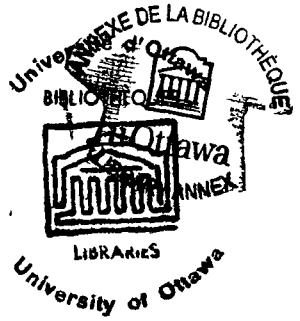
1915/1

FRENCH AND BRITISH STRATEGY IN THE LAKE ONTARIO THEATRE OF OPERATIONS, 1754-1760

by Malcolm MacLeod

Thesis presented to the School of Graduate Studies of the University of Ottawa as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy



Grand Lake, Nova Scotia, 1973

© Malcolm MacLeod, Ottawa, Canada, 1974

UMI Number: DC53626

INFORMATION TO USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleed-through, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.
In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

UMI®

UMI Microform DC53626
Copyright 2011 by ProQuest LLC
All rights reserved. This microform edition is protected against unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code.

ProQuest LLC
789 East Eisenhower Parkway
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis was prepared under the helpful and encouraging supervision of Professor Marcel Trudel, of the Department of History of the University of Ottawa.

The writer is indebted to Alex Balisch, Bill Kearns, Peter MacKay, Ralph Pastore and Eric Ruff, each of whom made useful suggestions after reading various chapters in manuscript. The financial assistance of a Canada Council Doctoral Fellowship is gratefully recognized.

CURRICULUM STUDIORUM

Malcolm MacLeod was born October 10, 1936, in Lunenburg, Nova Scotia, and grew up in Halifax. He received the Bachelor of Arts degree from Dalhousie University in 1958, and the Masters of Arts degree in History from the University of Toronto in 1961. He was Assistant Professor in the Department of History, Memorial University of Newfoundland, St. John's, in 1968-1970, and is presently Associate Professor of History in the Nova Scotia Teachers College, Truro, Nova Scotia.

ABSTRACT

French and British headquarters shared many of the same ideas about strategy, although differences in their situations led to some differing applications of those ideas. The geographical features of the Lake Ontario theatre of operations -- especially the rapids in the upper Saint Lawrence River -- exerted a strong influence upon plans for that region. For security and possession both sides relied mainly upon fortified positions in carefully selected positions. Naval forces on Lake Ontario ought to have been important determinants of power, but were not. The two commands, competitive bidders for alliance with Indian nations, in wartime particularly sought the services of Indian troops for purposes of intelligence and morale. Supplies of provisions, trade goods and munitions were very important. They were affected by the size of colonial establishments in North America and by the security of their sea-links with a Mother-country in Europe. The same factors, plus certain tendencies towards wastage, controlled the availability of that most essential ingredient of all strategies: manpower.

The 1758 campaign in the Lake Ontario area illustrates how these main considerations of power and ability blended with accepted strategical principles to produce military plans, and how intertwined and concrete the various

ABSTRACT

factors of power were. The strategy of the war was not exciting. It was more an administrative than an intellectual matter. Greater Anglo-American resources in manpower and materiel overcame French advantages in every other aspect of strength and strategy in the Lake Ontario theatre.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter		page
	Acknowledgements	ii
	Curriculum studiorum	iii
	Abstract	iv
	List of illustrations	vii
	List of abbreviations	viii
	Introduction	ix
I.-	Principles of strategy	1
II.-	Geography	71
III.-	Fortified positions	176
IV.-	Naval power on Lake Ontario	249
V.-	Indian alliances	298
VI.-	Materiel	363
VII.-	Manpower	440
VIII.-	Sample, summary, conclusions	513
	Bibliography	547
	Appendices	568

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

		following page
I.-	The Lake Ontario theatre of operations	xiii
II.-	Diagram showing the territory traversed by Lt.-Col. Bradstreet's force in his successful attack upon Fort Frontenac in the summer of 1758	71
III.-	Map of the Albany to Oswego route, about 1756	73
IV.-	Saint Lawrence River from Lake Ontario to Montreal island, 1760	91
V.-	Plan of the fortifications of Montreal	178
VI.-	A View of Fort La Galet, Indian Castle, . . . on the River St. Lawrence, . . . taken by Ct Lt Davies on the spot	184
VII.-	Plan du Fort . . . à Katarakouy (Fort Frontenac)	192
VIII.-	Plan of Fort Niagara	201
IX.-	Plan of river and forts of Oswego	212
X.-	Old Fort Johnson in 1753	223
XI.-	The Technographical Plan of Schenectady with a Design to Fortifie it	225
XII.-	Carte Du Lac ontario	276

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviations are used in the notes:

AB	Abercromby papers, Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery, San Marino, California, U.S.A.
BJ	Bougainville Journal. Edward P. Hamilton, Adventure in the wilderness, the American journals of Louis Antoine de Bougainville, Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 1964.
Casgrain	H.-R. Casgrain, Collection des manuscrits du maréchal de Lévis, 12 volumes, Quebec, Demers, 1889-1895.
CHAR	Canadian Historical Association Reports
CHR	Canadian Historical Review
JP	The papers of Sir William Johnson, 14 volumes, Albany, The University of the State of New York, 1921-1965.
LO	Loudoun papers, Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery, San Marino, California, U.S.A.
NYCD	New York Colonial documents. E. B. O'Callaghan, Documents relative to the colonial history of the state of New York, 15 volumes, Albany, Weed, Parsons, 1853-1887.
PAC	Public Archives of Canada.
RAPQ	Rapport de l'Archiviste de la province de Québec.
RHAF	Revue d'Histoire de l'Amérique française.
WO 34	War Office 34 (the Amherst papers). Public Archives of Canada, Manuscript Group 12, B.

INTRODUCTION

Strategy

This dissertation is about strategy: the non-violent nine-tenths of warfare. Derived from the Greek word for "the general's art", "strategy" comprises the intellectual and administrative discipline of directing a military campaign up to the moment of meeting the enemy -- laying down plans, creating the means to carry them out and disposing all the elements of power.[1] Strategy is not the general's only task; he also directs tactics. Contact with hostile forces is what separates strategy and tactics. Strategy is all the preparation for the battlefield; tactics begins when opposing forces interact physically.[2]

This century's foremost writer in English upon military matters, Basil Liddell Hart, makes a threefold division, putting strategy mid-way in the hierarchy of functions between grand policy and tactics. The government sets policy, specifying the war's aims. Liddell Hart's short and simple definition for the strategic role entrusted to the commanders of armies is "The

---

1 Encyclopaedia Britannica (Chicago: Benton, 1967), XXI, 289-290.

2 Ibid. "Strategy is the comprehensive direction of power; Tactics is its immediate application": Henry E. Eccles, Military concepts and philosophy (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1965), 46. According to J. C. Wylie, a strategy is "A plan of action designed in order to achieve some end . . . together with a system of measures for its accomplishment." Military strategy (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1967), 13.

distribution and transmission of military means to fulfil the ends of policy."[3] To the Baron de Jomini, leading French military theorist of the 19th Century, strategy was the "art of directing the greater part of the forces of an army on to the most important point of a theatre of war, . . ."[4] What he listed separately as logistics -- "the practical art of moving armies" -- is included in our definition of strategy. Jomini's "logistics" embraced preparation of materials and alternative orders for various contingencies, conducting troop movements, arranging transport, supply, medical, signals and other support services, gathering intelligence and sifting it, organizing camps and depots and providing reinforcements.[5] The Chevalier de La Pause, a French officer particularly charged with generating ideas for the army defending Canada in the 1750's, thought the essence of strategy was planning. Nothing was more important than to have everything figured out in advance of the enemy's appearance and the shock of meeting.

> The lack of foresight always brings calamities, more especially in war; and in everything connected with making war it is essential to accustom oneself to

---

3 Robert Graves and Liddell Hart, T. E. Lawrence to his biographers (Garden City: New York: Doubleday, 1963), section two, p. 15.

4 Michael Howard, "Jomini and the classical tradition in military thought", Michael Howard, editor, The theory and practice of war (London: Cassell, 1965), 15-16.

5 Ibid.

> observe objects from afar, in order to consider them in all their aspects as they approach, so as to be in a position to make less ambiguous judgments on how things are developing, and to act with greater certainty. 6

Topic

The subject of investigation is the war that culminated in the Anglo-American conquest of Canada in 1760, and thereby became the most important event in Canadian history since Europeans first came here. Probably most of what will be said applies to the whole war, but for the sake of manageability and discovery it is the strategy in the Lake Ontario theatre of operations that is analyzed. This procedure is more manageable because it does not require documents that deal only with other theatres to be read. It promotes discovery because the Ontario region has been less studied than the others.

---

6 "Mémoire fait au mois de 9bre 1759", Rapport de l'Archiviste de la province de Québec [hereafter cited as RAPQ], 1933-4, 134-140. Jean-Guillaume-Charles le Plantavit de Margon, Chevalier de La Pause (1721-1804), came to Canada as a captain in the Guyenne regiment in 1755. In 1756 he was major on Montcalm's staff; succeeded Bougainville as Deputy Quartermaster-General in 1759; and was promoted colonel in 1761. RAPQ 1931-2, 1-3, 389. Mackellar's journal 14 August 1756, Stanley M. Pargellis, editor, Military affairs in North America 1748-1765 (New York: D. Appleton-Century, 1936), 213. Lévis to Belle-Isle 10 November 1759, H.-R. Casgrain, Collection des manuscrits du maréchal de Lévis (Quebec: Demers, 1889-1895), II, 251. Minister of Marine to Vaudreuil and Bigot 22 February 1760, Public Archives of Canada, Manuscript Group 1, B, vol. 111, 167. The voluminous writing that La Pause did in Canada -- four lengthy essays and three dozen shorter narratives, reports, orders, contingency plans, etc. -- are published in Rapport de l'Archiviste de la province de Québec 1931-2, 1932-3 and 1933-4.

The Lake Ontario theatre of operations

Canada in the 1750's was a very large country. Essentially, it comprised the territory drained by the Great Lakes-Saint Lawrence River system, with the tiny exception of Lake Ontario's south-east corner. A policy of expansion, adopted by the French colony in 1753, sought to bring the valley of the Ohio River under Canada's control as well. To the north-west, the border was undefined and open to the possibilities of the prairies. To the south-west, Canada's common border with Louisiana, another French colony, twisted and curved along the height of land from the junction of the Wabash and Ohio Rivers to Lac Rouge at the headwaters of the Mississippi.[7]

This was a magnificent empire, and its kernel -- the essence of the Canadian idea -- was the region of almost continuous settlement along both sides of the Saint Lawrence River between Montreal and Malbaie. In these narrow, twin strips of cultivation, 250 miles long, dwelt a 60,000-strong nucleus of the French-Canadian people. From the point of view of defending French interests in North America it was chiefly this Laurentian community -- Canada's strongest citadel -- that had

---

7 Max Savelle, The diplomatic history of the Canadian boundary, 1749-1763 (Toronto: Ryerson, 1940), 120, note 84; and the map in T. C. Pease, Anglo-French boundary disputes in the west (Springfield: Illinois State Historical Library, 1936), 568.

