end of the War of 1812 the habitant's basic self-sufficiency was not altered: "Each family can, from its own resources, supply its wants. They manufacture their own linens and woollen stuffs, tan the hides of their cattle, make shoes and stockings, are their own carpenters, masons, wheelers and taylor."⁴

²Ouellet, p. 222; Jones, "Agriculture in Lower Canada," p. 51; Bouchette, pp. 65-66.

³Jones, "Agriculture in Lower Canada," p. 36.

⁴Heriot, I, p. 256.

The average farmer grew as much spring wheat as could be used or sold and it was thought, at least by some, to be of an excellent quality, perhaps superior to Baltic wheat.⁵ Fair quantities of oats for horse feed and of pease for soup, pig feed and to some extent for export, were also grown. Indian corn and barley were produced in limited amounts, while a little tobacco and flax were grown for domestic use. Heriot estimated the average yields in Lower Canada at fifteen bushels to one bushel of seed grain for oats, twelve for barley, six for pease and eleven for summer wheat.⁶ As in Upper Canada, attempts by the government to encourage hemp production had met with little success, but by 1812 the potato, which had been little grown in New France, had become a staple food in Lower Canada and was also used to fatten livestock. The cattle and swine of the lower province were the descendents of Normandy stock and though the cattle were hardy and good milkers, the beef was frequently tough eating. The sheep were held to be inferior to their European counterparts, but the horses of Lower Canada were acknowledged as one of the finest breeds in North America, small but hardy and able workers.⁷

By comparison with wealthy improved farmers in England, who could afford to experiment, the habitant was clearly behind. Yet

⁵Gray, p. 198.

⁶Heriot, I, p. 259. Wheat and barley would be sown at the rate of 1 to 1 1/2 bushels of seed grain to the acre. Oats at about 2 1/2 bushels to the acre.

⁷Jones, "Agriculture in Lower Canada," pp. 36-38; Lambert, p. 78.

the overall lack of progress cannot be ascribed purely to the constraints of seigneurial tenure and old laws, the attraction of the fur trade or even the climate, unfavourable as it was to growing wheat. Conservatism and a lack of incentives made the majority reluctant to accept change. Bouchette was quite convinced that the remedy lay in providing proper examples for the majority to follow, and indeed there were few model farms in Canada to emulate. Innovation was an uncertainty and the same tillage methods continued to be used well into the nineteenth century, while wheat remained a staple despite suggestions to emphasize stock raising and dairy production, for which the lower province was best suited.⁸ On the eve of the War of 1812 it seemed as if the habitant already possessed the conviction that his production could not be improved beyond certain limits,⁹ while circumstances involved with the appearance of the beef shortage at Quebec in 1810 would suggest a certain naivety. Yet it must be realized that the early nineteenth century was a time of change and uncertainty and though the habitant may have shown much more flexibility than is often conceded, it would have been most difficult for any farmer to have made a timely response to changes in a distant foreign market. The local consuming population was not great and experience had shown that overseas markets could not be counted on with any more certainty than favourable climatic conditions.

⁸Bouchette, pp. 64-65; Jones, "Agriculture in Lower Canada," p. 51.

⁹Ouellet, p. 218.

Indeed, from an economic standpoint the habitant would have been foolish to have simply attempted to increase production regardless of such factors. Nevertheless, in general terms, the development of agriculture on the vast majority of farms in Lower Canada can only be described as one which had not progressed beyond a rather poor state of extensive cultivation.

The special report of 1816 on agriculture did, however, give evidence of a small elite who had been using new techniques and were convinced of their utility.¹⁰ The vast majority had escaped any profound evolution, yet the habitant was not the only farmer present in the lower province in 1812. There was also a small but distinct group of British farmers near Quebec and Montreal, but especially on Montreal Island. In addition, there was an isolated enclave of American settlers located in the several townships adjacent to Vermont and New Hampshire who by 1815 numbered about 20,000.¹¹ Both groups used agricultural methods which were different from those of the majority of Lower Canadians. The British farmers purchased or rented exhausted seigneuries and by using a superior technique, renovated them, the proximity of a consuming centre giving them a steady and profitable market for livestock, vegetables, apples and other products. Travellers were impressed by the contrast they provided to both the traditional parishes of Lower Canada and the new

¹⁰Ibid, p. 221; Hériot, I, p. 259.

¹¹Jones, "Agriculture in Lower Canada," pp. 38, 50.

settlements of Upper Canada. Lambert felt that the largest crops were to be found near Montreal, where there was also more diversification.¹² Farther to the south, along the border, New Englanders had been moving into the Eastern Townships since the end of the American Revolution, yet even by 1812 they had had relatively little contact with communities along the St. Lawrence. They were still very much an appendage to American settlements along Lake Champlain and on the upper Connecticut River, and preserved business and social ties with relatives to the south. A wilderness of some one hundred miles separated them from the St. Lawrence, yet they were acknowledged to be active and enterprising settlers - men who cut down and burned trees for potash, raised cattle and horses for market, kept a few sheep, did some pork packing and cheese making, while growing enough rye, barley and wheat for their own use with a small quantity for export. Here Indian corn was almost a staple; though not particularly well adapted to the region, and many farmers also had apple orchards.¹³ In both of the Canadas the American settler was noted for his industry and success in clearing and improving virgin woodland.

Beyond the borders of Lower Canada, in the relatively new province of Upper Canada, farming was carried on by a population composed chiefly of recent American and British immigrants, along

¹²Lambert, p. 132.

¹³Jones, "Agriculture in Lower Canada," pp. 44-45.

with various groups of Loyalist stock. By 1812 the inhabitants of the upper province could look back on the previous two and a half decades as a period of notable agricultural advancement. For many the economy of the backwoodsman had been replaced by that of the wheat farmer, with small attempts at diversification, and while some areas of the province had the appearance of well established settlements, others were quite decidedly pioneer communities with large tracts of virgin land, much of it heavily wooded. The first task for the pioneer who broke this virgin land, was to dispose of the bush.¹⁴ Clearing a forest was a tremendous task requiring arduous labour for which previous experience was an infinite asset. The inexperienced newcomer could find his first years difficult indeed. After the first stage of clearing the land, a first crop of wheat might be sown between the stumps and ploughing was seldom started until the third year, harrowing usually being sufficient until then. After this continuous wheat cropping could be started, but the agriculture that followed was extensive rather than intensive, as land was plentiful and labour was not.¹⁵

Implements for the most part were crude and most field work was done by oxen. Sowing, weeding, harvesting and threshing all

¹⁴An area's suitability for agriculture was largely determined by its tree cover. The more heavily wooded sites were preferred over those that were relatively open.

¹⁵Spelt, pp. 36-37; Talbot, I, p. 51; Glazebrook, Life in Ontario, p. 33.

demanding time-consuming hand labour and the average farm was small, being largely dependent on the skill of the farmer and the labour of his family. For the most part, soil fertility compensated for poor husbandry and in favourable areas of Upper Canada wheat could yield as much as sixteen bushels to one bushel of seed grain or even better than twenty to one. The major crop was winter wheat, but rye, oats and buckwheat were also planted together with Indian corn and vegetables. Most farmers kept hogs, cows and a few sheep, and in some settlements either transport difficulties or regional conditions also encouraged the raising of cattle that could be driven to market, but as in Lower Canada the emphasis was on cutting expenditures, frequently to the animals' detriment, especially in winter. The livestock were hardy but not impressive.¹⁶

¹⁶Ibid., p. 34; Spelt, p. 37; Talbot, I, pp. 178-179.

APPENDIX VI

Some Comparative Agricultural Statistics
1800-1950

Man-hours used to produce specified amounts of wheat and corn.
Yields for 1800 and 1840 are estimated.

	<u>1800</u>	<u>1840</u>	<u>1900</u>	<u>1950</u>
<u>Wheat</u>				
Man-hours per acre	56	35	15	4.6
Before harvest	16	12	7	2.6
Harvest	40	23	8	2.0
Yield per acre - bushels	15	15	13.9	16.6
Man-hours per 100 bushels	373	233	108	28.0
<u>Corn</u>				
Man-hours per acre	86	69	38	15.2
Before harvest	56	44	22	9.9
Harvest	30	25	16	5.3
Yield per acre - bushels	25	25	25.9	39.0
Man-hours per 100 bushels	344	276	147	39.0

(From Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1957, p. 281).

Harvest and Seeding Dates in Eastern Canada

Winter wheat	- Harvest - mid-July to mid-August
	Seeding - 1 September to 21 September
	Plowing - late August
Corn	- Harvest - October
	Seeding - early May
Oats	- Harvest - late July to mid-August
	Seeding - early May (late April on the Niagara)
Rye	- Harvest - July to early August
	Seeding - 1 September to 21 September
Barley	- Harvest - July to early August
	Seeding - late April to early May
Hay	- Harvest - late June through July

APPENDIX VII

The Grain Trade of Early Nineteenth Century
Canada

In Lower Canada, until the last decade of the eighteenth century, there would appear to have been little advancement or economic change from the traditional farming methods practised by the habitants prior to the Conquest. The European wars which erupted in the 1790's, however, precipitated change in the province's economy and in the years following 1792 brought about considerable expansion in the grain trade. Yet throughout this period both harvests and foreign markets remained fickle. In Great Britain there was a large demand for wheat owing to crop failures throughout Europe in 1793, 1794 and 1795, aggravated by the interruption of trade due to the commencement of hostilities. The habitant was encouraged by high prices to sell all the grain he could spare. The increased export of breadstuffs emptied the lower province to the extent that a bad crop in 1794 and a worse one the following year necessitated a temporary embargo on wheat, flour and biscuit exports to all destinations other than the British Isles and Britain's colonial possessions. Drought, worsened by attacks from the Hessian fly, reduced local supplies to the point where it was deemed necessary to import food supplies from Europe to feed troops stationed in Lower Canada. For the next few years a slackness in British demand and rather poor harvests kept grain exports down, but by the turn of the century a rapid increase

was again underway, reaching a peak in 1802 when some 28,300 barrels of flour and 1,013,033 bushels of wheat left the port of Quebec. The sharp increase in exports, however, must not be taken as a precise indicator of agricultural progress in Lower Canada alone, for it reflected not only improved harvests in the lower province but also the arrival of breadstuffs from Upper Canada and northeastern New York for shipment overseas, the whole being stimulated by a revival in British demands. After 1802 grain exports again tapered off as overseas demand lessened and were further reduced by the ravages of the Hessian fly in Lower Canada which started in 1805. Exports of breadstuffs in 1805 and 1806 were hardly better than those of 1797 and 1798.¹

The period between Jefferson's Embargo of December 1807 and the repeal of the Non-Intercourse Act in May 1810 became a time of feverish prosperity and smuggling as American produce moved north illegally into Lower Canada, being denied an outlet from ports in the United States. At the same time demand was steady in Britain, especially after the start of a series of bad harvests in 1809, and in most cases the leading agricultural commodities exported from Lower Canada in 1808, 1809 and 1810 greatly exceeded those of 1807, which was about an average year. Though the merchants and those agriculturalists who stayed on the land benefitted from the increased

¹Jones, "Agriculture in Lower Canada," pp. 33, 39-40; Adam Shortt, "The Economic Effect of the War of 1812 on Upper Canada," Papers and Records of the Ontario Historical Society, X, 1913, p. 81.

