

always laid up at that place. This business appears to me of the first importance as it would not only be a great step towards the reduction of Niagara, if Congress should attempt in the next campaign to get possession of that very important pass, and which if in our hands would have a variety of such obvious good consequences that I need not mention them ; but it would also be necessary in order to secure a retreat that way which, if a retreat is necessary, I would rather wish than by the way of Champlain, if St. John's should hold out so long as that the enemy might send forces into Canada from New York or elsewhere. It may be asked why I should wish a retreat by Ontario and how it could be effected ? To the first I answer, because measures may be taken to reinforce the army at their arrival at Oswego by troops from Albany, thence to proceed to the reduction of Niagara, if Congress thought proper ; if not they might return by the way of Fort Schuyler. To the second, that all the batteaux in the St. Lawrence in the vicinity of Montreal might be collected and these would probably be sufficient to convey all the troops, if not, an additional number might very soon be constructed ; and for that and other business one hundred carpenters should be sent with the army into Canada. Nor should the commanding officer neglect, when at Montreal, to take hostages from the Caughnawaga Cannassederaga Indians (who will be in his power) for their peaceable behaviour, and those should be sent to these parts without delay. If St. John's should be reduced, I think it is pretty certain that a body of troops appearing before Ticonderoga, the garrison would surrender should they not abandon it this fall or on seeing our preparations for going into Canada. It would therefore be necessary to collect a body of troops not only for that purpose if necessary, but if Ticonderoga should be abandoned to be sent into Canada to reinforce the army there in such a manner as that the country might be kept and, if possible, the siege of Quebec undertaken. For the convey-