

to neglect, but to the natural accidents attending so long and intricate a combination of land and water carriage. Fifty team of oxen, which had been collected in the country through which I had marched, were added to assist the transport; but these resources together were found far inadequate to the purposes of feeding the army, and forming a magazine at the same time. Exceeding heavy rains augmented the impediments. It was often necessary to employ ten or twelve oxen upon a single bateau, and after the utmost exertions for the fifteen days above stated, there were not above four days provision before hand, nor above ten bateaux in the river.

Intelligence had reached me that Lieutenant Colonel St. Leger was before Fort Stanwix, which was defended. The main army of the enemy opposed to me was at Stillwater, a place between Saratoga and the mouth of the Mohawk.

A rapid movement forward appeared to be of the utmost consequence at this period. The enemy could not have proceeded up the Mohawk without putting themselves between two fires, in case Colonel St. Leger should have succeeded, and at best being cut off by my army from Albany. They must either therefore have stood an action, have fallen back towards Albany, or have passed the Hudson's River, in order to secure a retreat to New England, higher up. Which ever of these measures they had taken, so that the King's army had been enabled to advance, Colonel St. Leger's operations would have been assisted, a junction with him probably secured, and the whole country of the Mohawk opened. To maintain the communication with Fort George during such a movement, to as to be supplied by daily degrees at a distance, continually increasing, was an obvious impossibility. The army was much too weak to have afforded a chain of posts. Escorts for every separate transport would have been a still greater drain; nor could any have been made so strong as to force their way through such positions as the enemy might take in one night's march from the White Creek, where they had a numerous militia. Had the enemy remained supine, through fear or want of comprehending so palpable an advantage, the physical impossibility of being supplied by degrees from Fort George was still in force, because a new necessity of land carriage for nine miles arises at Stillwater; and in the proportion that carriages had been brought forward to that place, the transport must have ceased behind.

The alternative therefore was short, either to relinquish the favourable opportunity of advancing upon the enemy, or to attempt other resources of supply.

It was well known that the enemy's supplies in live cattle, from a large tract of country, passed by the route of Manchester, Arlington, and other parts of the Hampshire Grants, to Bennington, in order to be occasionally conveyed from thence to the main army. A large deposit of corn and of wheel carriages was also formed at the same place, and the usual guard was militia, though it varied in numbers from day to day. A scheme was formed to surprise Bennington. The possession of the cattle and carriages would certainly have enabled the army to leave their distant magazines, and to have acted with energy and dispatch: success would also have answered many secondary purposes.

Lieut. Col. Baume, an officer well qualified for the undertaking, was fixed upon to command. He had under him 200 dismounted dragoons of the regiment of Riedesel, Captain Fraser's marksmen, which were the only British, all the Canadian volunteers, a party of the Provincials who perfectly knew the country, 100 Indians, and two light pieces of cannon; the whole detachment amounted to about 500 men. The instructions were positive to keep the regular corps posted while the light troops felt their