

lakes, that their portion of the trade of the Upper Country would centre chiefly in New York and that this might also be found the most convenient channel of communication for them. To this account of the importance of the communication I am speaking of in respect to the trade with the Indian countries and supplies of the posts must be added the necessary intercourse of the settlers themselves on these lakes with the lower country. But the degree of consequence in which the passage between Lakes Erie and Ontario may be regarded should not perhaps be confined to what merely relates to the convenience of the trade and settlements; something is due to the consideration of it in a military view, in which, besides their convenience, the protection and safety may also be materially affected as well as that of the frontier in general. And in this respect I conceive it must be looked upon as a pass of very considerable importance, and by which we may hereafter be open to invasion unless it is guarded against with every necessary precaution. It is true the present state of the country does not seem to leave room for any very serious apprehensions of being immediately exposed to it; at least a force could not suddenly be collected to act against us by surprise, but in making arrangements for forming any durable system of security the future must be looked to. At present Great Britain possesses all the navigation of the lakes and their communications with the posts thereon, and there are few settlers on the shores but what are British subjects, but should a boundary be run along the middle of these waters, what would be thus separated from the British territory and which is at present scarce at all inhabited, would soon be filled with people whose government and interests might have views inimical to us, and in the full establishment of their country, they must in this quarter have the superior advantages on their side as they will in general possess better harbours, a better soil and climate, and a more compact territory uniting their old and new settlements together. These are some of the circumstances unfavorable to us which would attend the separation of territory by a boundary which should be run in the manner already described. By this