commercial activity, the consumer in Quebec city suffered as the general cost of living rose, accented by an actual shortage of fresh meat. By 1810 the price of good beef at Quebec was about double what it had been in 1808. The failure in meat supplies was attributed to the conservatism of local farmers who did little to increase their stock of cattle to meet market demands. The chief cause, however, seems to have been with the butchers near Quebec who encouraged the habitants to sell their stock even to the point of jeopardizing future breeding. In some parishes there were not even enough oxen to work the land. The Governor, Sir James Craig, sought to remedy the situation by opening a road southward from Quebec to draw on the Eastern Townships and the frontier settlements of Vermont and New Hampshire. Completed in the autumn of 1810, the first produce brought into Quebec by the Craig Road arrived by sleigh in January 1811. The spring thaw interrupted traffic and not until the roads had dried completely did the cattle droves from northern New Hampshire, north-eastern Vermont and parts of the Eastern Townships begin arriving in Quebec.²

Throughout this period Montreal was somewhat better off, partly because of its British farmers who increased their production more rapidly than the habitants near Quebec, but mainly due to the fact that Montreal was not only an excellent outlet for the swine and cattle of eastern Upper Canada but also competed well for the

²Jones, "Agriculture in Lower Canada," pp. 42-44, 46.

produce of northeastern New York and northern Vermont. The period which followed the repeal of the Non-Intercourse Act down to the outbreak of war in June 1812 was less prosperous for Lower Canada as American ports were again open to British shipping. Yet the quantity of leading agricultural products leaving the St. Lawrence in 1812 compared favourably with exports of the Embargo and Non-Intercourse years.³

The same two decades preceding the War of 1812 which saw the expansion of the grain trade in Lower Canada also witnessed the establishment of wheat as a main staple in Upper Canada. The Loyalists who arrived in the upper province following the American Revolution soon passed through the initial stages of pioneer farming and despite such hardships as the famine of 1788 were solidly established within a decade.⁴ Military posts, either British or American, provided an important local market for what little surplus might be produced and until 1800, with few exceptions, the greater part of Upper Canada's agricultural produce found local markets. Garrison demands also stimulated pork-packing along the Bay of Quinté, which in 1793-94 cured some 480 barrels for the use of the King's troops. Breweries and distilleries also sprang up encouraging the further production of grains, while the exportation of livestock

³Ibid, p. 47.

⁴Jones, "Agriculture in Ontario," pp. 18, 22; Guillet, pp. 208-214.

from the eastern districts of the upper province to Montreal began^P about 1800. Upper Canada's share in the expanding grain exports of the 1790's was initially small but grew rapidly.

In 1794 an estimated 12,823 bushels of wheat and 896 barrels of flour and 83 of biscuit were shipped from Kingston to Montreal, being the produce of Upper Canada's most flourishing region, Midland District, by the Bay of Quinté. A further 1,624 bushels and 3,596 barrels of flour were furnished for garrisons at Kingston, York and Niagara, but agriculture remained subject to violent fluctuations in yield. The period from 1794 to 1797 was exceptionally dry. The harvests were light as crops suffered from drought and the Hessian fly. Though the overall production of wheat was on the increase in the last decade of the eighteenth century, such conditions helped to check the incipient export trade. More important, however, was the sudden development of a more local market among the new settlers on the American side of the St. Lawrence and the Great Lakes. Local demand was good, surpluses limited and prices were high for several years. In the winter of 1797 it was reported that the demands of the American garrisons had not only driven up the price of flour and peas in the Niagara area, but had also practically exhausted the supply. In some cases previous contracts with British garrisons were disregarded, while there were also attempts to profiteer by withholding supplies in times of scarcity.⁵

⁵Jones, "Agriculture in Ontario," pp. 25-26; Creighton, p. 122.

Such advantages, however, were soon lost in the early years of the nineteenth century as good harvests and the rapidity of American development on the other side of the lakes changed the situation greatly. By 1800 American settlements south of Lake Ontario had not only enough for their own needs but were preparing a surplus for export to Lower Canada and in Upper Canada too, eyes were again turned on Montreal.⁶ In 1801 Kingston merchants sent 13,963 barrels of flour, 322 barrels of biscuit flour and 350 bushels of wheat to Montreal. As before, the greater part came from the areas around Kingston, but some 2,489 of the barrels of flour came from the Detroit area. The following year demand remained good and Upper Canada exported another 11,422 barrels of flour. From this time on, with few interruptions, there was strong demand in Lower Canada for Upper Canadian breadstuffs to export to Great Britain, yet in the first years of the new century the price of grain fell as it had to bear the cost of transportation to the lower province, sometimes to England.⁷ This in turn encouraged farmers to give more attention to the production of potash and articles associated with the timber trade. Light harvests helped to push the price of wheat up again between 1808 and 1811, but there was little to export, especially as the crop of 1810 proved particularly bad.

⁶Shortt, p. 81; Jones, "Agriculture in Ontario," p. 27. In 1812 Major-General Isaac Brock reported the produce from the area south of Lake Ontario to be about 40,000 barrels of flour - all of it normally destined for the Montreal market. (I. Brock to N. Freer, 23 April 1812, P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 329, p.32).

⁷Shortt, p. 81.

* * * * *

The following figures on wheat and flour exports from the St. Lawrence were printed in the Montreal Gazette, 1 November 1831. The figures for 1793 to 1801 are given in round numbers, those after 1802 were based on official returns. The export figure given is expressed in bushels. One barrel is taken to be the equivalent of five bushels of wheat.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Wheat exported (bushels)</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Wheat exported (bushels)</u>
1793	541,500	1807	333,753
1794	482,500	1808	399,168
1795	485,000	1809	295,849
1796	24,606	1810	233,495
1797	101,000	1811	97,553
1798	139,500	1812	451,303
1799	201,000	1813	2,585
1800	317,000	1814	6,086
1801	660,000	1815	9,600
1802	1,151,033	1816	5,675
1802	438,052	1817	335,895
1804	270,378	1818	554,506
1805	114,966	1819	98,325
1806	151,894	1820	535,893

It should be remembered that the harvest of any given year was not exported until the following year. Nor do these figures represent solely Canadian produce. During the war years exports were of course curtailed by law.

(From Select Documents in Canadian Economic History 1783-1885, pp. 265-266)

APPENDIX VIII

General Scale for Rations

General Order, Quebec
20 January 1814

It being necessary to establish a General Scale of Rations of Provisions and Forage, embracing all the several General Orders which have been issued on this head - The Commander of the Forces is pleased to direct, that the following Scale be acted upon in future, and to approve of all issues that may heretofore have been made in conformity to this Regulation:

[see table, p. 272]

When circumstances will not admit of procuring all the necessary Supplies, the Commutation is to be made in the following proportions, viz.

Two Pounds of Flour for one Pound of Rice.

One Pound of Flour for Three Pints of Pease, or the Pease paid for at 6s. Currency per Bushel.

For the Naval Ration, 1 1/2 lbs. of Fresh or Salt Beef is equal to 1 lb. of Pork.

For the Old Marine Ration 1 lb. of ditto, is equal to 1/2 lb. of Pork.

	Flour or biscuit	Pork	Fresh or salt beef	Pease	Rice	Rum	Salt issued with fresh beef only	Sugar	Oatmeal	Butter or sugar	Cheese, rice or cocoa	Vinegar
	pounds	ounces	ounces	pints	ounces	pints	ounces	ounces	pints	ounces	ounces	pints
Treasury	1	10 4/7	or 16	3/7	1 2/7	0	1/2	0	0	0	0	0
Field	1 1/2	10 1/2	or 16	0	0	0	1/2	0	0	0	0	0
Naval	1	4 4/7	9 1/7	2/7	0	1/2	0	6/7	3/14	6/7	1 5/7	1/14
Old Marine	1 1/2	9 2/3	or 16	1/4	1	1/2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Corvée (to Batteau men)	2	10	0	1/2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rations in one species	3 or	21 or	36 3/4	or 4	or 24	or 4	pints of Indian Corn					

Hospital Rations - Pork left undrawn by Sick in Hospital to be paid for at 6d. per lb. - Salt Beef at 3d.1/2, and Fresh Beef at the Contract Price of the Garrison or Post.

By District General Order - 4 Ounces Pork have been added to the Old Marine Ration in Upper Canada, and 3 1/2 ounces Flour in lieu of Rice and Pease.

Back Rations - Are not to be issued except the Return be specially approved, and entitled "Back Ration Return."

Scale of Rations of Forage

	Oats, Barley or Indian Corn lbs.	Bran lbs.	Hay lbs.	Straw lbs.
Cavalry	8 1/2	or 14	16	6
Artillery Draught Horses, or Oxen . .	8 1/2	or 14	20	3 3/7
Where Oats or Bran cannot be had				
Cavalry	0	0	32	6
Artillery and Draught	0	0	36	3 3/7

RemarksFor the Instruction and Guidance of all Commissariat Officers
or Persons in Charge of Provisions and Forage

The Treasury Ration, or Ration in all Species, is the regular Ration to be issued to Troops, ~~Departments~~, etc in Garrison.

The Field Ration is to be issued to the Troops actually in the Field, and upon the March; in this case, the words "Under Marching Orders" are to be noted in the Head of the Provision Return; Officers Commanding Posts may direct the Issue of Field Rations, when it is absolutely necessary.

The Naval Ration to be restricted to Seamen and Marines, or Troops serving as Marines, on board Ships of War in the Lake Service.

The Old Marine Ration to be issued to Artificers in the Dock Yards, and Persons employed in the Gun Boat Service.

The Corvée Ration to Canadians employed in the Batteau Service, Batteau Men in cold and wet weather in the Spring and Autumn, and when the emergency of the Service may require it, may receive Half a Pint of Rum, in addition to the Ration.

The Ration in one Species, is to be restricted to Indian Warriors in the Upper Province, where from long habit, it has become necessary to issue it occasionally.

Issues to Indians, are to be made in Treasury or Field Rations, upon an approved Requisition, by the General or Officer Commanding. When Rum is required, the quantity of Rum to be inserted by the officer of the Indian Department making the Requisition, who is to sign the Receipt.

Issues to Regiments - The Senior Officer of a Regiment present, is always to sign the Provision Return, together with the Pay-Master, and when no quarter Master, or Person acting in that Capacity is present, he is also to sign the Receipt; if no Officer is present with the Corps or Detachment, the Brigade Major, or an Officer of the General Staff; if at an Out Post, the Officer Commanding is to sign the Return, and the Receipt to be signed by the Person receiving the Provisions.

Detachments or Parties, however few in number, moving from one Military Station to another in the same District, or out of the District, are to be provided with a Commissariat Certificate of the Period up to which they have been victualled.

Definition of the Term Back Rations - All Returns for Rations, that are due for a time previous to the Weekly Period for which Rations are then issuing, are considered as Back Rations.

Staff and Departments are entitled to draw Monthly in advance, all Rations due for a Period anterior to the Monthly Period for which Rations are then issuing, are also considered Back Rations, and are not to be issued, unless the Return be specially approved.

By His Excellency's Command,

Edward Baynes, Adjt.Genl.
N.A.

Memorandum - Rum is no Part of the Soldier's Ration, and is only issued upon Special Orders.