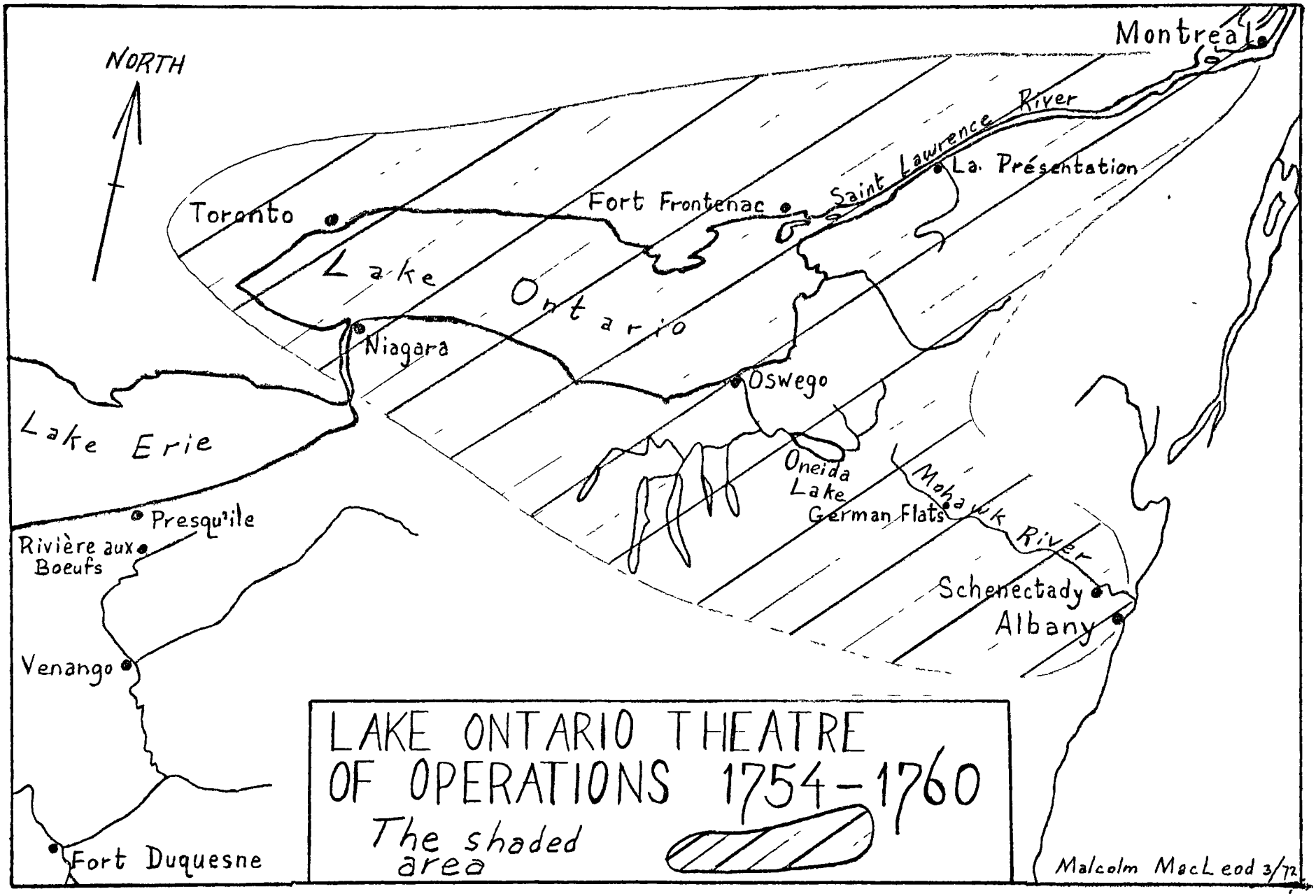
to be protected from the British and Americans. From the other viewpoint, this axis of French-speaking population had to be seized in order to end the struggle with New France once and for all. As long as France held this secure foothold on the Saint Lawrence River, any part of the western empire that might be lost could probably be regained, either through diplomacy or war. Conversely, whoever conquered Laurentia would automatically inherit control of the Great Lakes along with it.

In 1754-1760, this vital heartland of Canada was threatened from three directions. The British could launch an attack from the east, by sea up the Saint Lawrence River. They could approach by way of the historic Lake Champlain-Richelieu River invasion route. Or their armies could come from Lake Ontario down the upper Saint Lawrence.[8] During the War of the Conquest the British indeed operated on all these avenues. Defending the security of the settlements in the Saint Lawrence River valley, therefore, was a threefold strategical problem.[9]

---

8 For several years Governor Shirley of Massachusetts was champion of a fourth approach to Laurentian Canada, via the Kennebec and Chaudière Rivers directly towards Quebec. But it was not a practical route: the British party that tried it in 1760 survived only by eating bark and leather garments. See Winslow to Halifax 30 December 1754, Public Archives of Canada [hereafter cited as PAC], Manuscript Group 18, N 15, 20-23; and Amherst to Gage 3 March 1760, PAC, Manuscript Group 12, B, War Office 34 [hereafter cited as WO 34], vol. 46A, 427.

9 There was a fourth area where important military operations took place: the Ohio valley. However, the Ohio


NORTH
Montreal
Saint Lawrence River
La. Présentation
Fort Frontenac
Toronto
Lake Ontario
Niagara
Oswego
Lake Erie
Oneida Lake
German Flats
Mohawk River
Schenectady
Albany
Presqu'ile
Rivière aux Boeufs
Venango
Fort Duquesne
LAKE ONTARIO THEATRE OF OPERATIONS 1754-1760
The shaded area
Malcolm MacLeod 3/72

The Lake Ontario theatre -- comprising the lake itself with the British and French access routes to it -- was different from the other two threatened peripheries of Laurentian Canada. The fact that oceanic seapower could approach the eastern front made that theatre unique. The southern and western theatres (the Lake Champlain and Lake Ontario areas) were alike in one highly significant respect: both were inland areas through which vital waterways led. Nevertheless, strategical considerations appropriate for the Ontario region were not precisely the same as for the Lake Champlain zone, on account of certain peculiar attributes of the territory.

Of the three principal theatres of operations, the Lake Ontario area was the least crucial. This was so largely for topographical reasons. (Until the last year of the war the route from the

---

was several hundred miles distant from Canada's principal settled portion and -- a separate watershed in an era when technology decreed travel by rivers -- was exceedingly diff-cilut to get to from either Lake Ontario (the French access) or the rivers flowing into Chesapeake Bay (the Anglo-American approach). Consequently, events in the Ohio -- either victory or defeat -- did not affect the safety of Canada's Montreal-Quebec heartland in any urgent or direct way.

south was always the scene of Britain's main overland thrust against Canada.) Military action in the western region had two distinctly separate motivations. The French and British fought here to threaten or defend the territorial integrity of Canada's Laurentian settlements and -- quite apart from that -- they fought also for possession of the rich fur-trading empire around and beyond Lake Ontario. More, the actual and potential wealth of the west was a major reason for the war being fought at all.[10] In the west the influence of the Indians upon military operations was greater than in the other two theatres, because the region itself was a sphere of domicile or influence for several Indian governments of too much power to be ignored. Here also effects of a raw new world setting -- unimproved, inconvenient topography; no roads for wheeled vehicles; insignificant agricultural production; often unkind climate -- had the greatest impact on strategic planning, undermining some European ideas about war and confirming others.

---

10 William Johnson wanted to conquer Canada so as to put an end to French power and gain the fur trade "of inestimable value". Johnson to Orme 18 September 1755, Guy Frégault, La guerre de la Conquête (Montreal: Fides, 1955), 156. Thomas Pownall: "These great Lakes appear to be the Throne & Centre of a Dominion whose Influence by an Infinitude of Rivers Creeks & Streams extends itself thro' all & every Part, . . .", "Considerations upon the Scite, Interests, and Service of North America", 1755, Pargellis, Affairs, 159-160. Doreil called the upper country "Canada's entire wealth" (toute la ressource du Canada). Doreil to Belle-Isle 31 August 1758, RAPQ 1944-5, 158; Documents relative to the colonial history of the state of New York (Albany: Weed, Parsons, 1853-1887), [hereafter cited as NYCD], X, 821.

Narrative

The period studied is the time when violent clashes between forces representing two rival governments were taking place in North America; that is, 1754 to 1760. This war has been clumsily identified for over two hundred years. Usually English-speaking Canadians, even the students of history among them, think of it as the Seven Years War (1756-1763). It would be hard to find a crazier title for a conflict which began, only partly by accident, in a 1754 ambush, and crashed to a final quiet when Canada capitulated six years later. What French-speaking Canadians have sometimes called this war is not printable. The others involved -- Americans, British and French -- have their own titles for the event that fit in with their history. Seven Years War has no relevance to ours. It is greatly to be hoped that the title Guy Frégault found and publicized -- the War of the Conquest, so clean, definite, precise and important: it announces the birth of the country's most creative tensions -- will come into usage in Canada to the exclusion of all others.[11]

---

11 Frégault wrote he had seen "War of the conquest" used only once before, in Amedée Gosselin's introduction to Bougainville's Journal, RAPQ, 1923-4. Frégault, 10.

This work is not a narrative, but an analysis of the war's events to see what the opposing commands attempted and what were the factors which impelled them to try one strategy rather than another. The evidence is gathered by skipping back and forth over the records of six years, with some contributions from contemporary forethought, and more from hindsight. Readers who are not familiar with the main trend of events in the War of the Conquest may be confused. Therefore, there follows the briefest of narratives, putting into order the major events in the Lake Ontario theatre, upon which the thesis reflects.

1754 French forces engaged in the occupation of the Ohio valley passed and repassed through the Lake Ontario sector. The British observed as much as they could from their weakly-fortified fur-trading post at Oswego, but did not try anything. Only the French had navigation on Lake Ontario -- bateaux and several sailing ships.

