

The main defence of this island, and of the communication by the Saint Lawrence with Quebec, will depend further upon the proper employment of armed steam vessels, for the protection and refuge of which, some of the proposed works are intended.

But the triangle adverted to should be strengthened and strongly held, as not only tending to retard the enemy's attack against Montreal, but as affording an opportunity to troops of superior quality to his, to profit by their success in the field.

7. The attention of the Commanding Royal Engineer has been called to the proposed system of defence, which is no otherwise new, than that it will be more strongly and actively defensive on the frontier than those formerly proposed.

It has been observed to him, that the barracks lately erected for one battalion at St. John's afford shelter, but not defence; that the barracks at Chambly, La Prairie, are equally defenceless, and that during those periods of the year when the passage of the St. Lawrence is interrupted, the troops stationed on the southern bank must be left to themselves, in a position that they cannot defend long against a superior force, and from which they cannot easily retreat to Montreal; whilst the enemy, having established themselves in this triangle, can afterwards proceed against Montreal at their own convenience.

With the object of strengthening this frontier, and of enabling us to support or withdraw the troops from it, whilst the St. Lawrence is open, and of defending themselves when unsupported, the Commanding Engineer has been requested to prepare plans and estimates, with due regard to economy, for works at the following points:—

1. Some small works in the Island of Montreal itself, and on points connected with its immediate defence, aided by steam vessels.

2. At St. John's, on the Richelieu River, where there is a bridge, which is the more important to us, as the enemy from Plattsburg and Lake Champlain can, after mastering or turning the small fort at the Isle aux Noix, advance by either bank of the Richelieu.

At St. John's, also, is the terminus of the railroad from La Prairie, at which place all goods and passengers from Quebec, Montreal, and the St. Lawrence, generally, intended for the United States, are landed, and sent by railroad to St. John's, and there transhipped for Lake Champlain.

By this railroad troops could be readily moved from Montreal and La Prairie for the support of the St. John's and defence of the country in front of the railroad, which may be thus disputed, and the fall of the Isle aux Noix retarded.

St. John's is therefore a place of the utmost importance to us to hold strongly. There is a village on the opposite bank of the Richelieu, having stone buildings, that, on emergency, can be easily converted into a tête-de-pont, enabling us to act on either bank of the river according to circumstances.

St. John's will be supported from Chambly, also, and small well-armed steam-boats should assist in the defence of the Richelieu, as well as the St. Lawrence.

The point of next, if not of equal, consequence to us, is the mouth of the Chateaugay River, where a work, as a strong tête-de-pont on the St. Lawrence, should be built; but it is thought a better position for such a work than that pointed out by Sir J. C. Smythe can be selected and erected at less expense.

It is supposed that with St. John's well-protected on one flank, and Chateaugay on the other, troops may safely contest with an enemy the possession of this triangle.

It is proposed, also, to strengthen the post at Sorel on the Richelieu; there is a harbour at this place for steam-vessels, and the position of Sorel is one of importance in other respects.

Small works are also proposed at the Bout de l'Isle on the eastern extremity of the Island of Montreal, with the same object of protecting craft on the St. Lawrence, and one at the cascades on that river for the same purpose.

The communication between the Upper and Lower Provinces will thus be protected, if not absolutely secured.

8. That something promising to be effectual should be done for this object, cannot be doubted.