

way. His remarks on the future defence of Canada were embodied in a letter to Lord Melville, written soon after.

"The experience of two years' active service," he said, "has served to convince me that tho' much has been done by the mutual exertions of both services, we also owe as much if not more to the perverse stupidity of the enemy; the impolicy of their plans; the disunion of their commanders, and lastly between them and their *Minister of War*. The fatal and fortunate for us *mistaken confidence* they placed in the *attachment of the Canadians* to their cause was another delusion highly favorable to *ours*, which they are now convinced of, and there is no doubt but in the event of another war with this country, they will rectify their past errors by their past experience. This will be effected by totally reversing their late plans of operations and giving a new and different turn to their mode of attack, which will consequently lead to a change of ours, for what might have been applicable perhaps to the nature of the service *last war* may never be so again.

"The preservation of Canada by means of a naval force on the lakes will, in my opinion, be an endless, if not a futile undertaking. On Lake Erie the only place for building ships of war is Amherstburg, which is situated at the very end of that lake, consequently no provisions, stores, and other supplies can be conveyed there but by water and to secure which we must of course possess the naval ascendancy on that lake, and that even must depend on the naval superiority of Lake Ontario, without which nothing can be conveyed to the upper lake. But even allowing that we possess these two-fold advantages, our operations would be crippled and rendered nugatory from the insufficiency of transport on the River St. Lawrence, the navigation of which being so much exposed to the fire of the enemy's riflemen from its banks that our bateaux would be exposed to perpetual annoyance in every communication with us. Independent of this, should the enemy cross over, (which they easily might do), and take any strong position between Montreal and Kingston, our fleet and army in the upper province would be perfectly useless, cut off from their supplies and liable to capture or defeat, and this is the plan which I have no doubt of their adopting upon any future rupture with this country. Much has been said of the advantages to be derived from the taking of Sackett's Harbor. Could the place when taken be rendered tenable, I will not dispute it, but that's impossible. The many difficulties our forces would have to oppose in the acquisition of this *temporary* benefit would be more than it is worth and the injury we should do them would only stimulate them to greater exertions and the improvement of the many advantages they possess and must possess as things stand, over us. Such are their facilities that I can assure Your Lordship, they more than half finished two ships of 120 guns each in thirty days. When I was at Sackett's Harbor on my way to New York, they had the guns, anchors, &c., for three first rates, and I found an excellent water communication all the way, except from Utica to Sackett's, a distance of ninety miles, and a good winter road. It therefore appears to me that to maintain Upper Canada, a very large military and naval establishment must be kept up, as a small force being there would only subject the poor defenceless inhabitants to the miseries of a predatory warfare."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Yeo to Lord Melville, Brompton, near Chatham, May 30, 1815.