(From P.A.C., W.O. 57/37)

APPENDIX IX

General Estimate and State of Supplies, and Provisions required For the Forces in Lower Canada
from 25 April 1812 to 1 June 1813

	Flour lbs.	Pork lbs.	Pease bushels	Rice lbs.
<u>Required</u>				
For the troops of the line, Provincial Corps now levying and militia to be embodied on 1 June 1812	3,568,250	2,357,606	23,894	254,874
To be shipped for Nova Scotia	1,277,528	285,000	8,559	-
To be forwarded to Upper Canada	-	-	-	40,000
Total required	4,845,778	2,642,606	32,453	294,874
<u>Supplies</u>				
Remains in store in Lower Canada, 24 April 1812	862,887	404,210	5,688	42,553
To be received from contractors in Lower Canada	2,940,000	900,000	6,500	-
To be received from Upper Canada, purchased by Deputy-Assistant Commissary-General McGill	-	-	10,000	-
To be received from England	-	216,000	-	100,000
Total Supplies	3,802,887	1,520,210	22,188	142,553
Balance remaining to be supplied	1,042,891	1,122,396	10,265	152,321
Equal in barrels to	5,321	5,396	-	-

The supplies of flour and pease may with certainty be provided in this province.
The supply of pork (with the exception of 1396 barrels which may be purchased here) and the
supply of rice, to be imported from England.

In the above estimate no notice is taken of the usual supply of fresh beef for six months as
in the probable event of a war or continuance of the land embargo by the American states, a
supply of that article is not to be calculated upon.

Commissary-General's Office
Quebec 18 May 1812

(Extract from P.A.C., W.O. 57/14)

APPENDIX X

Provisions Shipped for Canada from
10 April to 20 August 1813

Shipping date	Beef lbs.	Pork lbs.	Flour lbs.	Rice lbs.
10th and 14th April	-	623,924	980,112	-
18th and 28th June	311,984	311,900	979,776	-
7th and 19th August	721,726	725,268	1,418,592	354,199
Total	1,033,710	1,661,092	3,378,480	354,199

(From P.A.C., C.O. 42/155, p. 4)

APPENDIX XI

Commissary-General Robinson's Estimate for
Provisions required in the Canadas
25 April 1814 to 24 September 1815

	To be obtained in British North America	To be shipped from Great Britain	Total Required
Flour	6,692,698 lbs.	3,920,000 lbs.	10,612,698 lbs.
Salt pork	1,678,635 lbs.	6,840,000 lbs.	8,518,635 lbs.
Rice	-	450,302 lbs.	450,302 lbs.
Cocoa	-	120,000 lbs.	120,000 lbs.
Pease	109,687 bushels	-	109,687 bushels
Rum	50,126 gallons	-	50,126 gallons

The British government, however, decided to send all of the flour needed from the British Isles and Robinson was told to refrain from purchasing local rum as the Treasury intended to send him 40,000 gallons. In August 1814 the Commissary-in-Chief's Office informed Robinson that the following quantities would be sent from the British Isles to cover his requirements. These revised figures took into consideration quantities already sent, outstanding orders and an addition of 10 per cent to cover wastage (except in the pease):

Flour	4,682,982 lbs.
Salt Meat	8,162,000 lbs.
Rice	365,530 lbs.
Cocoa	132,000 lbs.
Pease	50,000 bushels

Upon the cessation of hostilities a new estimate for 12 months' consumption in the Canadas was drawn up in London and Robinson was informed that the following quantities would be sent by the first spring fleet of 1815:

Flour	4,000,000 lbs.
Salt Meat	4,000,000 lbs.
Rice	200,000 lbs.
Cocoa	30,000 lbs.
Pease	10,000 bushels
Rum	100,000 gallons

The Victualling Board made the following arrangements for these shipments:

From St. Catherines

Flour	4,000,000 lbs.
Beef	1,066,667 lbs.
Pork	693,333 lbs.
Rice	200,000 lbs.
Cocoa	30,000 lbs.
Pease	8,000 bushels
Rum	70,000 gallons

From Portsmouth

Beef	800,000 lbs.
Pork	240,000 lbs.
Pease	2,000 bushels
Rum	30,000 gallons

From Plymouth

Beef	800,000 lbs.
Pork	400,000 lbs.

(From P.A.C., W.O. 58/64, pp. 234-236, 249-250)

APPENDIX XII

Return of Camp Equippage

Shipped on board the Bellfield, Sarah Ann and Northumberland

Transports in part of Supply for the service in Canada.

Flanders Tents	1,420
Poles for do.	1,420
Iron collars for do.	710
Mallets for do.	2,200
Pins for do.	44,000
Camp colours complete	720
Powder bags	100
Drum cases	200
Bill hooks	2,550
Flanders kettles	3,500
Canteens	20,000
Canteen straps	20,000
Haversacks	17,300
Blankets	20,000
Hospital Marquees Tents	10
Sets. of Poles	10
Bags of Pins and Mallets	10

April 20th, 1813
Storekeeper General's Office

(From P.A.C., C.O. 42/153, p. 157)

APPENDIX XIII

Ordnance, Ammunition, Small Arms and Stores
Embarked for Canada

Shipments made between 28 July 1812 and 26 June 1813.

		<u>Quantities</u>
<u>Ordnance</u>		
Guns	- Iron - 24 pr.	6
	18 pr.	6
	12 pr.	6
	Brass - 6 pr.	5
Mortars	- Iron - 10 in.	1
	8 in.	4
Carronades	- Iron - 32 pr.	66
	18 pr.	6
	12 pr.	10
<u>Rounds of Ammunition</u>		
Guns	- 32 pr.	300
	24 pr.	9,100
	18 pr.	7,625
	12 pr.	9,142
	9 pr.	2,300
	6 pr.	3,880
	3 pr.	902
Carronades	- 32 pr.	29,250
	24 pr.	1,500
	18 pr.	7,000
	12 pr.	11,000
Mortars	- 10 in.	316
	8 in.	1,564
Howitzers	- 5 1/2 in.	1,000
	4 2/5 in.	500
<u>Carriages Spare</u>		
Garrison	- 18 pr.	6
	12 pr.	20
	9 pr.	12
Travelling	- 6 pr.	6
	3 pr.	6
<u>Devil Carriages</u>		
		1

QuantitiesCarts

Ball Cartridge	20
Hand	6
Trench	2
Cars	4
Waggons	23
Musquets	27,112
Cartridges, Musquet	4,000,000
Flints, Musquet	550,000
Accoutrements, Sets	6,000
Gunpowder, whole barrels	4,460 1/2
Iron shot for Grape and Case (Tons)	20
Lead for Cartridges (Tons)	20
Swords	1,100
Pistols	552
Pikes, serjeant	500
Portable Forges	16

All of the above were accompanied with small and other general stores.

(From P.A.C., C.O. 42/154, p. 31)

APPENDIX XIV

Commissary-General Robinson's Disbursements in Canada,
1813, 1814, 1815 and 1816

Extracted from the Auditors' States of the annual accounts of
Commissary General W. H. Robinson, covering the services specified:

Extraordinaries of the Army

- comprising payments for supplies of provisions, forage and fuel; stores and utensils; transport; public works; pay of the Commissariat, Engineer, Medical, Barrack, Indian and other departments; military allowances; loss of exchange of Treasury Bills; interest on Army Bills; and generally all disbursements exclusive of regimental and staff pay, advances to the Ordnance and Naval Departments as well as to the colonial treasurers on account of the civil expenditure:

1813	E	1,216,422/17/1
1814		2,388,165/11/11
1815		1,750,270/3/4
1816		561,006/8/1

Out of the preceding sums there was paid on account of transport of commissariat, ordnance, engineer, barrack, purveyor, naval and other stores; conveyance of troops, clothing and baggage; freight; team hire; pilotage; batteaux and sleigh hire; and for repairs etc. of batteaux

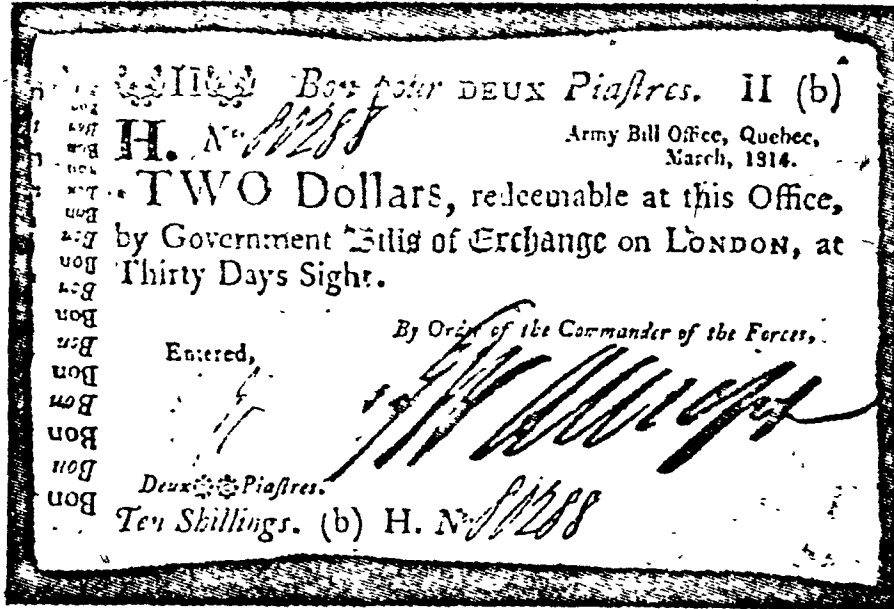
1813	E	104,634/15/6
1814		192,477/1/11
1815		341,253/6/6
1816		50,541/17/5

Treasury Chambers
24 March 1828

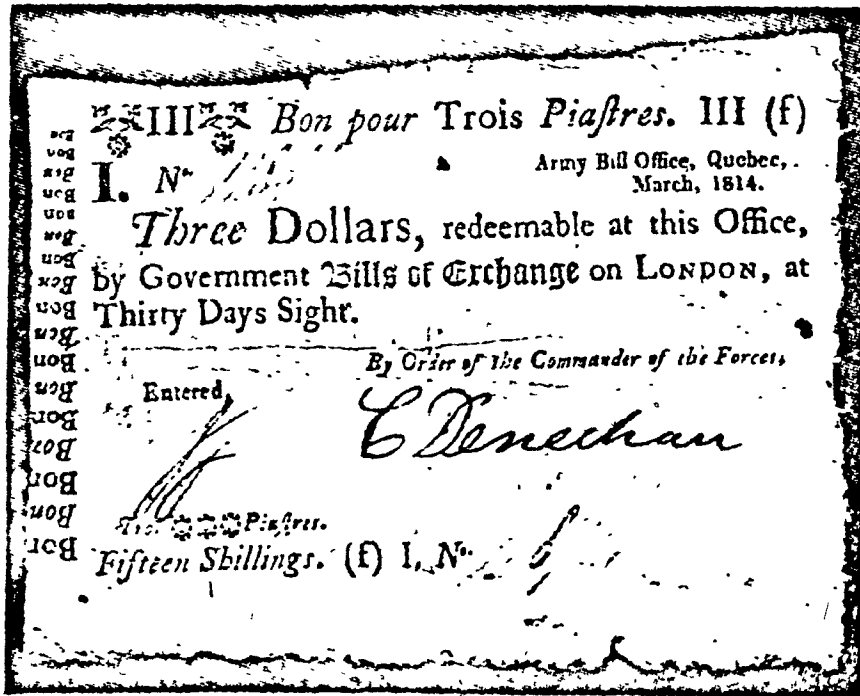
(From McGill University, Hardinge Papers)

APPENDIX XV

Army Bills



Army Bill for Two Dollars



Army Bill for Three Dollars

APPENDIX XVI

List of Transports under Orders for North AmericaTransport Office,
11 August 1813.

