

both of which would afford great facilities for the disembarkation of hostile force, if unopposed.

As, for the reasons stated in paragraph 115, Your Commissioners do not consider that the navy will at present be available for the defence of any of the ports in Lake Huron, it becomes necessary that works be constructed to prevent a landing, and to deny the use of the harbour to the enemy; they do not, however, recommend the construction of any permanent or extensive works at this point; but, in the event of hostilities, the ground, which offers great facilities for defence, should be occupied by earthen batteries on the sites shown on the accompanying plan—No. 4.

Works to be thrown up in time of war.

These sites should be acquired by the Government without loss of time.

Land to be secured at once.

Your Commissioners do not think it probable that any landing would be made to the north of Goderich, unless it be at Sydenham, as the country there is but sparsely settled—the roads indifferent, and so long a period would elapse before the enemy could occupy any decisive point, that ample time would be given to organise the means of resistance.

From Sydenham one good road leads to Guelph, and in case of war, this point should be protected by earthworks, for the construction of which the ground is favourable.

Sydenham.
Batteries to be thrown up in event of war.

Port Bayfield, about twelve miles south of Goderich, is not capable, in its present state, of affording shelter to vessels; but the beach is favourable for disembarking a hostile force, and two good roads lead from it to the interior; one by Goderich, the other crossing the Goderich and Guelph road at Seaforth. Your Commissioners do not recommend any defensive works here, but it should be carefully watched, as a small force landed at this point might easily cut off the railway communication between Goderich and London.

Port Bayfield.
To be watched.

22. The importance of Sarnia consists not so much in its offering facilities for the disembarkation of a hostile force on the shore of the lake, or from the St. Clair river, as in offering a site for works to close the navigation of that river, and so to cut off the communication between the Western Lakes and Lake Erie, which in time of war would be an object of primary importance.

Sarnia.
Important point.
Plan No. 5.

A work at Point Edward would cover the extremity of the Grand Trunk Railway, and also indirectly that of the Great Western, the terminus of which is on the river bank, about a mile and a half below Point Edward. This point is vulnerable, as an invading force landing here, with the object of attacking London, would turn the works at Chatham.

The breadth of the river here is about 800 feet; either shore is therefore under point blank range of field artillery from the opposite bank.

It is to be presumed that the Government of the United States is fully alive to the great importance to be attached to the navigation of the St. Clair River, and that after a declaration of war, they would in all probability attempt to seize upon Point Edward, in order to ensure this advantage, and also that they would oppose the construction of works at that point, even if it should be occupied by a force sufficient to prevent their seizing it. Earthworks, moreover, could neither be thrown up or maintained, if opposed by heavy rifled ordnance, at so short a range.

Your Commissioners, therefore, strongly recommend the erection, with as little delay as possible, of a regular casemated work, to mount twenty guns, and with peace accommodation for 500 men.

Permanent work on Point Edward for 20 guns, and accommodation for 500 men recommended.

There is a military reserve of land at this point, which would be sufficient for the work contemplated.

The United States, it must be expected, would construct a similar work, but that would only have the effect of closing the channel to both parties. At present they have no work there, Fort Gratiot having been removed.