1755 Both sides reinforced and improved their Lake Ontario forts, and made obvious threats against the other's, but no attacks took place. British communications between Albany and Oswego were worried by multiple small parties of Canadians and pro-French Indians.

1756 In March the French interfered with the British build-up at Oswego by the destruction of Fort Bull on the Oneida portage, its sixty-man garrison being massacred.

A large stock of supplies was blown up. Oswego was semi-isolated by stepped-up French guerilla war on the communication route. When French regulars, Marines, militia and Indians were concentrated against it in August -- Lieutenant-General the Marquis de Montcalm directing the execution of Governor-General the Marquis de Vaudreuil's favourite scheme -- the post fell and was demolished. Few deaths, many prisoners. The British thereupon destroyed posts they had established on the Oneida portage and withdrew from the Lake Ontario region. The French reduced the Niagara and Frontenac garrisons to a minimum. The Six Nations of Iroquois Indians, seeing the tide of war set in favour of the French, sent a delegation to Montreal to sue for neutrality.

1757 All quiet, sign of French supremacy. A Canadian raiding party destroyed the Mohawk valley village of German Flats in November. But during the next three years the unchallenged French hegemony of 1757 collapsed into utter disaster.

1758 A French attack from Oswego towards Schenectady was planned, but called off at the last moment. Diplomatic competition for Indian alliances heightened. An ambitious British colonel undertook the destruction of Fort Frontenac in a lightning raid, and succeeded at the end of August. The whole French fleet on Lake Ontario was

destroyed also. Canada reinforced the west, built new vessels, and moved the main defensive position from Cataraqui to the head of the Saint Lawrence rapids. The British built a new fortified post at the Oneida portage, but did not reoccupy Oswego.

1759 British launched an attack on Niagara, meanwhile re-establishing themselves at Oswego and repulsing a French force which attempted to expel them from the ground before they were well dug in. A relief force that tried to lift the siege of Niagara -- several hundred French and Indians that had been gathered at the posts between Lake Erie and Fort Duquesne for the purpose of reconquering Ohio -- was bloodily defeated July 24 in the theatre's worst fighting during the war. Two hundred were killed on the French side. Niagara fell. The French started a new fort at the head of the rapids to block any advance to Montreal (Fort Lévis). The British worked to strengthen Oswego and gain full control over the route from the Mohawk valley by dotting posts at intervals between the Oneida portage and Lake Ontario.

1760 Surprisingly, Major-General Jeffrey Amherst chose the Lake Ontario area for his main thrust into Canada. He gathered a 10,000-man army at Oswego in July. French scalping and surveillance on the Mohawk-Oneida route ebbed. The British left Oswego 10 August, captured

the last French lakeship on the 17th, besieged Fort Lévis for three days until it surrendered the 25th, met no resistance running the rapids on the upper Saint Lawrence River, and arrived on Montreal island in amazingly lucky synchronization with smaller British armies that had moved from Quebec City and Lake Champlain. Vaudreuil signed the surrender of the colony in the face of force majeure.

Structure

The structure of the thesis is threefold. First, a chapter on the accepted strategical ideas of the mid-18th Century, which also shows how the opposing commands made different applications of some of the ideas in response to differences in their general situation. Next are several chapters on conditions with which the two armies in North America grappled. The generals were not free to do whatever they might have liked, but were naturally restricted to doing what they were able to. The possible sets limits to men's ambition. Six factors are isolated for dissection and discussion in this major part of my work: the geography of the theatre, possession of fortified positions, Lake Ontario seapower, Indian alliances, materiel and manpower. These were, in the first place, the principal factors of power, that is, of capability. Because of that they became determinants of strategy.

Finally, a concluding chapter offers the 1758 campaign as an example of how these factors impinged upon and were affected by each other when actual plans were being shaped; suggests what was of greater and what of lesser importance among these compulsions that guided the commanders; and stresses the primacy of material over abstract considerations in the development of strategy.

Aim

The events of the war did not just happen, as if by accident. Instead, they resulted from the interplay of two sides' conscious and cunning planning. Since plans were based on definite and discoverable premises, we can to a large extent learn to weigh pros and cons and think about the war's problems in the same way as contemporaries did. The purpose of the dissertation is to contribute to this end, adding to knowledge not of what occurred, but why.

Terminology

What to call the war itself has been discussed above, and the meaning of "Lake Ontario theatre of operations" has been defined as the lake itself along with the access routes leading to it from settled parts of Canada and New York. "French" will mean both French and Canadian, unless it is clearly restricted to mean European French only. Often it includes pro-French Indian allies. Similarly, "British" is an inclusive term used

to describe all persons on the other side, except in those cases where it is used for European British in distinction to Americans and pro-British Indians. Placenames used will be those employed at the start of the war by the side which held, or had the greatest influence over, that particular locality. For example: Albany not Orange, La Présentation (or La Galette) not Swegatchie; and outside the Lake Ontario region, Carillon not Ticonderoga, and Nova Scotia for the peninsula while Acadia is retained for New Brunswick and the east coast generally. Possible confusions will be discussed the first time a place is mentioned; maps are included which should help; but readers have to accept the quoted documents the way they were written and be ready to accept "Corlar" for Schenectady or "Choueguen" in place of Oswego from a French pen.

On language -- this work is written in English. Translated passages from original French documents should faithfully represent what the author said and how he wrote it. French words which have passed into the English language, of which a good example is the word Québec, will be written in English (no accent aigu in the English "Quebec").

Previous studies

There are no published studies devoted to the strategy of the war, nor to the Lake Ontario theatre. Narrative histories of

the war from a variety of national and professional angles well describe the flow of events, and sometimes offer interpretation of the plans behind them. Of the standard narratives, the least satisfactory are by the Europeans: Richard Waddington, La Guerre de Sept ans: histoire diplomatique et militaire,[12] and Julian Corbett, England in the Seven Years' War: a study in combined strategy.[13] These two books lean too exclusively upon one side's sources, either British or French; and in their scale and scope, what transpired in North America -- and particularly in one obscure, half-civilized theatre of the war there -- was a very small afair, and gets slight treatment. An American, Francis Parkman, wrote an account that is the most magisterial in tone, and attractive in style, of them all. Interestingly, his two volumes entitled Montcalm and Wolfe[14] depend more heavily upon French sources than English, which sources, however, he used and criticized from an overconfident New England viewpoint, with perhaps a little bias.

The British empire before the American revolution, by Lawrence Harvey Gipson, another American, is the most thorough

---

12 5 volumes, Paris: Fermin-Didot, 1899-1914.

13 2 volumes, London: Longmans, Green, 1907.

14 Boston: Little, Brown, 1927 [first published 1884].

and trustworthy history of the war.[15] Indeed, it is hard to imagine how it could ever be surpassed as the definitive narrative, unless by clearing up very occasional, very trifling lapses of fact.[16] Like Parkman, Gipson devoted a considerable portion of his life's work to studying this matter as part of a greater framework. His strongest features are the author's catholic acquaintance with all available sources, his good judgment in using them and the large scale of his work. He has given himself room to quote the words of participants so copiously that it would be almost possible to make an adequate study of the war from original sources just by using Gipson's book -- and on disputed points to come up with conclusions not necessarily the same as his. In the plan of his work it is an imperfection that North America takes up so much attention, compared with

---

15 Volumes V, Zones of international friction: the Great Lakes frontier, Canada, the West Indies, India, 1748-1754 (New York: Knopf, 1942); VI, The Great war for the empire: the years of defeat, 1754-1757 (New York: Knopf, 1946); and VII, The Great war for the empire: the victorious years, 1758-1760 (New York: Knopf, 1949).

16 E.g., in five pages dealing with the British advance upon Montreal from Oswego in 1760, Gipson mistakenly promotes Captain Pouchot of Fort Lévis to a knighthood ("the Chevalier Pouchot") and incorrectly states that the ONONDAGA, badly damaged in action 23 August, was refloated before the end of the month (Volume VII, 450, 453). Actually, correspondence about the chances of getting the ship back into commission continued until the end of October, and ended with no sign of salvage (Correspondence among Amherst, Lt. Sinclair of the MOHAWK, Lt. McLeod of the ONONDAGA, and others, in WO 34, vol. 64, 100; and vol. 65, 34, 35, 37, 39, 41-42, 196-205, 207). Gipson also seems to suggest that the British sailing vessels, as well as their rowing craft, made the passage right down to Montreal -- a navigational impossibility.

other parts of the British empire. Logic's loss is our gain. The imbalance allowed his account of the war to be even fuller than it might otherwise have been. Gipson does not analyze strategy except when explicit disputes break out in the documents. In these cases he does not fail to set the matter fully forth, and suggest his wisest solutions.

The Canadians seem to write smaller books. L'Abbé H.-R. Casgrain's Montcalm et Lévis [17] is bulky enough, with good use of the documents Casgrain dug through, especially the Canadian army's headquarters papers which he helped bring to light. But his work is weakened by insufficient primary evidence from the British side, and is a little too laudatory of the title-heroes and the community they defended -- Parkman's bias, carried a short way towards the other extreme.[18] Guy Frégault put everything he had to say about the war between the covers of one thickish volume. La Guerre de la conquête [19] is a sensible,

---

17 2 volumes, Quebec: Demers, 1891.

18 These two writers corresponded, and in one acid interlude in an otherwise friendly connection (1887-1889), quarrelled bitterly over clashing interpretations of controversial points in Canadian history. Wilbur R. Jacobs, editor, Letters of Francis Parkman, 2 volumes (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1960); see especially II, 101-119, 173, 211-230.