Vessel	Tonnage	Service	Destination	Location at present
Warrens	324	To embark troops at Cork	Quebec	On way from Portsmouth to Cork
Sir William Bensley	573		Quebec	
Herald	336	To load flour at Cork	Quebec	At Portsmouth, ready to proceed to Cork
Mary	262		Quebec	
Mentor	227	Army provisions and stores	Quebec	Sailed from Deptford laden on the 9th instant
Pacific	260	Army provisions and stores and to embark troops at Portsmouth	Quebec	Sailed from Deptford on the 10th instant
Sovereign	671	Army provisions and stores and to embark troops at Portsmouth	Quebec	Sailed from Deptford this day
Duke of Bedford	321	Army provisions and stores	Quebec	Sailed from Deptford this day
Lord Cawdar	158	Army provisions and stores	Quebec	Sailed from Deptford this day
Harvest	213		Quebec	

Vessel	Tonnage	Service	Destination	Location at present
Earl St. Vincent	868	Ordnance stores and troops	Quebec	To sail from Longreach tomorrow
Union	306	Ordnance stores	Quebec	At Woolwich loading.
John and Thomas	304	Ordnance stores	Quebec	Ordered from Deptford to Woolwich to load this day
Caroline	224	Army provisions	Quebec	Loading in the river
Ocean	480	Army provisions	Quebec	At Deptford waiting for provisions
Lydia	359	Army provisions	Quebec	Will be ready to load at Deptford tomorrow
Coventry	308	Storekeeper-General's stores	Quebec	Expected to be completed tomorrow
Numa	326	To load army provisions at Cork	Quebec	Sailed from Deptford on 9th instant for Cork to load
Astrea	290	Ordnance and Storekeeper-General's stores	Halifax	Deptford, laden and ordered to Spithead

Vessel	Tonnage	Service	Destination	Location at present
Ganges	400	Ordnance stores	Halifax	At Woolwich loading
Charlotte Ann	81	Ordnance stores etc.	Newfoundland	Sailed from Deptford, laden on the 10th instant
Eclipso	143	Army provisions	Newfoundland	Will sail from Deptford this day
Tobago	374	Army provisions	Newfoundland	Will probably be completed tomorrow
Mary and Dorothy	187	Army provisions	Newfoundland	Deptford, under orders to load
Camberwell	533	Troops and Storekeeper-General's stores	Bermuda	Deptford, loading

(From P.A.C., C.O. 42/154, p. 132)

APPENDIX XVII

Distribution of Batteaux and Durham Boats
in the Canadas

General Order, Quebec
24 April 1812
(P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 1168, 129-130)

<u>Posts</u>	<u>No. of Batteaux</u>
Quebec	30
Three Rivers	20
William Henry	20
Montreal	100
La Chine	25
Kingston	30
York	10
Niagara	12
Amherstburg	12
St. Joseph's	4
	<hr/>
Total	263
	<hr/>

General Order, Montreal
25 August 1812
Distribution in Lower Canada only
(P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 1168, pp. 243-244)

<u>Posts</u>	<u>No. of Batteaux</u>
Chambly	10
William Henry	8
Isle aux Noix	4
La Prairie	6
La Chine	25
Three Rivers	10
Montreal)	
Quebec)	unlimited - being general depots

Proposed Arrangements for 1815,
made in November 1814.
(From P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 1223, p. 40)

<u>Durham Boats</u>	<u>Station</u>	<u>Bateaux</u>
20	Isle aux Noix	60
-	William Henry	20
6	Three Rivers	20
-	Montreal and La Chine	400
4	Coteau du Lac	10
40	Fort Wellington	6
60	Kingston	100
4	York	10
-	Niagara	10
-	Chippewa	30
16	Quebec	34
<hr/>		<hr/>
150		700
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Crews were variable. On the St. Lawrence the bateaux and Durham boats carried from five to ten or more, according to the difficulties of the trip. Five were sufficient for descending the St. Lawrence, but double the number often comprised the crew in the ascent.

Calculating at the rate of a five-man crew, the bateaux listed for the Canadas in April 1812 would have needed 1,315 men to operate them. The bateaux proposed to be put into service for 1815, calculating at the same rate, needed 3,500 men and then another 750 men for the Durham boats that Robinson was hoping to obtain.

APPENDIX XVIII

Payment Rates for Corvées in Lower Canada

District of Montreal
January 1814

To each wagon or sleigh with 2 horses	3/- per league
To each common cart or sleigh	1/8 per league
For each hogshead, puncheon or pipe	1/8
For each large tierce of 336 lbs.	7d.
For each common tierce or barrel of pork	5d.
For each common tierce - liquids of 36 gallons	5d.
For each barrel of flour, etc., etc.	4d.
For each bag of one cwt.	3d.
On government carriages - man and horse	6/- per day
On government carriages - man and 2 horses	8/- per day

Cartage of Stores and Baggage

Montreal to La Chine	5/-
Cape St. Marie to La Chine	6/6
Cape St. Marie to Upper La Chine (including turnpike)	7/1
Montreal to Upper La Chine (including turnpike)	6/-
Montreal to Upper La Chine (Troops and baggage not paying turnpike)	5/-
La Chine to Montreal	3/9

An express ordering in corvées	2/6 per league for going
Conductor bringing in corvées	2/4 per league for coming
Extra conductors in charge of loaded corvées (conveyance included)	7/6 per day

(From P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 1223, p. 3)

APPENDIX XIX

Carts Required for a Detachment
of One Hundred Men

General Order, Quebec
3 August 1813

"The Circumstances of the moment making it necessary that the troops should move as lightly equipped as possible, The Commander of the Forces is pleased to direct that the portable Baggage of every Officer shall be contained in one portmanteau, and that, when Corps or Detachments are directed to March, Carts in the following proportion only, shall be supplied to them."

For every 100 Men of which the Detachment may Consist -----	Number of Carts
For the Carriage of the Light Baggage of the Officers, including Paymasters, Surgeon and Assistants, Quartermasters etc.	3
Provisions for one day	1
When ordered to be carried:	
Tents, Poles, Blankets and Intrenching Tools	2
Camp Kettles	3
Spare Ammunition	2
Total for 100 Men	11

(From P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 1168, p. 221)

APPENDIX XX

Roads in the Eastern Districts of Upper Canada

A Memorandum from John Strachan for
the use of Colonel Bruere
3 February 1813

The Undersigned as a Commissioner of Highways for the Eastern District in 1808 explored the road passing through the middle of the Scotch Settlement of Stormont and the county of Glengary, commonly called Pannoyer's road and also along the Front road along the River St. Lawrence to the Point au Bodet to determine which of the two could be made more generally useful. He was of opinion that Pannoyer's road was exceedingly convenient to a large and respectable settlement, but much less useful than the Front road, which might accommodate both Provinces. He decided therefore to expend a sum of money entrusted to him as Commissioner upon the Front road as being very convenient for the whole Colony. It was indeed suggested at the time by some very respectable Gentlemen who seemed to favour Pannoyer's road that a highway at a distance from the water might be extremely useful in the event of a war for sending supplies to the Upper parts of the Province, should the Enemy get possession of the River. But this argument had no weight because Pannoyer's leads into the Front road within three miles of the place where the line forty five strikes the St. Lawrence, that is so long as we possess both sides of the river and are in no danger, Pannoyer's road is at a great distance from it, but as soon as we come up to the place where the South Bank belongs to the Enemy, it joins the road on the river. The argument therefore does not apply. Nor does the Undersigned conceive that a back road through the Province would be of much advantage in a Military Point of view after losing the command of the river, because the Settlement is almost entirely on the Front, and an inland road environed as it must be with thick woods would expose convoys to incessant attacks without giving them an opportunity of revenge. Of the line of road, From Montreal to Kingston the worst place is in the Lower Province from the Point of the Lake to Point of Bodet. About four miles and three quarters of this space is always covered with water in some places nearly two feet deep. The water comes from the land towards the lake, and rests upon a hard bottom of sand mixed with a little clay. It is to be noted that this marshy ground is gradually drying up as the country gets cleared, Houses and farms being now far within its ancient limits.

In 1808 Mr. McGee, who was then alive and a Proprietor at Point of Bodet offered to make the road through the swamp for 750 Halifax pounds or for a reasonable toll for fourteen years. Facines well covered from the proceeds of deep ditches dug on each side with

water courses at proper distances would make an excellent road. All the necessary materials are upon the spot.

The line dividing the Provinces is about a mile South West of Point of Bodet from which to the River au Raisin, eleven miles, the road will not require much labour. From the River au Raisin to Cornwall a distance of 16 miles five are bad, but may be easily logged and covered as it is already well cut out and the remaining eleven miles will do with very little repair.

From Cornwall to Brockville a distance of 70 miles the road is very good and sixteen miles farther may be made excellent at a trifling expence. Of the remaining distance, about 35 miles, to Kingston, ten may be tolerable, but 25 require much labour, yet the soil is good for roads and if well cleared out in the first place, the sun and air will half make the road.

A military road along this communication should be as near the river as possible in order that boats may be protected with facility by the troops sent to escort them, but after passing Brockville the road diverges from the river in some places to the distance of three miles in others not above one owing to the roughness of the ground near the river. But as there is no current here in the river, which also is full of Islands part of the Escort might without inconvenience be put aboard the Boats; or indeed the whole.

(From The John Strachan Letter Book, 1812-1834, pp. 33-34).

APPENDIX XXI

Bateaux and Durham Boats

During the War of 1812 the bateau became the vital link in communications between Upper and Lower Canada, being singularly important in the movement of men, provisions and stores of all types along the St. Lawrence to Kingston. When control of Lakes Ontario and Erie passed to the American squadrons, it again fell to the bateau crews to forward what supplies they could by slowly edging their way along the shoreline of the lakes.

The name bateau denoted a variety of wooden craft, from a small skiff to a barge almost as large as the Durham boat. The typical Canadian bateau, as used on the St. Lawrence, was flat-bottomed, 30 to 40 feet long and from 5 to 8 feet wide at the centre. The sides were about 4 feet high, being nearly perpendicular, and bow and stern usually came to a sharp point about a foot higher than the rest of the boat. Construction was usually of white oak and fir with 4 or more benches laid across the boat as seats for the crew and passengers. The size of the bateau varied on other waters. On Lakes Ontario and Erie larger types were used, being 70 feet or more in length and 10 or 12 feet wide.

Equipment included a lug-sail with about 15 feet of hoist, 6 oars, 6 setting poles about 9 feet long, pointed and shod with iron, grappling irons, an anchor and some cooking utensils. The

cargo capacity of the average bateau operating on the St. Lawrence was from 3 to 4 1/2 tons, say 30 or 40 barrels of flour. Many of those on the lakes could carry as much as 100 barrels. As a troop carrier the bateau might take from 25 to 30 men.

