

young men belonging to "the best class of settlers." By the recent Militia Act, they were required to arm and clothe themselves, and as many of them had far to travel, Brock begged that they should at least receive an allowance for rations.

The Governor General suggested that the Government of the United States entertained hopes that something might happen to provoke a quarrel between its soldiers and the British troops on that frontier, and desired him to take every precaution to prevent any such pretext for hostilities.

Early in May, Brock made a rapid tour of inspection along the Niagara, thence to the Mohawk village on the Grand river, returning to York by way of Ancaster. He reported that the people generally seemed well disposed and that the flank companies had mustered in full strength.

### BEGINNING OF HOSTILITIES.

By the 17th of June six hundred American militia were stationed along the river, and a complaint was made by three reputable inhabitants of Fort Erie that their sentries were in the habit of wantonly firing across the stream. On the 25th of the same month this period of suspense was terminated by the arrival of a special messenger employed by Mr. Astor and other American citizens interested in the Northwest fur trade, to convey the earliest possible information of war to Lieut. Colonel Thomas Clark, of Queenston, who immediately reported his intelligence to the commandant of Fort Erie. The messenger, one Vosburg, of Albany, had travelled with relays of horses at such speed that he outrode the official courier bearing despatches to Fort Niagara by fully twenty-four hours. On his return he was arrested at Canandaigua, and held to bail together with some of his employers, but it does not appear that they were ever brought to trial.

Lieut. Gansevoort and a sergeant in the United States Artillery, who happened to be on the Canadian side were made prisoners, and the ferry boats plying across the river at Queenston and Fort Erie were seized by the British troops at those places. The people of Buffalo received their first intimation of the declaration of war by witnessing the capture of a merchant schooner off the harbor by boats from Fort Erie.

The flank companies of militia marched immediately to the frontier, and were distributed along the river in taverns and farm houses. On the second day, General Brock arrived from York, with the intention of making an attack on Fort Niagara. He had then at his disposal, 400 of the 41st Regiment, and nearly 800 militia. Success was all but certain, as the garrison was weak and inefficient. His