19 Montreal: Fides, 1955. English translation by Margaret M. Cameron (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1969). Frégault uses sources excellently, but his work is not exhaustive. In a terrific note appended to Chapter IV, he proves a new point about the Oswego campaign of 1756, citing 14 separate sources. Others that he might also have used, which would have made his correction of past mistakes even more watertight, are Léry Journal, RAPQ 1926-7, 398-404; Sieur de "C", "Mémoire du Canada" (written about

sensitive study which tells the familiar story in a brilliantly taut sweep of narrative and, most valuably, amounts to a study of public opinion about the war, in four countries. Fourteen years after it was first published an English translation appeared. With both versions available, Frégault's highly original and readable book will, for the foreseeable future, have greater influence than any other work, upon all the students who are likely to become interested in its topic. English-speaking Canadians, mesmerized by the battle for Quebec, have not yet produced a full-scale account of the whole war. The most recent important treatment is George F. G. Stanley's New France: the last phase, 1744-1765.[20] Concise and well-organized, it bears the beneficial stamp of a soldierly mind. Stanley can clarify old military matters by employing terms familiar to 20th Century servicemen[21]; he knows the difference between 0 and I. The work is as much a social history of the war as a record of campaigns: struggle throughout. For our purposes it is unfortunate he did not spell out at length his appreciation of the two sides' strategy. He did say that the problem of defending Canada was "less a matter of strategy than of obtaining adequate

---

1770), RAPQ 1924-5, 120 ff; La Pause, "Mémoire et réflexions", RAPQ 1933-4, 150-151; La Pause, "Relation de la Campagne [1756]", RAPQ 1932-3, 324-325; and "Relation de la prise des forts de Choueguen ... ", PAC, MG 5, B(1), vol. 10, ff. 264-265.

20 Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1968.

21 Operations and Intelligence.

assistance from the homeland."[22] Those thirteen words make a good approximation to the conclusion of these 130,000.

The present study is not in competition with these previously-published works, and does not add to the story they tell. Instead, it belongs on a brand new shelf in the library, for books of a different genre: analysis rather than narrative.

Sources

Three main groups of primary sources were used:

1) The voluminous papers in the Public Archives of Canada that deal with the War of the Conquest, germinated in both French and English camps.[23]

2) The fifty volumes of documents published since 1920 by the Archives de la Province de Québec. Searched thoroughly, they yielded a high return of important materials.

3) The Loudoun and Abercromby papers in the Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery, San Marino, California, U.S.A. Among the chief published works on the subject of the war, only Gipson's made use of these rich collections. They are companion pieces to the Amherst papers in the Public Archives of Canada

---

22 Stanley, New France, 211.

23 Manuscript Group 18, K 8 includes almost all the indispensable French headquarters papers published as H.-R. Casgrain, editor, Collection des manuscrits du maréchal de Lévis, 12 volumes (Quebec: Demers, 1889-1895).

(Manuscript Group 12, B, War Office 34), and extend the detailed record of the British high command wrestling with the project of Canada's conquest back from 1758 (when Amherst was named Commander-in-Chief) to 1756. If these papers had not been consulted it is likely most of the conclusions reached throughout the thesis would have been the same, but their presentation would have lacked depth, and proof would have been less certain.

From the available documents, it is easier to trace the reasoning behind the French campaigns, rather than the British. There are several possible explanations. It could be the French records, or those of them that throw light on strategy, have survived more completely. It could be an indication of the logical and abstract thinking with which the French are sometimes credited above others; they tried to reason things out, while the British muddled through. The most likely interpretation of this pattern in the sources, however, is that since the British had the initiative and were attacking during most of the war, they had less cause to work everything out on paper. Most of their correspondence was on military housekeeping: the mustering of men, bateaux, provisions, etc. to undertake various expeditions. On the other hand, since the French were on the defensive, they were always wondering what the British were going to do -- for they would have to respond to it. In their situation the maxim of Frederick the Great for fighting a defensive

war obviously applied: "Anticipate everything detrimental."[24] As the French paymaster in Canada said, it was necessary to have tremendous vigilance and foresight "when one tackles an enemy who is not only powerful but unfailingly superior in forces and in means."[25] The French defenders of Canada therefore attempted to be ready with a file full of well-thought-out strategies, prepared for whatever emergency might be imposed on them.

---

24 "Projets de campagne", quoted in Jay Luvaas, Frederick the Great on the art of war (New York: The Free Press, 1966), 335.

25 Doreil to [Belle-Isle] 31 August 1758, RAPQ 1944-5, 159.

CHAPTER I

PRINCIPLES OF STRATEGY

The two armies' high commands had certain ideas about military strategy which can be read in what they said, and with greater assurance in what they did. Both thought and action were strongly shaped by contemporary European expertise. Soldiers crossed the ocean, to face the occasionally novel problems posed by warfare in the New World, with a comprehensive and pre-set way of thinking determined by conditions in the Old World.

Turning from conventional theories about strategy to analyze the actual choices made by French and British headquarters on this continent, one finds that their agreement on strategical principles was very great, and the differences quite minute. When they shared the same idea it was not just because experts had laid it down, but because the situation they were in encouraged the course they took. Where they disagreed it was because each was confronting the mirror-image of the other's problem.

The strategic principles on which they agreed were: 1) Concentration of force; 2) Security; 3) The approach to the settled part of Canada from the west was of less importance to the colony's ultimate security than the approaches from south and east; 4) Subservience of military action to overriding

political or diplomatic aims. They acted from different strategical principles in that: 5) The two armies had different objectives; 6) Only the British adopted the offensive, displaying steady initiative; 7) The French combined economy of force with concentration, while the British weakened the principle of concentration by regularly dividing their troops, seeking simultaneous preponderance of force at any one of several points.

1. Eighteenth-century ideas on strategy

The most analytical general on the British side, James Wolfe, has left us a document which sets out his idea of a curriculum. Sending advice on what a budding army careerist should read, he listed most of the authors and works that gave the strategists of mid-Eighteenth century European armies the principles they followed.[1] His list featured L'Attaque et la défense des Places[2] by the Maréchal de Vauban (who laid down styles for the furniture of fortresses for a

---

1 Wolfe to [Thomas Townshend] 18 July 1756, PAC, Manuscript Group [hereafter cited as MG] 18, L 5, vol. 4, 1-3.

2 See A Manual of siegecraft and fortification (translated by George A. Rothrock), Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1968; and Daniel Halévy, Vauban builder of fortresses (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1924).

hundred years or more); Frederick the Great's Regulations for his horse and foot;[3] the memoirs of the Duc de Sully;[4] biographies of Gustavus Adolphus,[5] Charles XII of Sweden[6] and the blind Hussite warlord Zizka;[7] and the Maréchal de Puységur's L'Art de la guerre par principes et par règles.[8] In addition,

> There is a book published that I have heard commended, Art de la guerre pratique; I suppose it is collected from all the best authors that treat of war; and there is a little volume entitled Traité de la petite guerre that your brother should take in his pocket when he goes upon out duty & detachments.[9]

Wolfe did not refer to Mes rêvèries sur l'art de la guerre -- compendium of innovations by the Maréchal de Saxe, written in 1732 and published in 1757 -- but elsewhere in his correspondence

---

3 Encyclopaedia Britannica [hereafter cited as ENCYCLOPAEDIA], (Chicago, 1967), XXI, 291. Edward Mead Earle, editor, Makers of Modern Strategy (Princeton: University Press, 1948), 53-58.

4 Sully (1559-1641) was chief minister for Henry IV of France and among other offices, superintendent of fortifications and grand master of the artillery. His Mémoires or Economies royales were published in 1638. ENCYCLOPAEDIA, XXI, 402.

5 King of Sweden 1611-1632. As commander of armies he maintained Sweden's great power status against unlikely odds, chiefly through manoeuvring. ENCYCLOPAEDIA, X, 1048, XXI, 291.

6 King in 1697-1718. His strategic forte was fighting for decisions, and in the right places. Ibid., V, 314.

7 Jan Zizka, a fabulous character, brought up at the court of good king Wenceslas (Vaclav IV of Bohemia), died in 1424 after leading armies in religious wars, usually to victory. Ibid., XXIII, 985.

8 Joined Louis XIV's war council in 1715, made marshal

there is reference to the great German warrior who fought for France, with an indication that Wolfe admired him more as a soldier than as a family man.[10]

Officers in the French army used the same sources. The Chevalier de Johnstone's off-duty studies were devoted to most of the books already mentioned, plus the Mémoires of Turenne, Seventeenth century master of manoeuvre, risk and concentration,[11] and the ancients: Julius Caesar, Polybius and Vegetius.[12] The Chevalier de La Pause, most productive and thoughtful of the strategists who were directly concerned in the War of the Conquest, cited the last of these Latin authors by name in one of his contingency plans for the 1759 campaign.

It is an interesting fact that many of the respected authorities were French, and none of the names or titles are

---

in 1734, died in 1743. Larousse du XXe siècle (Paris: Librairie Larousse, 1932), V, 855.

9 Wolfe to [Thomas Townshend] 18 July 1756, MG 18, L 5, vol. 4, 3.

10 "Maréchal Saxe died in the arms of a little whore, that plays upon the Italian stage -- an ignomenious end for a conqueror." Wolfe to his father 29 January 1753, MG 18, L 5, vol. 3, part 1, 248. B. H. Liddell Hart thinks Saxe more important than Frederick the Great on two counts: as a creative thinker, and as having a greater influence on later developments. The ghost of Napoleon (London: Faber & Faber, 1933), 49.

11 Turenne's Mémoires, first published in 1735, tell of his exploits in 1644-1659, fighting for France against external enemies and for the house of Bourbon against internal factions. ENCYCLOPAEDIA, XXII, 359. G. F. G. Stanley, New France: the last phase (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1968), 63.

in English. In warfare as in most other matters, Eighteenth-century France gave the lead to Europe, germinating new ideas, sponsoring the re-circulation of established old ones, and dictating the jargon of technical undertakings and elevated studies. Liddell Hart found French military thought of that era the "most active of all."[13] From Wolfe's own pen came remarkable testimony to French 'superiority':

> It is much to be wished that all our young soldiers of birth and education would follow [your] brother's steps and as they will have their turn to command, that they would try to make themselves fit for that important trust, without it we must sink under the superior abilities & indefatigable industry of our restless neighbour.[14]

The soldiers of every Eighteenth century western European army shared a set of general attitudes towards strategy and warfare. Defence and fortifications were stressed, rather than ambition and risk. The government's instrument of military policy was a professional standing army -- a somewhat inflexible instrument whose nature powerfully affected the selection of assignments given to it. An army's material support, crucial to its success, was a burdensome task and becoming more so. Manoeuvre was the height of skill and battle only

---

12 Caesar made Roman military history while Polybius (died 118 B.C.) and Vegetius (4th century A.D.; author of De re militari) wrote about it. ENCYCLOPAEDIA, IV, 573-577; XVIII, 194-196; XXII, 935.

13 Ghost of Napoleon, 27. See Advice to the officers of the British army (London: Cape, 1946; first published 1782), 15. A striking proof of gallic ascendency was Frederick the Great's Principes généraux de la guerre. A limited edition of only fifty copies was published in 1753, for circulation under strict security among his generals -- published in French,

rarely accepted.