The journey up river from Montreal to Kingston might take anywhere from 8 to 12 days or more, but was seldom accomplished in less than 10 days. The bateaux sailed well before a wind, but the poor rigging and the absence of a keel and a weather helm made sailing into the wind a difficult matter, little progress being made with sails alone. The usual rate of travel in calm weather was about 3 miles per hour but even with a good wind behind they rarely did more than 30 miles a day. For the crews, the journey up river was heavy work, demanding strenuous efforts to overcome the turbulent rapids between Lachine and Prescott. It may be readily seen why the bateau service became so unpopular with Lower Canadians called away from their farms on corvée:

The current between the Cascades and the Cedars is so very impetuous, that the boatmen are obliged to have recourse to their setting-poles, which they fix in the bed of the river; and, by the pressure of each man upon his own instrument, they propel the boat upwards with astonishing celerity. These exertions, though fatiguing in the extreme, they are often obliged to continue for several hours, without intermission; and not unfrequently, even their best endeavours in this way prove abortive. When this is the case, they make a rope fast to the bow of the boat and, leaving only the pilot on board, they plunge into the water and tow her by main strength up the foaming cataracts. This is the manner in which they perform the arduous passage, which though only 120 miles, they seldom accomplish in less than ten days. How the men who are employed in this difficult navigation exist, without ruining their constitutions, is a mystery which I am utterly unable to explain. They are compelled, almost every hour,

when actually melting with heat and fainting through fatigue, to jump into the water, frequently up to their arm-pits, and to remain in it towing the boats, until they are completely chilled. They then have recourse to the aid of ardent spirits, of which on all occasions they freely partake, and in a few minutes, are once more bathed in perspiration.¹

By the close of the 1814 navigation season it became evident to Commissary-General Robinson that the bateau transport system which had been established during the first two years of war was insufficient for the increased demands which were being made of it. This was especially due to the tremendous efforts then being made to build up naval squadrons on the inland lakes. To ease the situation, Robinson proposed shortening the bateau journey between Lachine and Kingston by obtaining the much larger Durham boats to operate between Prescott and Kingston.

The Durham boat had been introduced to the St. Lawrence in 1809 by Americans who had used it on the Mohawk. The vessel was a flat-bottomed barge with a slip keel and centre board, rounded bow and square stern, and a long rudder. The usual length was 80 to 90 feet with a beam of 9 or 10 feet. A large hatchway was in the centre of the craft, extending for half the length of the boat and aft, towards the bow and on both sides of the hatchway, was the deck. There was no railing or bulwark other than a covering board about three inches in thickness. Described as a species of sloop, it had one rather tall mast, with long boom, placed well forward on the

¹E. A. Talbot, I, pp. 84-86.

deck and at times a portable juremast might also be used aft. When adverse winds or heavy currents prevented the use of sails, the Durham boat could be poled or "set" up the river.

The crews for both the Durham boat and the bateau were variable. On the St. Lawrence both craft carried from 5 to 10 or more men, depending on the difficulties of the route. Descending the St. Lawrence 2 oarsmen on each side and a steersman were sufficient but double that number might be needed in the ascent, and by travelling in brigades, the crews were able to help each other over the difficult spots. The flat-bottomed bateau was considered to be the safer of the two craft for travel along the St. Lawrence, but the freight capacity of the Durham was about 10 times that of the average bateau, being 350 barrels or about 35 tons. In 1811, however, one traveller along the upper St. Lawrence noted that Durham boats were scarce on the Canadian side of the river.

(Based on Gullet, pp. 415-423)

APPENDIX XXII

The Movement of Troops and Supplies
along the Upper St. Lawrence

Arrangements for a bateau escort:

General Order, Montreal
22 September 1812

Captain Pentz Canadian Fencibles with a party of 1 subaltern, 2 Serjeants and 50 Rank and file to march to La Chine on Wednesday afternoon to form an Escort to a Brigade of Boats with Stores proceeding to Kingston; -

Such Soldiers as are discharged from Hospital belonging to Regiments in the Upper Province are to proceed by this opportunity. - The Major of Brigade will furnish Captain Pentz with a Return of their Names; -

The Escort to take with them 60 Rounds Ball Cartridge per Man, and are to be kept in separate Divisions in light Boats, in readiness to use their Arms, at a Moments Notice and are not to be employed in rowing. -

Lieut. Smith of the Kingston Militia having volunteered his Service, is to proceed with this Escort and to be obeyed according to his Rank.

(From P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 1168, p. 280)

Arrangements for the movement of troops
between Montreal and Kingston
(See Map No. 5):

General Order, Kingston
19 May 1813

The 1st Brigade of the Line and the 1st Demi Brigade of Light Infantry with a Car Brigade of Light Artillery to proceed immediately to Kingston in light marching Order - but such baggage as is indispensably requisite to preserve the comfort and health of the

Troops, is to be brought on in Batteaux direct to Kingston - a small baggage Guard to be allotted for that Service and His Excellency strongly urges the precaution of the Men being amply provided with necessaries, particularly shoes, as are indispensable in the Field and which cannot be procured in the Upper Province - .

This movement is to be conducted by Column of Grand Divisions of two Companies each, to follow in daily succession - and for this purpose Divisions of Batteaux are to be assembled at La Chine and at the Ferry above Coteau du lac - The troops are to disembark at the Cedars, and to March to the Ferry Six Miles above Coteau du lac, where they will embark in the Second Division of Boats and proceed towards Cornwall, until they arrive where the road becomes good - they will then land and the Batteaux are to return without delay to their respective Stations to bring on the following divisions of Troops - and each officer in charge of a Grand Division is to see that this Order is promptly executed -

The Royal Artillery will conduct their Horses by the inland communication from Coteau du lac to Cornwall, the Guns and Carriages to be sent forward by Water . . .

Camp Equipage for 1000 Men to be forwarded to Kingston from Montreal and in order that these movements may not interfere with, or retard the Transport of Marine and Ordnance Stores which are to be sent on with the utmost expedition, His Excellency is pleased to direct that the 5th Battn. of Militia furnish Crews for conducting the Divisions of Batteaux to Transport the Troops from La Chine to the Cedars and from Coteau du lac to Cornwall and further with a view to facilitate the Service His Excellency approves of a sufficient Number of Men being selected from the Militia Companies of the 1st Light Battalion to conduct the Batteaux with the baggage of the two Brigades . . .

In case of any impediment arresting the progress of the Column, the Division obliged to halt is immediately to send intelligence of their detention to the rear, to prevent the column crowding, the whole will halt till the obstacle is removed.

(From P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 1170, pp. 207-212)

APPENDIX XXIII

Logistics and Strategy

American plans for a campaign on the Niagara in 1814 were very much affected by logistical considerations. The American Secretary of War was well aware of the meager resources of Upper Canada and the following letter to General Brown clearly indicates the difficulties which had to be overcome. Armstrong points out the critical importance of water transport and the necessity of naval dominance on Lake Ontario in order to support his plans.

J. Armstrong to J. Brown
War Department, 19 June 1814
(Gruikshank, Documents relating to the
Invasion of the Niagara Peninsula,
pp. 35-37)

This despatch is forwarded by Lieut. Frazier of the 15th Regt. Infantry. It concerns the necessary instructions both as to the objects to be attained and the means of attaining them.

1st. Capt. Sinclair will go up to Detroit with a part of the Flotilla, he will there embark Lieut. Colo. Croghan and as large a number of troops as his vessels will accommodate with the necessary supplies of provisions & ammunition. He will then enter Lake Huron and proceed to Gloucester Bay where the troops will debark, attack and carry the enemy's new Establishment at Matchedash, fortify and garrison that place and open with you a communication if another part of the plan, next to be detailed, shall succeed; this effected the fleet will go on to the mouth of St. Joseph's & Mackinaw.

2nd. What remains of the Flotilla on Lake Erie will be put under orders to transport your Division to the Canada shore. The place of landing will be selected under the best information you possess. From Colonel Campbell's report & other advices, it is believed the point marked "A" in the enclosed Sketches, is best adapted to the purpose & that your

approach to Burlington Bay, which will be your first object, should be made by the route marked "C" as laid down in Faden's map. On reaching the heights of that place you will spare no pains to fortify the position in such way as effectually to cover your whole force, taking care to establish a small and interior work of increased strength, which will render the position tenable by a reduced force & which in particular will command the only road as we understand that leads from York to Fort George. Thus situated, you will find yourself in the heart of the enemy's country, in the centre of his military stations & prepared to fall upon and carry these in succession.

A Question arises here whether this Expedition should be suspended until we obtain an ascendancy on Lake Ontario and as a part of the greater plan; this Question turning on a circumstance which I shall briefly examine.

For all military operations we must begin with the belly. Our attention must therefore be first directed to the quantity of provisions on hand, to the means of transporting it and to the expedients for supply should either of these be deficient. You ought at least to be assured of one month's provisions. This you possess, but how is it to be transported? On boats to the Canada shore and afterwards by Land in wagons or on pack horses. But 5,000 men require for one month 200,000 lbs. weight of bread & meat; calculate then the load of a two-horse wagon at 1500 lbs. and that of a pack horse at 250 lbs. and your train will be enormous, difficult to sustain, & perhaps impossible to procure, but besides provision, you must carry a train of artillery, ammunition, medicines, Hospital Stores, Camp Kettles, tents, spare musquets, etc. etc. Where is such a number of wagons or pack horses to be found? In Canada, no. They also must be carried with you, which necessarily leads me to state another difficulty. I have said you may cross the lake in transport vessels but the Secretary of the Navy does not calculate that more of these will be left by Sinclair than will be competent to transport 800 men at one trip. Hence it follows that the transportation of 5,000 men will require more than *six trips*, besides what may be wanting for your Artillery, your tents, provisions, wagons, Horses, etc. Is it to be supposed that the enemy will remain ignorant of these movements across the Lake? Or that knowing them he will either mistake their object or be inattentive to the means of defeating it? We have no right to think so. They are well informed, vigilant and skilful. Taking for granted, however, that we have conquered all difficulties, arising from Land & water transportation and that we have actually got hold of Burlington

Heights, are we in a condition to avail ourselves of that position so long as the Enemy has command of Lake Ontario? Could we advance to the reduction of York or Fort George with any hope of success without the aid of a Fleet? Could we maintain ourselves at Burlington for any length of time without that aid, and, if not, ought we to hazard the approach of a retreat or the disgrace of a surrender? The conclusion from all this is that though the expedition be approved, its execution must be *suspended* till Chauncey shall have gained the command of the Lake. That accomplished there will be no hazard of interruption to our march from the Enemy nor any necessity for loading ourselves or retarding our movements by a large provision train & Burlington will be easily supplied from the 18 Mile Creek or the Genesee River, where depots have been established. Other considerations lead to the same conclusions. This course will give time to Brigdr. Genl. Porter to assemble his Corps, to General McArthur to forward the Recruits of the 17th, 19th and 28th Regts, to those of the 9th, 11th, 21st and 25th, to join their Regts, to the 1st, 22nd and 23rd Regts to reach their destination & for the Boats now at Detroit to be brought down to Buffalo. Commodore Chauncey says, "The Fleet will be ready in all the month of June," to which the Secretary adds two weeks for accidents, making it the 15th of July before they will be certainly on the Lake and fit for action with the Enemy. On the whole it will be seen that this expedition will be *contingent* and that if our Fleet on Lake Ontario be beaten or destroyed, it will *not* be *undertaken*.

To give immediate occupation to your troops and prevent them from stagnating, why not take Fort Erie & its Garrison, stated at 200 to 400 men. Land between point Abino and Erie in the night, assail the fort by land & water, push forward a Corps to seize the bridge of Chippeway and be governed by circumstances either in stopping here or going further. Boats may follow and feed you. If the Enemy concentrate his whole force on this Line, it will not exceed 1600. But Garrisons must be left to occupy Forts George and Niagara, whence the probability that he will not shew in the field, 1200, with them you should not decline a contest. The issue of a successful one on our part would be to enable you to invest Fort George & to avail yourself in the most direct way of Commodore Chauncey's aid, (should he beat Yeo) in reducing that place & Fort Niagara.

