

"It will become absolutely necessary," Chauncey wrote, "to increase our naval force upon this lake, so as to be ready to meet the enemy upon equal terms in the spring. I have positive information from Kingston, from a person who left there Sunday last, that the enemy have two vessels with all their ribs up and in a state for planking. One of these vessels is said to be 150 feet keel; the other about 123. They have the materials for a third in a state of preparation. Situated as our army is at present they cannot prevent the enemy from sending from Montreal to Kingston all the ordnance and stores that will be required to fit these vessels for service and no doubt they will profit by the opportunity."¹

Yeo took advantage of Chauncey's departure from his station off Wolfe Island to send all his gunboats under Captain Mulcaster, escorting a division of bateaux with a body of picked troops from Kingston, in pursuit of the American flotilla descending the St. Lawrence. These gunboats rendered effective service by menacing and harassing the rear guard of the expedition. Two American schooners were scuttled and abandoned by their crews to avoid capture. Parties of troops were landed at Ogdensburg and Hamilton who brought off two heavy guns and quantities of provisions and stores left behind at those places. During the action at Chrysler's Farm the gunboats protected and supported the right flank of Colonel Morrison's force with their fire. Mulcaster afterwards descended the river to Coteau du Lac and opened communication with the division of gunboats stationed in Lake St. Francis. He continued to observe the American position on Salmon River until winter set in.

The construction of two frigates and several gunboats at Kingston was carried on with great activity by Yeo and O'Connor during the two last months of the year. Early in December Yeo despatched Scott, his first lieutenant, by the toilsome overland route to Halifax to inform Sir John Warren of his exact situation.

"The two new ships are in a very forward state," Yeo said, "and I am almost certain of having a force in the spring, sufficiently strong to meet the enemy with effect and decision. I need not point out to you, Sir, the great advantages that are to be hoped for by this squadron being on the lake three weeks or a month before the enemy. This, I think, is certain if I receive a reinforcement of seamen by the beginning of April and not otherwise, and I know of no other possible means of obtaining them but by their marching to Quebec. Lieut. Scott is well qualified to conduct, having travelled that road before.

¹Chauncey to the Secretary of the Navy, Nov. 25.