Towards the end of the previous century, European governments had begun to pay "extraordinary attention" to forts.[15a] France was the leader, and the Maréchal de Vauban was the continent's great expert on how places could be fortified, and how fortified places should be attacked.[15b] By the 1750's, fortresses established all over Europe were most remarkable for the way in which a would-be attacker encountered successive well-planned obstacles -- defence in depth. A sophisticated art was involved in making the proper arrangements; there were definite rules to follow:

> Let us examine these rules. One chooses an advantageous site, commanded on no side, to fortify . . . One side of this fortress is protected either by a river or an escarpment and, lacking some natural obstacle, it is strengthened with surrounding works. These outworks must provide mutual defense by flanking fire and they must . . . be supported by works behind them.[15c]

Intricate companion to the art of fortification was the approved

---

like all the Prussian King's writings. One hopes the German officers for whom it was intended were able to read it -- but since it was meant to be kept so very secret, perhaps it does not matter! Earle, 53. G. P. Gooch, Frederick the Great (New York: Knopf, 1947).

14 Wolfe to [Thomas Townshend] 18 July 1756, MG 18, L 5, vol. 4, 2.

15a O. L. Spaulding, Junior, Warfare (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1925), 509. According to Walter L. Dorn, the "great importance attached to fortresses . . . was, after all, only the reflex side of the difficulties of transport." Competition for empire 1740-1763 (New York: Harper, 1940), 80.

15b Spaulding, 517.

15c Frederick the Great, "Eléments

sequence of steps an attacker had to follow to bring his siege-guns safely within destructive range of a fort.

The value of fortresses -- which were often located close enough together that one could relieve the other -- lay in that they were secure depots for men and materiel; and permitted relatively few defenders to make an obstinate and prolonged defence. Because they threatened the communications of an enemy army, forts along the line of advance were never ignored in orthodox operations. Before going on, a hostile force "had to take the important ones" (time-consuming) and "carefully mask the minor ones" (man-consuming).[15d] "Throughout the century, it was always held that a fortress must be taken, and taken by siege rather than by coup de main. There was no question of by-passing these strongholds, of leaving them behind by sweeping operations."[15e] -- even if, on some occasions, there would have been greater military utility in doing so. Maréchal de Saxe, not fully sharing this fad concern, was scornful of the "rage for sieges which prevails at present."[15f]

---

de castramétrie et de tactique" (1770), quoted in Jay Luvaas, Frederick the Great on the art of war (New York: The free press, 1966), 279.

15d Spaulding, 510, 531.

15e J. O. Lindsay, editor, The New Cambridge Modern History, VII (Cambridge: University press, 1957), 168.

15f Liddell Hart, Ghost of Napoleon, 35.

In most respects the European armies that fought in North America were very similar to each other -- two separately-administered versions of an institution that reflected chiefly the general state of European society rather than any national differences. At the bottom, both armies took in their rank and file from the class that was economically least advantaged -- someone said, the scum of the earth, enlisted for drink.[15g] A firm line -- one could say a brutal one -- was preserved between the rude mob that was the men, and the genteel aristocracy that commanded them as officers. The forces were cosmopolitan. In the French army, between one-quarter and one-half of the manpower was not French, but mercenary troops of other nationalities.[15h] Baron Dieskau's aide-de-camp was a "Lieutt. in the Royal Swedish Regiment."[16a] Foreign Legion officers "voluntarily banished" themselves from Europe to the French army in Canada for promotion's sake, deserting with equally light hearts to the British when their hopes were dashed.[16b] Among British officers who fought over Canada

---

15g Half-civilized soldiers were expected to wreck billets assigned to them. "You may be sure that go into what quarters you will the landlord will heartily wish you out of them. You should therefore make it a point to give him good cause for it; as it is hard a man should be hated and despised without reason": the light-hearted Advice to the officers of the British army, 96.

15h Dorn, 89.

16a Wraxall to De Lancey 10 September 1755, Documents relative to the colonial history of the state of New York (Albany: Weed, Parsons, 1853-1887), [hereafter cited as NYCD], VI, 1004.

16b Coujard and Segaud to Loudoun 20 October 1757,

were fifty Swiss and Germans who were commissioned as light infantry experts to handle the Royal Americans; the son of the ambassador to Britain from Hesse-Cassel;[16c] an anglophile Swede, 19 years in the Swedish army, who had been imprisoned for six years by the pro-French faction in Sweden before he escaped and served as a Russian dragoon captain prior to coming into British service; an Englishman whose curriculum vitae -- Russian guards and Swedish jail -- was remarkably similar; a Scot who had spent four years in the Dutch army; and another who had served in the forces of Saxony for nine years but had "gott leave from both his Prussian and Polish Majestie to Serve his [own] King and Country" and who understood "French and German as well or rather better than English."[16d]

Stark social cleavage in the forces, the generous admixture of non-national elements and men impressed against

---

Loudoun papers, Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery, San Marino, California, USA [hereafter cited as LO], 4099.

16c Prevost to Cumberland 23 May 1757, Pargellis, Affairs, 340. John Pownall to Colden 14 April 1761, NYCD, VII, 462. Concerning Lieutenant Ault from Hesse-Cassel: Barrington to Amherst 19 October 1759, MG 18, L 4, packet 9, 30.

16d The Swede, John Nordborg, Memorial to Lord Barrington (1758), Abercromby papers, Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery, San Marino, California, USA [hereafter cited as AB], 863. Englishmen: Archibald Campbell, Memorial to the Earl of Loudoun 23 November 1757, LO 4888; Murray to Loudoun 1 November 1757, LO 4729; S. M. Pargellis, Lord Loudoun in North America (New Haven: Yale University press, 1933), 312. A good example of the one-big-happy-family connection linking the armies of Europe was the case of Jean Rozen. A Swiss enlisted in the Royal Americans, he participated in the invasion of Canada in 1760, then applied for Church permission to marry

their will, plus brutal discipline and harsh conditions, produced a persistent and widespread tendency to desert. The private soldier's only important inducement was his pay. He faced many hardships and dangers. Yet he could not lightly be allowed to run away, because it was a lengthy and therefore expensive process to train up a new recruit to the standard of patience, of fortitude and imperturbable group solidity that was required of the Eighteenth-century professional soldier.[16e] Also, the tendency throughout the century was for armies to grow in size.[16f] Personnel had therefore to be carefully husbanded. Armies had to gather huge magazines of food before venturing to move, if foraging and living off the land would have necessitated splitting the force into small groups, less easily controlled and more prone to temptations.

---

his own individual conquest -- a Canadian girl he had met. He testified to the Bishop's office how for 20 years he had been a trooper in the service of Hungary, Spain, France and now for the last two years, England. (He got the girl). "Témoignages de liberté au mariage", Rapport de l'Archiviste de la province de Québec [hereafter cited as RAPQ], 1951-3, 96.

16e Spaulding, 515-516.

16f Luvaas, 263, 305.

There could be no swift pursuits.[16g]

Comparing the forces of the 1750's with those of forty years previously, Frederick the Great noted, besides their larger size, an increase in destructive power. More and more guns were being deployed. Austria's artillery, he wrote in 1758, was now so "prodigious" that the guns alone "would be nearly enough to repulse, destroy, and overwhelm any attack", without any troops being employed. "To attack the enemy without first having procured the advantage of superior or at least of equal fire is the same as trying to fight against armed troops with men carrying only sticks."[16h] As field artillery became more plentiful, the labour of supplying sufficient guns and carrying them along with the army, with all their spare parts and accessories, made logistics a much more important consideration than it had formerly been.

The other bulky load that had ceaselessly to be carried across country with the forces was food -- for the men and for

---

16g Lindsay, VII, 168-169. The Prussian army formed "free" battalions from enemy deserters who came in, but "Our generals dare not send the free battalions forward for fear they will lose them , . . . " Luvaas, 271-272.

16h "Réflexions sur . . . quelques changements dans la façon de faire la guerre", Luvaas, 265.

the animals. Larger armies of mid-century had to have immense quantities of "Powder and bread -- two things that force even fortresses to surrender."[16j] "It is not I who commands the army, but flour and forage are the masters."[16k] Supply and transport systems increasingly shaped and limited strategy.

Restrained by fortresses and a growing weight of baggage, and undertaken by armies whose human make-up made them instruments of only partial reliability, mid- Eighteenth century campaigns were marked by moderation in aim and in achievement. In that age of monarchs, wars were often dynastic squabbles in which the mass of citizens felt themselves very little involved; the objectives of hostilities were usually limited, economic ones.[16m] Clearcut conquest of the enemy was not sought. "The only purpose of war," said Frederick the Great, "is to force the enemy to consent to an advantageous peace as soon as possible, . . ."[16n] This is a quite different concept from that of destroying the armed forces of the enemy: his ability to resist. In that case no consent is needed -- but orthodox Eighteenth-century military thought did not envisage utter prostration. Instead, it had a gentlemanly concept: of states like brothers (often the kings were cousins)

16j Frederick, "Charles XII", Luvaas, 357.

16k Ibid., 15-16.

16m Spaulding, 528.

16n "Projets de campagne", Luvaas, 310.

quarrelling, then composing their differences again, with some piece of territory, a range of fortresses, or a colonial possession, as balm or booty.

The strategy customarily followed was that appropriate for a war with limited objectives -- equally balanced, moderate, limited. It was a "strategy of small successive advantages over that of annihilation."[16p] Saxe voiced very nearly the common outlook when he declaimed,

> I do not favour pitched battles, especially at the beginning of a war, and I am convinced that a skilful general could make war all his life without being forced into one . . . Frequent small engagements will dissipate the enemy until he is forced to hide from you. I do not mean to say by this that when an opportunity occurs to crush the enemy that [sic] he should not be attacked, nor that advantage should not be taken of his mistakes. But I do mean that war [should] be made without leaving anything to chance.[16q]

Nothing was more chancy -- or expensive -- than the head-on clash of huge masses of soldiers. Much more neat and controllable, and saving of all the army's components, were dainty, chessboard-like manoeuvres and standardized siegework.[16r] The enemy should be allowed, even aided, to retreat.[16s]

16p Lindsay, VII, 166.

16q Reveries on the art of war (translated by Brigadier-General T. R. Phillips; Harrisburg: Military service publishing Company, 1944), 121. Liddell Hart, sick of World War One carnage, made Saxe his hero because of this attitude. See his Ghost of Napoleon, 29-30; and Paris: or the future of war (New York: Garland, 1972), 8, 13.