APPENDIX XXIV

Return of the Resources of the Niagara and
London Districts, Including the West
Riding of the Home District

On 21 January 1814 Lieutenant-Colonel Robert Nichol, Quartermaster-General of the Upper Canadian Militia, was summoned to Major-General Riall's Headquarters and directed to collect intelligence on the state of local resources in the Niagara and London Districts. A winter campaign against the American forces on the Detroit frontier was under consideration and Nichol was to provide the necessary information on road conditions, the possibilities for forming depots and working through the militia officers was to provide complete information on local provision and forage resources. In February, the attack was called off because of unusually mild weather, but before the end of that month Nichol had completed his returns of the nine regimental divisions of London and Niagara Districts and the west riding of Home District.

The results of Nichol's efforts provide some interesting agricultural statistics and by making a few simple calculations, the problems encountered by the Commissariat may be brought into sharper focus. Working from Nichol's figures, it may be seen that the supply of flour, wheat and rye which farmers in Lincoln County had on hand as of mid-February 1814, if eaten at a daily rate of one pound per person (the standard "Treasury" ration), would have sufficed the 12,000 civilian inhabitants of the county for just under 180 days -

or barely sufficient to cover the intervening time until the next harvest was gathered in July and August. This, however, must not be taken to mean that there was no surplus available for the Commissariat, for the returns do not include quantities already at military depots nor quantities then at the mills. The acreage figures for wheat and rye sown in the fall of 1813 are perhaps more revealing. If harvested at the yields predicted (12 and 15 bushels respectively) these crops would have provided one year's consumption of flour for the population of Lincoln County with approximately 3,180,000 rations to spare.

In Norfolk County, the supply of flour, wheat and rye at hand on local farms in February 1814 would have fed Norfolk's 3,000 inhabitants for a little over 200 days, covering the time until the next harvest with perhaps 20 days of flour, at 3,000 rations daily, to spare. The wheat and rye sown the previous September if harvested at 12 and 15 bushels respectively (yields which were certainly low for that area, yet quite possible because of the demands of militia duty) would have provided one year's consumption for the inhabitants with a surplus of about 900,000 rations.

In May 1814 Deputy Commissary-General Couche returned the Right Division's rate of consumption at Burlington and on the Niagara frontier at about 7,350 rations daily. At this rate of consumption the surplus produced in Norfolk and Lincoln counties in 1814 would have covered the Right Division's issues for about 550 days. But, in mid-August 1814, the Right Division was reported as devouring some

14,000 rations per day and at that rate the projected surplus from Lincoln and Norfolk would have lasted about 225 days - more than four months short of the year's supply necessary to sustain the Right Division until the next harvest (July-August 1815). Nor could the resources of Oxford and York make up the difference. Provisions would have to be brought in from elsewhere.

Such calculations as are possible from Nichol's returns certainly appear to refute Commodore Yeo's assertion that it was only because of the Commissariat's neglect in collecting local resources that it became necessary for him to bring provisions from Kingston to feed the Right Division. With respect to flour supplies, the truth was that there was simply not enough being produced locally to feed both the civilian population and a large number of soldiers and Indians and according to Drummond, even many of the reputedly most abundant townships "greatly disappointed our expectations."

[N.B. All calculations have been based on yields of 12 bushels per acre for wheat and 15 bushels per acre for rye and 5 bushels of wheat has been taken as the equivalent of one barrel of flour weighing 196 lb. Consumption has been calculated at a daily rate of one pound per person, the standard "Treasury" ration. This of course ignores the fact that the farmer and his family may well have consumed more than this amount and no allowance has been made for wastage or the necessity of retaining a certain proportion of the grain as seed. It has also been assumed that all of the available surplus could be collected and put at the Commissariat's disposal. Population figures for Norfolk and Lincoln are from early nineteenth century sources, but can only be considered as rough estimates. Nor can Nichol's figures be verified, though they came from very detailed returns provided by local militia officers.

All things taken into account it can only be concluded that the actual surplus available to the Commissariat was less than these rough calculations would suggest.]

Return of Resources
24 February 1814

1st Lincoln--442 cwt. of flour, 7,997 bushels wheat, 1,299 bushels rye, 1,387 bushels oats, 134 bushels corn, 38 bushels barley, 184 bushels peas, 6 fat cattle, 33 to fat, 257 oxen, 1,206 cows, 1,057 young cattle, 3,222 sheep, 1,705 hogs, 835 tons of hay, 733 horses, 254 sleighs, 105 wagons, 2,129 acres of wheat, 2 of barley, 101 of rye.

2nd Lincoln--337 cwt. flour, 7,881 bushels wheat, 301 bushels rye, 1,749 bushels oats, 180 corn, 511 peas, 11 fat cattle, 50 to fat, 403 oxen, 1,325 cows, 930 young cattle, 3,980 sheep, 1,676 hogs, 950 tons hay, 716 horses, 236 sleighs, 99 wagons, 3,228 acres wheat sown, 128 acres of rye.

3rd Lincoln--392 cwt. flour, 6,043 bushels wheat, 267 rye, 3,417 oats, 466 corn, 580 peas, 6 fat cattle, 50 to fat, 362 oxen, 1,087 cows, 894 young cattle, 3,028 sheep, 1,665 hogs, 1,073 tons hay, 598 horses, 174 sleighs, 106 wagons, 2,659 acres of wheat sown, 152 of rye.

4th Lincoln--400 cwt. flour, 6,000 bushels wheat, 350 rye, 3,000 oats, 520 corn, 280 peas, 12 fat cattle, 52 cattle to fat, 350 oxen, 1,236 cows, 1,080 young cattle, 3,205 sheep, 3,706 hogs, 975 tons hay, 500 horses, 200 sleighs, 80 wagons, 3,217 acres of wheat sown, 200 of rye.

5th Lincoln--2,000 cwt. flour, 12,700 bushels wheat, 1,637 rye, 2,455 oats, 419 corn, 15 barley, 213 peas, 1 fat animal, 13 cattle to fat, 359 oxen, 1,318 cows, 677 young cattle, 3,110 sheep, 1,155 hogs, 543 tons of hay, 605 horses, 253 sleighs, 54 pungs, 85 wagons, 18 carts, 3,594 acres of wheat sown, 310 of rye.

2d York--2,022 cwt. flour, 9,797 bushels wheat, 589 rye, 2,062 oats, 157 corn, 96 barley, 142 peas, 102 cattle to fat, 472 oxen, 982 cows, 897 young cattle, 1,969 sheep, 1,308 hogs, 409 tons hay, 467 horses, 215 sleighs, 68 wagons, 3,365 acres of wheat sown, 1 acre of barley, 130 of rye.

1st Norfolk--473 cwt. flour, 3,211 bushels wheat, 2,495 rye, 1,587 oats, 446 corn, 55 peas, 48 cattle to fat, 288 oxen, 520 cows, 475 young cattle, 1,180 sheep, 954 hogs, 249 tons hay, 265 horses, 84 sleighs, 37 pungs, 49 wagons, 20 carts, 1,257 acres of wheat sown, 551 of rye.

2nd Norfolk--407 cwt. flour, 4,093 bushels of wheat, 3,199 rye, 2,093 oats, 487 corn, 4 peas, 5 cattle to fat, 280 oxen, 651 cows, 583 young cattle, 1,472 sheep, 1,050 hogs, 208 tons of hay, 373 horses, 101 sleighs, 19 pungs, 65 wagons, 3 carts, 1,483 acres of wheat sown, 620 of rye.

Oxford--226 cwt. flour, 2,798 bushels wheat, 983 rye, 1,861 oats, 831 corn, 129 peas, 8 cattle to fat, 278 oxen, 649 cows, 623 young cattle, 1,395 sheep, 1,050 hogs, 232 tons hay, 242 horses, 41 wagons, 63 sleighs, 872 acres of wheat sown, 132 of rye.

Recapitulation--Flour, 6,699 cwt., equal to 3,828 barrels; 60,520 bushels wheat, 11,031 bushels rye, 19,611 bushels oats, 3,640 bushels corn, 149 bushels barley, 2,099 bushels peas, 36 fat cattle, 361 cattle to fat, 3,046 oxen, 8,974 cows, 7,219 young cattle, 22,561 sheep, 12,329 hogs, 5,474 tons of hay, 4,529 horses, 1,580 sleighs, 110 pungs, 698 wagons, 41 carts, 21,756 acres of wheat sown, average yield 12 bushels per acre, 3 acres of barley, 2,330 acres of rye, average yield 15 bushels per acre.

Resource Return of the 2nd Norfolk Militia - London District - Township of Woodhouse - February 1814

The following extract composed a small part of the information that went into Nichol's larger return of resources. Woodhouse was in the Long Point area, and the collection of its resources was considered extremely important for the support of the Right Division during 1814. It can be seen that while some farmers are producing a surplus beyond their family's needs, others are not, and in fact there are some who apparently have planted no grain at all. While this extract provides a concrete example of farm resources in Norfolk County, it should be remembered that this return was made after the war had been in progress for more than one and a half years. (Extract from P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 1703, p. 139)

No. of Company	Captains Inhabitants		Concession	Lot	Flour (wt.)	Bushels of					Cattle					Carriages				Acres sown			No. of ea. family	Remarks						
						Wheat	Rye	Barley	Oats	Indian corn	Pease	Fat	To fat	Working	Milch cows	Young cattle	Sheep	Hogs	Hay (tons)	Horses	Sleighs	Pungs			Waggons	Carts	Wheat	Rye	Barley	
6	W.Parks	Philip Austin	3	4	100	9	30		50	15					3	1	16	4	1	3	1		1		8	2		8	wheat not fenced	
6	W.Parks	David Marr	4	4										1														3		
6	W.Parks	Lieut. I. Austin	4	4										2			5											6		
6	W.Parks	Solomon Austin	4	4		8	20		30	5				2	2	1	10	4	1	1					2			5		
6	W.Parks	Barzilla Sampson	4	5						20				2	2		1									5		8		
6	W.Parks	John Garner	4	5										1	1		1									2		3		
3	S. Ryerse	Frederic Steinhoff	4	2			8							2	5	16	3	1	2	1			1			2		11	Marsh hay	
3	S. Ryerse	Jacob Potts	5	3		8	25		35	4				3	1	12	3	1	3				1		4	8		7	Waggon wants repairing	
3	S. Ryerse	Raymond Potts	5	3			50		40					1	1	4	2		2	1								3		
3	S. Ryerse	John Pegg	5	3					16					1												6		3	Excused from all duty	
6	W.Parks	Roger O'Brian	5	4		15	15		30	5				2					3	1			1		6	7		6		
3	S. Ryerse	Henry Misner	4	1										1		3			1									2		
6	W.Parks	Emanuel Steinhoff	6	4		16	15		10					4	2	1	10		1	2				1		10	10		5	Oxen indifferent

APPENDIX XXV

Officers of the Commissariat in Upper Canada
December 1813Kingston

Deputy Commissary-General Peter Turquand, superintending the
Commissariat in Upper Canada
Deputy-Assistant Commissary-General Clarke

Prescott

Deputy-Assistant Commissary-General J. C. Green

York

Assistant Commissary-General Dance
Deputy-Assistant Commissary-General Crookshank
(acting) Deputy-Assistant Commissary-General Stanton
(acting) Deputy-Assistant Commissary-General McGill

Burlington Heights

Assistant Commissary-General James Coffin
Deputy-Assistant Commissary-General Bisset

Deputy-Assistant Commissary-General Reynolds - disposable

Deputy-Assistants Commissary-General Robert Gilmor and Tannatt H.
Thompson will repair to Lower Canada and report themselves
to the Commissary-General.

