

Harbour on parole, told him that Chauncey had openly boasted of his power to do this.¹

Gray then boldly proposed an attack upon Sackett's Harbour while the lake was frozen. As far as he could learn no sufficient precautions had been taken for its defence and the garrison did not exceed a thousand militia, wretchedly armed, sickly and discontented, in addition to a single company of regular artillery, the seamen, and shipwrights employed in the navy yard. The length of march from Kingston was forty-five miles. At Gravelly Point, fourteen miles away, the enemy had established an advanced post of two hundred militia in a log blockhouse which must first be taken. Thence for the rest of the way the road led through dense woods only broken occasionally by small clearings and isolated settlements.

"The force requisite for this service," he said, "need not be very great. I should imagine one good regiment, exclusive of what may be collected here would be sufficient. If your Excellency approves of the suggestion I have taken the liberty of submitting, the preparation may be made below and the men destined for this service provided with snowshoes and trained in the use of them. I am aware that this enterprise is not without risk; there is, however, every prospect of success as this post is very distant from succour. I believe Albany is the nearest point from whence they could be reinforced with effect, which is as far distant from Sackett's Harbour as Montreal is from hence. If the troops from the Lower Province are put in motion about the latter end of January they should reach this in good season for making the attack. They should not be more than ten days in reaching this in light marching order.

"They need not be above a month absent from Montreal. Either the King's Regiment (with its flank companies) or the flank battalion would be sufficient for this purpose. The principal thing to be apprehended would be the intelligence of our movements reaching the enemy. But if the enterprise is conducted with despatch, the blow would be struck before he could avail himself of any information he might receive. We would require three or four pieces of artillery on sleighs to destroy any blockhouse or temporary works he may in the meantime run up."

After his arrival at York he renewed this proposal.

"The more I reflect upon that subject the more I see grounds for hope as well as fear. What I apprehend is the probability of the enemy's strengthening his post by temporary means which he has so much at his command, such as abatis and barricades of wood of which

¹ Gray to Prevost, Kingston, Dec. 3; Gray to Prevost, York, Dec. 11.

² Gray to Prevost, Kingston, Dec. 3.