16r For succinct statements on the coded, pedantic, deliberate and leisurely character of 18th century war, see Liddell Hart, Ghost of Napoleon, 20-25; Spaulding, 510, 528-529; and D. H. Zook, A short history of warfare (New York: Twayne, 1966), 103-104.

16s "A bridge of gold should be made for the

Cerebration was much prized, mere muscle disdained. The most successful of Europe's practitioners at mid-century -- Frederick again -- catalogued a list of the means to make sure of in a war of mental attrition.

> At the beginning of the campaign you must carefully conceal your intentions, put the enemy on the wrong scent, and know everything possible about the opposing general, his method, and his way of operating. The more you can penetrate the mind of your opponent, the better able you are to deceive him. You gain superiority over the enemy by striking a surprise blow at his camp, by overwhelming part of his army . . . by winning decisive battles, by seizing the enemy's magazines, . . . by placing yourself astride the enemy's communications and thereby forcing him to retreat and yield terrain . . . [16t]

Decisive battle was one among many choices, and by no means thought the best. Thus did the art of war -- waged economically, with circumspection and defence prevailing -- reflect the "stabilized complacency which was so common in that period . . . . Preservation of a force was the first object, the results of its action secondary."[16u]

All these standard ideas which regular soldiers imported with them from Europe were applicable to the Canadian war, but some much more than others. In Canada's undeveloped borderlands, communication routes were few, obvious and inescapable. This fact made the forts guarding them of crucial importance, while rendering mutual support impossible and

---

enemy." Saxe disagreed with this common wisdom. Reveries, 121.

16t "Projets de campagne", Luvaas, 326.

16u Lindsay, VII, 163, 175.

adequate provisioning a work of immense weight. In the colonies -- this was especially true of the French colony -- there were available militia and temporary troops whose skills and motivations differed quite markedly from the regular levies brought from Europe. All kinds of materiel were as needful in the New World as in the old, but much harder to procure and to carry. In North America's thickly forested warzones, strategic manoeuvre in the continental sense was, not to put too fine a point upon it, impossible. At the same time, there were such root weaknesses in one side's situation that some of the constraints of difficulty and expense -- constraints that help explain why limited objectives were usually chosen in Europe -- might evaporate away in the heat of war.

In its general tenor and conduct, the war for Canada showed many features typical of European conflicts in that day. Questions remain: did its directors and planners, for the most part schooled in European attitudes and experience, clearly recognize which aspects of standard doctrine fitted the new situation, and which did not? How readily or willingly did they see the differences? Eighteenth-century military thinking -- the established orthodoxy -- may on some occasions have been a handicap as those soldiers struggled with questions raised by the North American war, but undoubtedly it was a potent factor behind the plans

and approaches which the war produced.

2. Shared principles.

The most important principle of war which was common to both French and British -- ceaselessly revealed by their campaigns and dispositions -- was the principle of concentration of force. One suspects that this rule is always the foundation of good strategy, in all kinds of competition. 'Concentration of force' has a simple meaning. It denotes, merely, mass: arranging matters so that in a confrontation you will bring to bear the very greatest proportion of your strength that you possibly can,

preferably against a small fraction of the enemy's power. "The essential maxim of all intelligent warfare . . . is so to engage as markedly to outnumber the enemy at a point of main collision."[17]

Eighteenth century military thinkers preached this maxim, and the greatest practitioners taught it by example. "In how many places may not one attack without risking anything?" wrote Maréchal de Saxe.

> How frequently an army is separated on its march by bad roads, rivers, difficult passes? . . . How often do opportunities present themselves of separating it, so as to be able, though inferior, to attack one part of it and, at the same time, by the proper placement of a small number of troops, prevent its being relieved by the other? 18

"There is an ancient rule of war," said Frederick of Prussia,

> that cannot be repeated often enough. Hold your forces together, make no detachments, and, when you want to fight the enemy, reassemble all your forces and sieze every advantage to make sure of your success. 19

Only the naive and untutored think that war is a contest. The generals never want a test of strength. They seek the sure thing; automatic coup; "attack without risking anything". Concentration is the best route to that end. We should consider taking Fort William Henry, La Pause wrote in

---

17 A.T.Mahan, Types of naval officers [London: Low, Marston, 1902), 15-16.

18 Maréchal de Saxe, My reveries on the art of war, in Phillips, 239.

19 The Instruction of Frederick the Great for his generals, Phillips, 343-345.

1757, but should not actually attempt it unless we are sure of quick and easy success.[20a] It was on account of concentration that the Chevalier de Johnstone imagined Montcalm reproving Wolfe for having divided the British forces under his command in 1759, an act "diametrically opposed to the first principle of the military art! It appears to me that this is an axiom recognized -- that an army ought to be disposed in such a manner as to be able promptly to reunite, and to sustain itself reciprocally in all its parts . . . "[20b]

Though the definition is easy and the unanimity great, concentration is difficult to achieve. Opposing parties are eager to shift their forces around to avoid being faced by superior strength. There are two ways to accomplish concentration of force. One is to bring to the battlefield more of one's own men (and other elements of power) than the enemy does of his. The other is to diminish the enemy's force by inducing him to send some of his units somewhere else. This second method -- seeking concentration by negative, devious means -- was the guise in which the principle was most frequently practised during the War of the Conquest.

The main British application of the doctrine was to attack the French in several localities at once. This

---

20a La Pause, Campaign plan for 1757, RAPQ 1932-3, 336.

was to force a dispersion of French efforts, leaving the British somewhere superior. A victory anywhere would give them something to exploit.[21a] In peacetime in 1754, the head of the British Board of Trade wrote a paper which foreshadowed this manipulative trend. The Earl of Halifax was offering "Considerations relating to the measures to be taken with regard to affairs in North America" -- specifically, ideas on what to do about French occupation of the Ohio valley.[21b]

20b "Dialogue of the dead between M. the Marquis of Montcalm . . . and M. Wolfe", Memoirs of the Chevalier de Johnstone (Aberdeen: Wyllie, 1871), III, 7.

21a This is not a strategy approved by Frederick the Great, who wrote that a plan "by which one proposes to attack the enemy with two, three or more armies is more apt to fail than that involving a single army. Clearly it is more difficult to find three good generals than to discover only one" (himself). "Projets de campagne", Luvaas, 312.

21b Author unknown but probably Halifax. Stanley M. Pargellis, Military affairs in North America, 36-39.

He held up three alternatives for examination. First, the French posts in Ohio could be attacked. Second, while making that thrust towards the Beautiful River, the British could "carry on other Attacks in different Places at the same time in order to produce a Diversion of their Forces", but the main weight would still be directed towards Fort Duquesne. Third, the principal attack could be made somewhere other than in the Ohio. A French defeat anywhere would end French encroachments generally, he thought, opting for the third choice. Several attacks, or the appearance of several, should be mounted at different spots along the approaches to New France. This would cause the French to scatter their men, and should make entry easy at the single locale -- either Lake Champlain or Niagara -- where a sincere and serious attack was recommended.

Another pre-war strategist, Arthur Dobbs of the Hudson's Bay Company, who later became Governor of South Carolina, had a similar idea. He had no doubt, for the sake of a marriage between Canada's furs and the Honourable Company, that the French had to be wholly dispossessed in North America. His method was that all British forces should be rigged out and ready to sail into strategy with the first breath of war. The American colonies should so mobilize and threaten that they would pin down a sizeable portion of Canada's defence forces while the British launched an expedition which, taking Quebec, would seal the colony's fate.[22]

---

22 PAC, MG 18, D 4, vol.6.

Throughout the war, British plans always called for several attacks at once to be made upon New France. The first campaign -- in 1755, before the official declaration of war -- was well calculated to make the French fragment their forces. The British deployed a full panoply of assaults from every angle of the compass. One army moved towards Fort Duquesne; another mounted the Mohawk River valley to Oswego and set its sights on French Niagara; another advanced in the Lake Champlain sector; while a fourth came to Fort Beauséjour at the narrow part of Acadia. Unfortunately, mounting four attacks was more expensive than merely one large one with three feints. Since they neglected to select one or two columns for fairly-sure victory by overloading them at the expense of the others, the framers of this British design should no more be credited with strategic sense than the shotgun hunter is praised as a sharpshooter. Colonel Robert Napier thought it should be done over. His sketch for the 1756 campaign called for several forces to march from Albany against some or all of Forts Duquesne, Niagara, St.-Frédéric and Quebec. He also warned of a likely attempt by the French to distract and weaken the British effort, by launching a diversionary attack from Louisiana upon the southern English colonies.[23]

---

23 "Sketch for Next Year's Campaign in North America" 6 September 1755, Pargellis, Affairs, 136.

The warning was wise, for the French were also attached to the idea of diminishing the enemy's strength in some vital field by attracting attention elsewhere. In 1755 forces gathering at Frontenac and Niagara made well-publicized threatening gestures towards Oswego -- but the main push came in the Lake Champlain region, where the French aimed to catch the British asleep (better still, absent) because they were still looking west. In 1756 it was the same strategy in reverse. Montcalm was at Lake Champlain until July 15th, while half the regulars and most of the Marines, militia and Indians were on Lake Ontario, where gear, guns and food had been stockpiled in readiness. When Montcalm hastened to lead them the French achieved a fine concentration over two regiments in Oswego. The fur-fortress' potential reinforcements had been immobilized by British change of command and uncertainty where the French were going to appear in earnest -- uncertainty which leaned heavily on deserters' and scouts' reports that the French Commander-in-Chief was at St.-Frédéric.[24]

In both 1757 and 1758, French plans included diversionary marches from Oswego in the direction of Albany, to draw British strength away from the vital and vulnerable Lake Champlain line where they felt serious confrontation could only be the worse for them. "We counted on sending to the Corlar river watershed, early in the campaign, a large party of troops with many Indians -- to divide the enemy's

---

24 Edward P.Hamilton, editor, Adventure in the wilderness: the American journals of Louis Antoine de Bougainville 1756-1760

forces and make him fear for that frontier; and to march at the same time to Carillon. . . ."[25] These western diversions were never made because of shrinking resources, and 1759's plan to re-possess the Ohio valley was likewise waylaid by weakness. Still, the insistent repetition of projects for opening extra fronts prove beyond doubt that French leaders were as anxious as the British were, to make diversions in secondary theatres assist concentration -- or equality, which is the underdog's most optimistic aim-- where it counted most.