(Enclosed in W. H. Robinson to J. C. Herries, No. 191, 15 December
1813, P.A.C., W.O. 57/14)

APPENDIX XXVI

Return of Provisions with the Right Division
16 May 1814

Dated Kingston, 6 June 1814

Burlington, etc.

4,583 persons

3,780	Barrels	of flour
133	"	of biscuit
622	"	of pork
66	"	of salt
50 $\frac{1}{2}$	Bushels	of corn
7,458	Gallons	of Rum
2,510	"	of Whisky
6,296	Pounds	of oats
263,312	"	of hay

York, etc.

1,368 rations

196	Barrels	of flour
13,440	Pounds	of biscuit
42	Barrels	of pork
25	Barrels	of salt
1,586	Gallons	of rum
89,600	Pounds	of hay
61	Head	of cattle

500 Barrels flour
purchased since -

Niagara Frontier

2,765 rations

779	Barrels	of flour
472	"	of pork
18	Bushels	of pease
460	Pounds	of rice
66 $\frac{1}{2}$	Barrels	of salt
6,407	Gallons	of rum
257,600	Pounds	of hay
130	Head	of cattle

Forwarded to the Niagara Frontier and York

1,020	Barrels	of pork
1,888	Gallons	of rum
5,570	Pounds	of rice

Flour, including the quantities at the several mills, will supply the Right Division to the 16 October next.

Pork, to 22 August.

Cattle, for 14 days, which will extend the supply of meat to 5 September next.

On 9 May there were at Burlington and surrounding mills and stores -----		<u>Flour Barrels</u>
		2,536
Crooks Smith	Mills	1,200
Grand River		1,416
Richard Hatt's		100
Fort Niagara		195
Fort George		154
Saint David's		102
Chippawa and dependencies		366
Between Niagara and Burlington		700
	Total	<u>6,769</u>

(From P.A.C., R.G. 8, C 683, pp. 262-263)

APPENDIX XXVII

Commissariat Problems at Amherstburg
1813

At Amherstburg the scarcity of local provisions and the presence of large numbers of Indians made the Commissariat's duties particularly difficult. Deputy-Assistant Commissary-General Robert Gilmor's letters concerning the situation which developed there in the summer and fall of 1813 illustrate vividly the difficulties which commissariat officers had to cope with in the Canadas. The first two letters were written while Gilmor was at Amherstburg and were sent to Deputy Commissary-General Couche who was then with Vincent's forces on the Niagara. The last letter was written at Montreal in December, 1813 and sent as a report to Commissary-General Robinson.

R. Gilmor to E. Couche
Amherstburg, 6 August 1813
(Cruikshank, Documentary History, II, pp. 317-318)

Your letters of the 26th ultimo, with two thousand pounds currency in army bills, were delivered to me by Mr. Charles Askin on the 29th.

I am extremely happy to find that I may expect liberal supplies of flour from Long Point, the more so as the two principal mills (McGregor's and Arnold's*) are not now going - the dams are broke, and I am informed it is more than probable will not be prepared and filled with water till late in the fall; thus the wheat on hand and that now cutting in this district will be of little immediate service to me for want of mills to grind it. The windmills at this season of the year do very little service.

*The former was burnt by the Indians in the skirmish of the 4th October at the Forks, the latter on the 5th October.

I have been abundantly supplied with cattle for some time past, though my issues have averaged about 17 per diem, - but should the Indians remain with us, and in addition to the quantities of meat, etc., issued by me continue their wanton and extensive depredations on cattle of all descriptions, a short period will put an end to our supplies of this article. I have now in my possession, to be submitted to Brig. Gen. Procter, accounts to near two thousand pounds for working oxen, milch cows, sheep, hogs, etc., killed by Indians, and I presume accounts to at least as much more will be given in addition thereto. Some of these cattle have been killed without any meat having been taken from them; in other instances the horns and tail seem to have been the cause of shooting down the animal - these being cut off, the carcass is left to the dogs. In addition to about 14,000 rations per day can a new country like this supply sufficient provisions for our consumption? The Commissary General cannot expect from me any particular accounts of the resources of the country under such circumstances. I can only say that for 2000 men I could easily supply provisions for six months, in conformity to general orders mentioned in your letter of the 18th ult. Since then I have been feeding about 15,000 troops, Indians, etc., from which, I presume, the Commander-in-Chief has as little idea of the provisions required for this post as others have of the difficulties to be surmounted by me and the immense labor to be performed, otherwise I can scarcely suppose that I should have been so long without more assistance. I have now given up the idea of making up my accounts till the assistants as required by me are sent. I find such difficulties in procuring flour, corn, etc., sufficient to feed such hordes of savages, in paying therefor and money to do so, finding materials for all departments of the army here, that the business of the day is more than sufficient to employ the whole of the time of myself and my small establishment. Hence my reason for applying for an officer of the department to be put over me. I find more expected of me than all my abilities and zeal can perform - my accounts getting in arrears and the miserable prospect before me of getting embarrassed beyond the possibility of extraction - of perhaps involving myself and my family in ruin from getting so involved. I was in hopes that as a number of officers of the commissariat, superior to me in rank and likely in abilities and practice, had arrived from England - others promoted in this country - that one of them might have been sent here to take charge of a district which I consider inferior to none in Canada in point of responsibility and commissariat duties. At the same time I should be far from wishing more than can be asked with propriety or granted without ruining my prospects in the department after 15 years' faithful services.

I am very happy that you are sending me a supply of oats. In addition to the 30 barrels mentioned by you I will require about 60, provided you can spare so much. I beg to be informed what quantity of that article is issued to the troops in your district. Brigadier-General Procter requires some for their horses though I cannot get him to give out a general order on that subject. I have to acknowledge your letter of the 24th ult. and beg leave to state that on the renewal thereof I could not pay the accounts of the 41st Regiment on account of the paymaster as well as the commanding officer being at the fort of the Rapids. Since their return I have been prevented from making payment for want of money, a supply of which I hope to receive on a larger scale than hitherto. The escort of dragoons with the 4,000 dollars in specie has not yet arrived.

P.S.—I sincerely hope that the transport *Mary* will soon arrive with more flour - I am really out. I have sent Mr. Reynolds and one of my clerks to Detroit to purchase the whole of the flour and corn that they can get in the Michigan territory and in the neighborhood of Sandwich. I pay \$10 per bbl. of 196 lbs. for flour and 7s 6d per bushel for corn. I understand that the schooner *Ellen* is to be sent for provisions to Long Point in a few days.

(From Niles' Weekly Register, Baltimore, Md., 15th January, 1814, Vol. V., pp. 328-329. Said to have been taken in General Procter's baggage on 5th October, 1813)

Extract

R. Gilmor to E. Couche
Amherstburg, 5 September 1813
(P.A.C., C.O. 42/151, p. 152)

Our Situation here in respect to Provisions is truly alarming, the only Flour which I can now obtain is hunted up from the Merchants and Farmers in Small Quantities;—this Measure can be only expected to afford us a temporary relief for a few days:—I hope that you have sent on another drove of Cattle, as I have reason to expect from your last letter, and that you will Continue to Send me from time to time, a further supply until we can get a Supply of Irish Pork at this place.—Our Issues, are now about 14 Head of Cattle per day, and had we no Corn would be 7000 lbs. of Flour—only 300 Bushels of Corn now remain in Store, and 40 Barrels of Flour;

—And I cannot say where more of either Species is to be had.
 —I have not now any Money, except, what I can make or borrow
 —I hope you will send some by Captain Chambers on his
 return; Specie is of great use in purchasing provisions and
 I beg that a proportion of 1 and 4 Dollar Army Bills may be
 sent to enable me to make Small Payments.

I am completely Worn out with fatigue and Anxiety, and I
 hope you will be soon able to Send me Assistance as before
 Mentioned,—I intend with the sanction of Major Genl. Procter
 to send two Batteaux from hence to Port Talbot, for Flour on
 Tuesday next:—Captain Barclay thinks that the Risk will not
 be great, and our Case is desperate.

R. Gilmor to W. H. Robinson
 Montreal, 3 December 1813
 (P.A.C., W.O. 57/14)

On my arrival at this Place from Upper Canada I consider
 it my duty to lay before you some circumstances relative to
 the Charge entrusted to me in the District of Amherstburg,
 for Some time prior to the retreat of the Right Division of
 the Army from thence—till the defeat of that Army by the
 American Forces near Moravian Village.

The prospect of a want of Provisions for a very
 considerable period before this event took place, was to me a
 matter of the Utmost concern—my Letters to Depy Comsy Genl
 Couche were replete with this Subject—Every possible step to
 Secure the whole of the Supplies which could be obtained had
 been taken—for 2 Months in the Spring, I fed the Indians
 almost exclusively on Fish—but with all the exertions which
 could be made by myself and Assistants, in addition to Agents
 employed by me, Provisions Sufficient for the Supply of the
 Troops, and Indians could not be obtained—My Issues were
 then about 14,000 Rations per diem.

My time being latterly almost entirely devoted to this most
 important object completely prevented me from making up and
 transmitting my Accounts—The few Gentlemen whom I could get
 in that Place to assist in purchasing Provisions made it
 indispensibly necessary for myself, and my (few) Assistants
 to be ever on the look out for Provisions. Not only my Zeal
 but my Personal Safety was concerned in getting Provisions
 for the Indians. I had already been threatened in an
 Official manner, by the Western Indians, with being taken to
 their Camp, and Starved, if I did not feed them more bounti-
 fully.

The American Fleet had several times been within a few Miles of Amherstburg and ours was in a State of blockade— A Depôt of Provisions was formed at Long Point but our Shipping being thus shut in our own Port I derived no advantage from it at that time. I was then reduced to a quantity of Flour, not more than Sufficient for two days issue—Under these circumstances I was induced to send 5 Batteaux under the directions of an intelligent daring and active Man, to Port Talbot for Flour—He left Amherstburg on the day before the last Sailing of our Fleet from thence—It was 3 days after this that I first experienced what I had so long foreseen and dreaded—a total want of Flour—for 4 or 5 days I had to Substitute Potatoes for Bread in my issues to the Troops—The Wheat that remained in the Country could not be made into Flour, by reason of the dry, still Weather which left the Mill Dams without Water and gave us little or no Service from the few Wind Mills—Wheat was issued to the Indians—After the melancholy disaster of the defeat of our Fleet and the Subsequent Order for a retreat was known, I was supplied with Cattle from the Farmers, who had resolved to follow our Army—On this occasion those People parted with the whole of their Working Oxen and Milch Cows—I had considered the Country before nearly drained of Beef Cattle. The day previous to our actual retreat from Amherstburg the five Batteaux, which I had sent to Port Talbot, returned, I may say through the Enemy's Victorious fleet with 131 Barrels of Flour—This was a very seasonable Supply for our retreating Army. As much Bread and Biscuit was baked at Amherstburg that day and at Sandwich the 3 days we afterwards halted there, as could possibly be done, from which the Army were supplied with their Ration of Bread, till we arrived at Dolson's on the River Thames. At this Place Ovens had been previously built, and no want of Provisions, worth mentioning, was experienced during the Retreat.

