

of agricultural and mineral freight, will be brought 365 miles nearer to the city of Montreal, than they now are by the Lake and Erie canal to tide water on the Hudson.

Through her Canals, already constructed, the British Government can pass gun-boats, of the most efficient size now in use, from Montreal to Kingston in twenty four hours, and to Lake Erie in less than forty-eight hours. She has, moreover, established and maintains, in connection with these Canals, large naval depots at Kingston, on Lake Ontario; at Malden, on Lake Erie, and at Penatanguishene, on the Georgian Bay; thus keeping in constant preparation for efficient naval operations on all the great Lakes. She is, in fact, about as well prepared for offensive war on the Lakes as she could have been if the treaty of 1817 had limited the naval force of the United States, as it now does, and left the British Government at liberty to build and fit out vessels of war as she pleased in all her Lake ports.

When, in 1861, in consequence of the seizure of the rebel leaders, Mason and Slidell, on the British steamer Trent, war between the two nations seemed almost inevitable, it was claimed extensively in the British press, that a large force of gun-boats was in readiness at Montreal to pounce upon our unprotected Lake Frontier and its immense commercial marine, at the very commencement of hostilities. The exposed condition of the Frontier seemed to be appreciated by our own Government, which notified the Governors of States, bordering on the Lakes, to be prepared to meet the threatened danger.

It is now a matter of little moment, whether these armed vessels were really at Montreal, in readiness for the expected onslaught, or not. The fact that they can be thus concentrated by the English Government on our border, and suddenly thrown upon our undefended Frontier, is patent to all, and demands the immediate action of our Government in the adoption of measures which will give reasonable security to the great national interests thus exposed and undefended.