With both commands sharing the same strategy, the process of intellection and guesswork in one of these campaigns could become quite complicated. Intentions tangled, as A sought to divert B, without being sidetracked himself. In 1758, for example, Vaudreuil wanted to send an army around by Oswego to pull British troops from Lake Champlain. However, some French officers thought he had been duped, through Iroquois invitation, by a British project to divide the French while concentrating themselves.[26]

(Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1964), [hereafter cited as BJ for Bougainville Journal], entry for 19 July 1756, p.13, According to La Pause, the original aim was not so much to actually take the fort as to prevent British concentration on Lake Champlain. "Relation de la campagne du Canada"(1756), RAPQ 1932-3, 322-325.

25 La Pause, "Relation des affaires du Canada" (1756-1757), RAPQ 1932-3, 347-348.

26 Doreil to unknown 28 July 1758, RAPQ 1944-5, 141. An English translation is in NYCD, X, 762-764.

Lieutenant-Governor James De Lancey of New York thought it was very lucky that the French called off the march, writing the Commander-in-Chief,

> Had you not by the greatest dilegence possible got so early to Fort William Henry, the Large Body of French and Indians under Mr De Levy (which were recalled on this occasion) would probably have penetrated as far as Schenectady and have obliged you to send back a considerable number of your troops to make head against them . . .[27]

The last French design for diverson was precisely that which Napier had imagined in 1755. A descent upon the Carolinas -- which had hitherto been far from the scenes of fighting, and were unprotected by habit -- was specifically recommended by the French Army's Canadian headquarters in its dispatches of autumn, 1758. Reinforcements sent to Canada would be taxed by the British navy en route, and stuck in a cul-de-sac if they did arrive. It would be better to land whatever extra manpower were available along the unscathed, therefore unwary seaboard. The British would be half prepared at Louisbourg, Halifax or New York, and could move troops to these spots with little trouble. A landing south of Virginia, however, would not meet naval interference; distance would swell the rumoured size of the French force; restive Negro slaves could be recruited -- in trying to handle all this, the British would surely have to disengage from at least one of Canada's frontiers. With some pressure removed, the French there could pull their troops together better.[28]

---

27 De Lancey to Abercromby 2 August 1758, Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery, San Marino, California, U.S.A., Abercromby papers [hereafter cited as AB], 496.

28 Bougainville memorandum, "Si la France faisait un armement considerable pour le Canada, quelle en serait

The court approved the soundness of Montcalm's plan, but failed to execute it for lack of funds.[29]

After 1758 the French had to give up ideas of dividing British forces through appearances on unexpected peripheries. Basic deficiencies deprived them of the requisite degree of initiative. But throughout the war the British continued to hold diversion as an unquestioned gospel, and were able to keep acting upon it. While British forces swelled until they were able to seize superiority on all fronts, every British planner called for multiple approaches.

The initial approval given to Lieutenant-Colonel Bradstreet's proposal for a surprise attack on Fort Frontenac (1758) rested on the thinking that the operation would be a diversion assisting major operations on Lake Champlain.[30] That August Colonel James Prevost, who was trying to goad his Commander-in-Chief into either a renewed assault on Carillon or a heart attack -- (he had ambition, as well as military ardour) -- urged

> strong presumptions that Admiral Boscawen is Sailed up the River St. Lawrence, . . . in that case Canada being kept by him in play, will not be able to afford any assistance to the Forts at this end of Lake Champlain.[31]

---

l'Operation la plus avantageuse au salut de cette colonie?" RAPQ 1923-4, 18. This same ploy, to make the British divide their forces, was defended in a remarkable memorandum of January 1759 recommending, from the French point of view, a post-war trade of Canada for Georgia (including Florida). MG 5, B 2, vol. 41, Part 2, 256-278.

29 MG 18, K 8, II, 235.

30 Loudoun to Bradstreet 31 January 1758, LO 5502.

31 Prevost to Abercromby 20 August 1758, AB 548.

He depended upon the distractive presence of a fleet in the river to give Major-General James Abercromby the extra edge of superiority needed to conquer Carillon on a second try. Or perhaps the French would decide to stand strongly on guard towards the south; in that case the thrust, by "preventing Montcalm to send any assistance to Canada", would give Boscawen and his sea-borne units a concentration wherever they chose to operate on the way to Quebec. Lieutenant-Colonel James Montresor drew up a detailed plan for 1759 which advocated simultaneous attacks upon Frontenac and La Présentation, and upon Carillon, both frontally and from the rear. In both theatres the armies were to unite after victories, and press on for La Prairie and Montreal unless stopped by enemy forces or definite superiority.

> This plan or project of operations is found only on one principle, which is to keep the enemy in suspense and state of uncertainty in being attacked at each extremity of its second Capital by two bodies, subdivided in two or more, mutually assisting each other, preventing them [the French] from resolving whether to send supplies or reinforcements to either of them, or watch the defence of MONTREAL, extremely weak . . . Therefore let the enemy act against what part they think proper, the rest in all probability will succeed, and if any one of them has the advantage, the whole of them will soon reap the benefit, . . .[32]

All the major measures of Major-General Jeffrey Amherst, Canada's eventual conqueror, were in terms of diversions and distractions, and the concentration which justified them. Instructing Brigadier-General John Prideaux to go against La Présentation after taking Niagara, he

---

31 Prevost to Abercromby 20 August 1758, AB 548.

32 NYCD, X, 910-912.

wrote that by that late in the summer, "I hope the Enemy will find so much to do in other Corners, as not to make any opposition to You . . ."[33] In 1760 as in 1759, he forced the French to fight on three fronts. Three armies chose Montreal as their last target. Brigadier-General James Murray, pushing off from Quebec in July, thought his own force would probably absorb the greatest weight of French resistance, thus insuring the superiority of the other two on their respective lines of approach.

> The Chevalier de Levis must assemble his Army for the defence of that Capital. If the Canadians do not join him, his force will not greatly exceed mine, if they do their country is abandoned to my mercy . . . At all events I do undertake to make an effectual divertion for the other two Armies, . . .[34]

On Lake Champlain Captain Henry Pringle expected his outfit would move in synchronization with the armies from Quebec and Oswego. "If we cannot drive the French from the Isle aux Noix, we shall at least be of use to the other two armies".[35] He rejoiced in Quebec's salvation from Lévis' siege: "by that means the army there will divide their force".[36] Murray made a more careful statement, remembering that all good soldiers seek concentration, and shun like the plague a dispersed line of operations that leave them opposed to several forces and weaker than them all at the several points of abrasion. "If I know the Country, and I believe I

---

33 Amherst to Prideaux 19 June 1759, PAC, MG 11, Colonial Office 5, vol.55, 212.

34 Murray to Pitt 13 July 1760, WO 34, vol.1, 195.

35 Pringle to family 26 July 1760, PAC, MG 18, L 8, 98-99.

36 Pringle to family 23 June 1760, Ibid., 95-98.

have a tolerable Idea of it, I must beat their army before I can open your passage by the Isle aux Noix. The Enemy are wiser than to divide their Force, . . ." [37]

As Pringle noted, for diversions to produce their intended result -- concentration of force somewhere else -- they have to be coordinated. "Synchronize our watches", the actors ape the soldiers nightly on the late show. In the 1750's the coordination of military operations meant a vague matching of days or even weeks, certainly not Hollywood's tense hours or seconds. A complaint against Shirley's 1755 campaign was that he got behind with operations that should have been contemporary with Braddock's, "Upon a Supposition that such Measures must divide the Force which the French had in those parts".[38] He learned the lesson. In 1757 he wanted ten days to lapse, after dispatching an army up the Kennebec, before having forces move from Fort William Henry against Carillon, and from the Oneida portage against Fort Frontenac.[39] That way the French command would be faced with three simultaneous problems. They would have no chance to stretch out their manpower by engaging the same troops on two fronts, one after the other. The original British plan for 1758 was to decoy the French into weakening their Lake Champlain army by means of an attack on Cataraqui. Once they shifted, Commander-in-Chief Lord Loudoun

---

37 Murray to Amherst 19 May 1760, PAC, MG 23, G II 1, vol.(1), 1, 26-30.

38 "Animadversions upon Mr Shirley's Conduct", Pargellis, Affairs, 313.

39 Ibid., 314-316.

would push from the south with the bulk of his men. "His Lordship's first Battle would have been for Montreal, . . ."[40] Brigadier-General John Forbes from Philadelphia, in a letter describing vividly how unready he was, nevertheless promised

> I shall forthwith proceed to something, both for keeping our Indians and keeping up the Spirit of the provincials. I should therefore beg to know how farr you are ready to begin your operations, in order that I may at least make a diversion, and facilitate your measures all that lyes in my power.[41]

"I hope the operations in your part of the world," wrote Sir John Ligonier (Commander-in-Chief of the British Army) from London to Amherst in 1759, "will be so concerted as to take place at the same time [as Wolfe's] as near as the nature of the thing will permit; which cannot fail of creating a diversion equally advantageous to both".[42] Another observer noted in connection with Wolfe's campaign, that in order to achieve a British concentration at one end or the other of hard-pressed Canada's gates, there had to be careful timing. "The issue of that important expedition will depend on the exact coincidence and concert of the two attacks by Amherst or Wolfe the one from the land, by Ticonderoga, the other by the river".[43]

Amherst's secretary summed up the strategy which was equally owned by both French and British, until the former lost the capacity to follow it:

By attacking the enemy at many different places

---

40 Robertson to Morton 19 December 1758. Ibid., 430.
41 J.O.Fforbes to Abercromby 7 June 1758, AB 334.
42 Ligonier to Amherst 12 February 1759, PAC, MG 18, L 4, packet 11, 17.
43 Lord Royston to Sir John Goodnesse 26 July 1759,

> all at once it was hoped the conquest . . . would become easy as it was impossible for the enemy to be formidable everywhere.[44]

Diversions and oblique approaches at locations "X" and "Y" were meant to produce concentration of force at "Z". "Calculated dispersion is often the only way to effective concentration."[45a] Overall, the British won the war by following this simple formula. The theory was easy. The difficulty was not in learning the recipe, but in getting the ingredients.

Another principle on which they agreed was the need for security (to prevent hostile interference with one's own arrangements)[45b] in both its aspects -- static and mobile.

