

natural daughter of Sir William Johnson, which gave him a powerful family influence. He was considered an experienced and capable pilot and sailing-master. His appointment to succeed to the command was approved without question. Several of the subordinate officers were confidentially reported as inefficient and totally unfit for their duties.

Four vessels were in commission at the opening of navigation in the spring of 1812. One of these, the *Duke of Kent*, was so rotten as to be unfit for repair, and was only used as quarters at Kingston for seamen during the winter. The *Royal George* was quite new and considerably larger than any other vessel then afloat on the lakes, but her great draught of water was regarded as a serious defect for general service. Her armament was formidable consisting of twenty thirty-two pounder carronades. The brig, *Earl of Moira*, needed much repair and it had been proposed to lengthen her for the purpose of increasing her armament but this was eventually effected by respacing her ports so as to mount an additional gun on each broadside. She was entirely armed with eighteen pounder carronades. The schooner, *Duke of Gloucester*, had been considered the most useful vessel on the lake in time of peace, but was condemned as beyond repair. The construction of a schooner at York to replace her had just been authorized. It was proposed to arm her with ten twelve pounder carronades.

The removal of the dockyard and naval depot from Kingston to York had also been practically decided upon as a measure of safety and expedience. The main objections to its retention at Kingston were forcibly stated by Captain Alexander Gray, lately appointed an Assistant Quartermaster General.

"The impolicy of keeping the greater part of our means of defence for the Upper Province at a frontier post as defenceless and exposed as Kingston must be obvious. Here we have not only our marine establishment, (which entails the necessity of keeping the ordnance, ammunition, and stores of various sorts for the equipment of the vessels) but there is likewise the dockyard and depot of arms for the service of the militia, &c., and all within a day's march of a neighbour who would not let so favourable an opportunity of striking a blow escape him, should war be the result. A loss of this nature at the commencement of the war would be irretrievable and at once decide the fate of the province as the communication with the Lower Province would in all probability be cut off, so that we would have no opportunity of replacing the military stores, if we even possessed the means. And the destruction of shipping would leave the whole of our frontier bordering on Lake Ontario totally defenceless. At present the garrison of Kingston does not exceed 100 men of the Veteran Battalion