

Extract of a Letter from Lieutenant-General Sir G. Prevost, dated Head-Quarters, Montreal, October 18, 1813.

SHORTLY after I had the honour of addressing your Lordship, I received information that the enemy were assembling in considerable force on the Montreal frontier; apparently with a view of penetrating into the lower province. The intelligence I continued to receive from different quarters, of these movements of the enemy, and of the extent of the preparations they were making, induced me to repair to this place, where I arrived on the 25th ultimo. On reaching Montreal, I learnt, that Major-General Hampton, with about five thousand regular troops of infantry, and some artillery and cavalry, had, after approaching close to the frontier line, near Odel Town, and overpowering one of our small piquets in that neighbourhood, suddenly moved with his whole force to the westward, and was encamped at a place called the Four Corners, near the Chateaugay river.

Measures had been, in the mean time, taken, by Major-General Sir Roger Sheaffe, commanding in this district, to resist the advance of the enemy, by moving the whole of the troops under his command nearer to the frontier line, and by calling out about three thousand of the sedentary militia. I thought it necessary to increase this latter force to nearly eight thousand, by embodying the whole of the sedentary militia upon the frontier, this being in addition to the six battalions of incorporated militia, amounting to five thousand men; and it is with peculiar satisfaction I have to report to your Lordship, that His Majesty's Canadian subjects have a second time answered the call, to arm in defence of their country, with a zeal and alacrity beyond all praise, and which manifests in the strongest manner their loyalty to their Sovereign, and their cheerful obedience to his commands. The force now assembled by the enemy at different points, for the purpose of invading these provinces, is greater than at any other period during the war. Major-General Harrison has, under him, at Sandusky, on the frontier of the Michigan territory, about eight thousand men, ready to avail himself of the absolute command lately obtained by their navy on Lake Erie, to advance upon Detroit and Amherstburg. Major-General Wilkinson commands at Fort George and Niagara, with a force amounting to nearly six thousand five hundred men; and Major-General Hampton with a force under his command, which by the last accounts had been considerably increased, and amounting probably to about eight thousand men, is on this frontier. I have reason to think, that the whole of the above force, amounting to twenty-six thousand men, consists of regular troops, and is exclusive of ten thousand militia, which either have or are in readiness to join them.

In consequence of my solicitation to Admiral Sir J. Warren, in June last, for a further supply of seamen for the Lake service, the crews of two sloops of war were ordered by him to be sent from Halifax to Quebec; and I have the satisfaction to acquaint your Lordship that they have arrived, and that part of them have been sent to join Captain Pring at Isle Aux Noix, for the service of Lake Champlain, and the remainder have proceeded to Lake Ontario. It cannot be too much regretted, that my letter

to Sir J. Warren upon this subject, which I dispatched in June last, in duplicate, was so long in reaching him, as not to be acted upon until more than two months afterwards; as, had this reinforcement arrived a few weeks earlier, it might have averted the melancholy fate which has attended our squadron on Lake Erie. A full confirmation of this disaster has reached me, through the medium of the American prints, which contain Commodore Perry's official account of the action, the only one which I have as yet received, or which I can expect to receive of it for a great length of time, in consequence of the dangerous situation of Captain Barclay, and of the death, wounds, or captivity of all the officers serving under him.

Under this misfortune, it is matter of great consolation to discover, even from the confession of the enemy, that the victory was at one period our own, and was only wrested from us, by the unfortunate loss of the services of Captain Barclay, and of almost every other officer of the squadron; leaving a crew without competent controul or command, totally unable to extricate themselves from the difficulties by which they were surrounded. On the 23d ultimo, the date of the last letter from Major-General Proctor, he was still at Sandwich, but he will be obliged to retire towards the head of Lake Ontario. I trust he will be enabled to make the enemy pay dearly for any attempt to press upon him, in his retreat to that position.

Commodore Sir James Yeo sailed with his squadron from Kingston, on the 19th ultimo, conveying transports with stores, provisions, ordnance, &c., for the centre division of the army, and arrived with them at the head of the lake, on the 25th. The enemy's fleet, on the 26th, under Commodore Chauncey, made their appearance, when Sir James Yeo endeavoured to bring them to a general action; but having the advantage of the wind, they were enabled to choose their own distance, and to prevent our ships from closing with them; the consequence was, that about fifteen minutes after the engagement began, the *White* lost her main and mizen topmasts, which rendered her perfectly unmanageable on a wind, that, after continuing the action for upwards of three hours, Sir James Yeo was obliged to put away before the severe gale then blowing, and get to anchor off Burlington Heights, whither the enemy, notwithstanding the advantage they had thus gained, did not think fit to follow him. The fore-topmast of the *Royal George* went over as the squadron anchored, but none of the other vessels were in any respect materially injured; and our loss in men must have been trifling, as Sir James, in his letter to me, does not mention it. The enemy's squadron appeared to have suffered in their sails and rigging, although they kept on the Lake, in the two following days, whilst our fleet was refitting.

I have just learned that Commodore Chauncey sailed on the 1st instant from Niagara, having under convoy a flotilla of small craft and batteaux, filled with a proportion of the regular regiments from Fort George, where they have been relieved by militia, the whole being evidently destined for Sackett's Harbour. Early on the following day, Sir James Yeo was apprised of this movement, and his ships being refitted, our squadron immediately