On the day of the Action I had about 170 Head of Cattle which I had sent 6 Miles Above the Moravian Village (about 9 Miles from the Battle Ground) They were in charge of a Capt of Militia, who I had employed as an Agent for purchases, he had then a sufficient number of Herds and Drivers under his Orders. On hearing of the Battle he immediately put them in Motion and had got them sufficiently advanced to have saved them had it not been for the universal panic which seemed to have seized on every person, belonging to our defeated Army, who had escaped—I was then in the rear of most of those who had fled, and on coming up with the Cattle found that two of the Drivers only remained with them, and the Cattle much Scattered in the Woods, by the Multitude of flying Indians who almost filled up the Road for a very considerable distance—I used every means to get more Drivers, and to

encourage those then with them to continue their exertions, but an alarm of a Party of the Enemy's Cavalry being very near prevented me from getting any more assistance and frightened away the two Men which to that time had remained on this duty.

I had Sometime before our retreat sent a part of my Accounts to Depy Comsy Genl Couche the remainder of my Papers were put into a Waggon with four good Horses the day before the Action, and a confidential Person sent in charge thereof—This Waggon was nearly out of danger, when by (as I suppose) the fright of the Driver on seeing the flight of the part of our Army which had escaped, it was upset and part of the contents pillaged (immediately) by our own Indians—The Person in charge saved the greatest part of my Cash Accounts—those lost were the Provision and Store Accounts, and some Cash Vouchers which were in Charge of Depy Asst Comsy Genl Reynolds—My Account Current Book, an open Pay List for Beef & Flour—Receipts for payments made to the Engineers Dept. etc.

The whole of my personal Baggage was in this Waggon and was lost.

INTRODUCTION TO THE BIBLIOGRAPHY

The most important source of material on the logistical problems encountered by the British forces during the Canadian War of 1812 is contained in records preserved at the Public Archives of Canada, at Ottawa. References to factors affecting supply and movement are scattered throughout the "C" series (Record Group 8, records of the British military and naval forces in Canada), but particular attention must be directed to the correspondence relating to the affairs of the Commissariat Department in volumes C 114 to C 120. Volumes C 114 and C 115 provide information on contracts, finance, departmental problems and organization in the Canadas during the two years immediately preceding the outbreak of war. The war years are covered in volumes C 116 to C 118 with letters touching on a full gamut of subjects from provision and transport problems to inter-departmental disputes and fiscal matters. Correspondence contained in volumes C 119 (January to June 1815) and C 120 (July to December 1815) is also of interest because of the light it sheds on the Commissariat's relations with the local inhabitants of Upper Canada, the problems of martial law and the breakdown of the corvée system during the summer of 1815.

The most detailed information on the role of the commissaries of transport in Lower Canada is found in volumes C 373 and C 374,

entitled Transports. These volumes also contain correspondence detailing the activities of the Royal Navy's Transport Office at Quebec, as well as letters on corvée problems and the bateau service. The general orders found in volumes C 1168 to C 1172 again encompass a wide range of topics and include orders relative to ration issues, procedures to be followed by the Commissariat, transport and the movement of troops. Various resource returns and orders contained in the militia records of the Claus family (C 1700 to C 1703) help to reveal the nature of agriculture in the upper province, the problem of transport and also the militia's role in ascertaining and "driving" the resources of the countryside.

Correspondence from Sir Gordon Drummond to Sir George Prevost, in volumes C 682 to C 686, forms the basis for a description of the difficulties encountered by the British Right Division in Upper Canada during 1814, but additional letters on Drummond's problems are to be found in C 118 and C 374. The letterbooks of the military secretary provide further information on the conduct of the war, and volume C 1222 (November 1813 to January 1815) contains Prevost's replies to Drummond's letters found in C 682 to C 686.

The manuscript material found in the books and boxes of the "C" series is also available on microfilm but should be supplemented by a study of certain War Office records and Colonial Office papers. Copies of these records, in so far as they relate to Canadian matters, are also available at the archives in Ottawa on microfilm or in the form of transcripts (Manuscript Group 12, "B" series).

Undoubtedly the most valuable correspondence in the War Office records consulted, is found in W.O. 57, volumes 14 and 15, which contain Commissary-General Robinson's letters to the Commissary-in-Chief in London. These letters are vital to an understanding of the problems which Robinson encountered in Canada and reveal the many problems experienced by the Commissariat in the Canadian Command. Volumes 63 and 64 of W.O. 58 contain the Commissary-in-Chief's replies to Robinson's despatches, but are of less interest as much of the material is concerned with the technical details of administrative procedure. Robinson's first set of instructions from the Treasury are to be found in W.O. 62, volume 45. Robinson's instructions, along with the "General Instructions for an Assistant Commissary-General," found in the same volume, give a very clear picture of the responsibilities and duties of the Commissariat.

Sir George Prevost's correspondence with Lord Bathurst, the Secretary for War and Colonies, during the war, is found in C.O. 42, volumes 147 to 159, and contains much material bearing on the logistical problems of 1812. Prevost's despatches deal with fiscal matters, the problems of the militia service, transport and supply, but also include lists of shipments sent to the Canadas and vessels bound for North America, while the inclusion of monthly returns of "Quebec Prices Current" show the progress of wartime inflation on market prices. Sir Gordon Drummond's correspondence with Lord Bathurst, relative to affairs in Upper Canada during the first half of 1814, prior to Drummond's departure for the Niagara, is contained in C.O. 42, volumes 355 and 356.

Manuscript Group 24 contains some of the private papers and records of individuals who served in the war. Commissary-General Robinson's letter on the Plattsburg expedition (F 21) contains information on the logistical problems encountered in mounting that operation and De Gaugreben's account of the Niagara campaign of 1814, written in May 1815, and his "Memoir on the Defence of Upper Canada" (F 23), provide some interesting reflections on the nature and difficulties of warfare along the Canadian frontier. De Gaugreben expresses an obvious dislike for General Drummond and both he and Colonel Hercules Scott, commander of the 103rd Regiment, criticize Drummond's conduct of operations in 1814 (F 15).

The Map Division of the Public Archives possesses a number of manuscript maps (as well as printed maps) depicting the Canadas during the War of 1812. Of particular help in studying Drummond's campaign on the Niagara is Lieutenant Nesfield's "Map of The Niagara District in Upper Canada" (Holmden No. 2070) drawn in November 1815.

The Hardinge Papers, kept by the Rare Book Department in McLennan Library at McGill University, Montreal, contain some materials relative to the administration of the British Army's supply services in the early nineteenth century. Included are documents on the supply of meat and bread for the army and a detailed account of the Storekeeper-General Department. Most documents and correspondence dealing specifically with Canada are of a later date than the War of 1812, but a manuscript map drawn by Assistant Quartermaster-General G. Brock, of the London and Western Districts in 1815 is invaluable.

Brock's map, on a scale of four miles to the inch, depicts the settlements, roads and mills located west of Burlington and serves to demonstrate clearly the difficulties of supply and movement encountered by large forces operating in such an area. Taken together with Nesfield's map from the Public Archives, it serves as an excellent reference for the operations of the Right Division in 1814. At present, however, neither Brock's map, nor the other documents consulted in the Hardinge Papers are catalogued, being stored in numbered boxes without reference as to contents.

William Wood's Select British Documents of the Canadian War of 1812 reproduces a good selection of some of the manuscript material to be found in the "C" series at the Public Archives, but much of the material dealing with the Commissariat is not included. Cruikshank's The Documentary History of the Campaign upon the Niagara Frontier, 1812-1814 uses both American and British correspondence but also draws on sources other than the official military correspondence and includes newspaper articles and some documents from private collections. Documents relating to the Invasion of the Niagara Peninsula by the United States Army, commanded by General Jacob Brown, in July and August, 1814 is particularly useful as it covers the 1814 campaign through the correspondence of General Brown. Cruikshank's work, however, must be approached with caution as many documents and letters are not accurately reproduced and where possible they should be checked against the originals.

The letters of Thomas Ridout, commissioned in Canada as a Deputy-Assistant Commissary-General in 1814, appear in Ten Years of Upper Canada in Peace and War, 1805-1815, edited by Matilda Edgar, and are particularly useful in providing further insight, beyond that of the official correspondence, into the activities of the Commissariat in the Canadas. The John Strachan Letter Book: 1812-1834, edited by George W. Spragge, also gives a further commentary on events and personalities of the war, though Strachan's opinions are not always borne out by evidence in the official military correspondence preserved in the Public Archives. William Dunlop's Recollections of the American War 1812-1814 presents an interesting and entertaining account of events and experiences on the Niagara in 1814 but cannot be considered as completely reliable. Events are misplaced chronologically and Dunlop's caustic remarks on his superiors are not tempered by a fair evaluation of the problems involved, though Dunlop does give a vivid picture of the tremendous effort required to maintain the British forces along the Canadian frontier. The Letters of Veritas, written by a Montreal merchant, originally appeared in the Montreal Herald in 1815, after Prevost's departure for England, and give another contemporary's opinions and commentary on the events of the war. Like Strachan and Dunlop, the opinions expressed are very critical of the Governor's conduct of the war, though often misinformed.

Descriptions of Canadian agriculture and settlement at the time of the war may be taken from the many traveller's accounts and

topographical descriptions written by contemporaries, though the information is not always accurate. Michael Smith, for example, in A Geographical View of the Province of Upper Canada and Promiscuous remarks on the Government, gives a very misleading impression of the state of that province's manufacturing capabilities in 1812 and was obviously more familiar with the western areas of the provinces, where he had lived, than with the eastern districts. Some additional commentary on the war is also to be found in such authors as Bouchette, Stuart, and of course, Smith, who was writing from the United States in 1813. Newspapers such as the Montreal Herald yield various bits of information on troop movements, the occasional letter by correspondents at the front, and list the arrival of ships at Quebec, along with their time in passage.

Among the secondary source materials, C. P. Stacey, in his article entitled "Another Look at the Battle of Lake Erie," shows clearly the effect of logistics on the outcome of operations and while good general histories of the war must inevitably touch on logistical matters, the emphasis is usually placed elsewhere and the full impact of supply and movement problems is not completely appreciated. Two older works, both by American historians, Mahan and Adams, remain excellent accounts and ones which do give consideration to the general problems of logistics and strategy. More recent histories worthy of note are Reginald Horsman's War of 1812 and J. Mackay Hitsman's The Incredible War of 1812.

Horsman has written one of the best balanced histories of the war, covering the military and naval aspects both on the Canadian frontier and elsewhere. H~~is~~man's history focuses on the British side of the struggle in Canada and takes due note of the strategic and logistical problems involved. Both he and Horsman make reference to such internal problems as finance, disaffection and the militia service, but the Commissariat itself receives only a mention. Problems such as the provision of manpower for the bateau service, of land transport and a study of Canadian agricultural resources are not dealt with, while the role of the Army Bill and the imposition of martial law are not covered in any depth.

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"Agriculture in Lower Canada, 1792-1815" are particularly useful for their information on early nineteenth century agriculture in Canada. Fernand Ouellet's Histoire Economique et Sociale du Québec 1760-1850 is also of value for its discussion of agricultural problems in Lower Canada during the war and for its evaluation of the success of the Army Bill and the attitude of Lower Canadians towards the government and the war.

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Clode's Military Forces of the Crown; their Administration and Government is a standard reference and gives further details on the Commissariat. The Organization of the British Army in the American

Revolution by Edward Curtis studies the operation of the British Army's supply services at an earlier date and is useful for the contrasts that may be drawn between the arrangements of 1775 and the improvements which had been made by 1812. American logistical problems are covered in Erna Risch's Quartermaster Support of the Army, 1775-1939, which also details the organization of the American army's supply arrangements as they existed in 1812.

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