Static security required fixed fortifications. As in Europe, forts in North America had two main purposes: to secure communications, and to bar the enemy. Control of communications on a long trail was assured by intermittently sited strongpoints, such as the French way stations between Montreal and Fort Duquesne -- La Présentation, Frontenac, Niagara, Presqu'ile, La Boeuf, Machault.[46] The "most respectable" -- that is, the strongest -- forts were built at the end of the trail, to prevent enemy penetration of the frontier. "This Fort was one of the keys of the Province",

---

PAC, MG 18, L 5, vol. 4, page (renumbered) 10.

44 Arthur Mair narrative, MG 18, L 4, packet 64.

45a Liddell Hart, Ghost of Napoleon, 53.

45b It implies intelligence of what the enemy is about, in order to frustrate his attempts. Henry E. Eccles, Military concepts and philosophy (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University press, 1965), 111.

46 See Prevost memorandum of May 1757, Pargellis, Affairs, 337-338.

wrote the Governor of New York when William Henry was destroyed. "I fear we shall soon severely feel the effects of this loss at Schenectady & on the Mohawks River, . . . "[47] The next year he pointed out how the absence of proper fortifications compelled the army to undertake awkward diversions of strength, in rhythm-response to hostile movements which could be more readily ignored if the country had strategic fixed defences.[48a]

Because of the importance of strong points in an era of slow movement and a country of no roads -- and because they could multiply the effects, and substitute for larger numbers, of troops -- the antagonists in the War of the Conquest put great stress upon forts.[48b] They dared risks to possess them, sweated their regiments in putting them up (or tearing down the enemy's), and were preoccupied with calculations of how to protect and improve the advantages they offered. La Pause' thought on defending Fort Frontenac was to prevent the approach of cannon to it by a system of redoubts.[49] In circumstances where time to make such preparations were lacking -- notably on the occasion of two French victories and their greatest defeat -- the defenders fought outside the walls without benefit of much, or of anything, in the way

---

47 De Lancey to the Lords of Trade 24 August 1757, NYCD, VII, 274.

48a De Lancey to Abercromby 5 June 1758, AB 320.

48b E.g., Desandrouins to the Minister 28 August 1756, MG 1, C 11 A, vol. 101, 351.

49 La Pause, "Notes on Fort Frontenac", RAPQ 1933-4, 85-87.

of outworks.[50] They uncovered troops in the open to postpone the siting of hostile batteries; casualties were courted and taken, to put off the day when the precious fort would itself come under gunfire. Postpone, delay, delay -- in the anarchic aftermath of such engagements, the groans of survivors amounted, strategically, to prayers for the swift approach of autumn, amputator of sieges. Thus armies defended forts that controlled territory when the army was not present.

Besides outworks and pitched battle in front of the fortress, additional factors helping shield the forts of the 1750's were distance and the difficulty of crossing it. "It is not the fortifications but the difficult access there is to Canada that constitute its strength for there is not a fort in the whole country that can hold out above a few days once a proper force gets before it."[51]

Every major operation of the conflict was in connection with attacking or defending one of these fulcrums of security.

---

50 Fort Duquesne, 1755; Carillon, 1758; Quebec, 1759. Clausewitz (who did not specifically have in mind a country with communications as constricted as Canada's were) wrote, "The purpose of fortifications is to keep a considerable part of the enemy's army occupied as siege troops, to give us an opportunity to defeat the rest of his army. Consequently, it is best to fight our battles behind our fortifications and not in front of them." Principles of war (edited by Hans W. Gatske; Harrisburg: Military service publishing Company, 1945), 55.

51 C.M., "State of Canada in 1758", MG 18, L 4, packet 57.

The two armies were also conscious of security in the open: on the march or in camp. As the French carried out demolitions at Oswego in August 1756, they were never so elated with their seizure as to lose sight of possible interference. "We have moved and now have our right on Fort Ontario and the left slanting across the woods," wrote Captain Louis-Antoine de Bougainville, Montcalm's aide-de-camp, "a position more suitable for our needs and more prepared for the enemy should they wish to come."[52a] Part of the rationale for having Indian auxiliaries was that they kept the nearby woods clean of the enemy, and prevented the main force being surprised. Ranging further afield, their raids for scalps and prisoners imposed the friction of constant precautions on the other side. Night sentries were de rigueur for the strugglers in the War of the Conquest and passwords were not beneath their dignity.[52b]

Officers continually reminded the men, both regulars and amateurs, of the need for alertness. Governor Thomas

---

52a BJ 16 August 1756, p. 27. Bougainville (1729-1811) was appointed aide-maréchal de logis de l'armée in Canada in July 1758, and promoted to colonel early in 1759. MG 4, A 1, vol. 3501, pièce 146. Interspersed among frequent snide anti-canadianisms in his Journal are many valuable insights on strategy.

52b At Frontenac 10 August 1755: "Les gardes tirerent La nuit sur des batteaux Venant de Niagara qui navoit pas repondre au qui vive." Malartic journal, MG 4, A 1, vol. 3405, pièce 118, 6.

Pownall's "Marching orders to the Troops of the Massachusetts Bay" (2758) contained a strong warning against stumbling into ambushes. Although the main body of soldiers

> may have got through any pass or defile without danger yet as an artful enemy may suffer a body to pass unmolested through such to . . . attack them in confusion just as they . . . thought all danger was over; every officer commanding a body so marching is hereby ordered always to draw up his men as fast as they get through such pass or defile or get over any fford or bridge, . . . [53]

Wolfe's orders for his men included:

> No sentries are ever to be placed within point blank musquet shot of a wood; . . . detachments must never halt nor encamp in the little openings in the wood . . . without examining the skirts with all imaginable care and precaution; next to valour, the best qualities in a military man is vigilence and precaution. [54]

Thirdly, French and British agreed on what priority Lake Ontario should have among all the theatres of war. In the early years it had top priority.[55] The Anglo-American casus belli was the Ohio valley; Lake Ontario was one way to get there, and it seemed a luckier path than the one Braddock chose. In 1755 the British sent an ambitious army to Oswego,

---

53 WO 34, vol. 25, 233-238.

54 Order book for the Quebec campaign, written on board the frigate RICHMOND, PAC, MG 18, L 5, vol. 8 (2), 8.

55 See, for example, Lord Halifax' 1754 paper on North American strategy. An attack on Niagara via Lake Ontario was his chosen prescription for the most convenient, far-reaching and inexpensive method of combating French encroachments. "Considerations relating the measures to be taken with regard to affairs in North America", Pargellis, Affairs, 39.

and in 1756 the French sent there an even more impressive one, which was in addition well directed.

However, once the British learned there was no easy back door into the Ohio valley, and when they undertook the utter conquest of Canada in a Gordian-knot solution to all continental problems, then the importance of the Ontario theatre declined greatly. In 1757-9 it ranked last (third) among the Laurentian colony's active fighting zones. That was because there was no very practical invasion route from Lake Ontario into the settled part of Canada. The topography of this situation will be detailed in chapter II. La Pause mentioned all the main considerations when he explained why the French felt less threat from the west than from other directions. If the British tried to come down the upper Saint Lawrence River, they would be weakened by lengthening communications and the necessity of maintaining garrisoned posts to guard them. While they got weaker, the French would grow stronger --

> we in our greatest force, being closer to the centre, and moreover able to engage all our people without great fatigue -- and they the more animated by the necessity for victory, the enemy being so nigh to our threshholds. Having no other resource in case of defeat, the enemy will be in danger of utter destruction, being unable to ascend the rapids again, and obliged to retire by land through the woods, across a considerable distance and a very difficult country. I believe that the fear of such an outcome will greatly discourage them using this route . . .[56]

The numbers of men allowed for Lake Ontario service, compared with other theatres, provide a neat measurement of its

---

56 La Pause, Project for 1759, RAPQ 1932-3, 370-371.

relative unimportance. William Shirley's weighting of forces in the operations he planned for 1757 was typical: 20,000 against Quebec, 10,000 to St.-Frédéric, 2000 to Cataraqui.[57] In the event, the British made no initiative at all towards Lake Ontario. The French only kept up small garrisons there, and late in the year sent no army but a raiding party into the Mohawk valley.[58a] Meanwhile, thousands of soldiers marched on the shores of Lake Champlain, and manoeuvred over the fate of Louisbourg.

Basic assumptions on the British side were revealed in Governor Pownall's plan for the following year's campaign. He proposed pressing the land war against Canada by the employment of two separate armies. The principal force should move northward from Lake Champlain. The other should develop a second invasion route from the south, probably by way of the Connecticut River.[58b] In settling upon this scheme Pownall was searching for a path on which to dispatch his second army, yet he did not suggest its use in the Lake Ontario region. The plan showed the widely-held Anglo-American attitude that the settled portion of Canada was virtually unapproachable and

---

57 "Some Hints for the Operations in North America in 1757", Pargellis, Affairs, 314.

58a Lévis journal October 1757, Abbé H.-R. Casgrain, Collection des manuscrits du maréchal de Lévis (Quebec: Demers, 1889-1895), I, 106.

58b Pownall to Abercromby 10 March 1758, WO 34, vol. 25, 31-34.

unassailable from that direction. As the campaign unfolded, the British belatedly spared 5600 men -- a smallish fraction of the army on Lake Champlain -- for a brief incursion into the Ontario theatre. The French did no more than try to maintain their positions. Montcalm in 1759 had to decide whether as many as three of his eight regular regiments could be detached from the main army covering Quebec, and where they should be sent. After comparing the relative scales of threat impending on Lakes Champlain and Ontario, he settled: All three regiments would go to Carillon.[59] Final French dispositions that year were: at Quebec, about 8000 men; Lake Champlain, 4000; Lake Ontario, 1800.[60] British troop commitments to the various sectors were similarly proportioned. If late-autumn attacks had developed in both the Lake Champlain and Lake Ontario theatres, the French plan for mustering out militia was to send the older and least able-bodied men to the latter area.[61a]

In the war's last winter, the French kept on foot 700 men towards the east, 500 towards the south, and 300 or

---

59 "Voilà les Rapides; pays d'en haut en santé; à Québec on a peur, disait-on à M. le chevalier de Lévis; je ne crains rien, j'en ferai partir les bataillons du plus tôt; ERGO, j'en conclus, tous les trois et tout à Carillon. Ainsi soit". Montcalm to Bourlamaque 31 March 1759, Casgrain, V, 308.

60 La Pause, "Mémoire et observations", RAPQ 1931-2, 90, 92. BJ, pp. 318-319.

61a Rigaud de Vaudreuil to the Minister 2 October 1759, MG 1, C 11 A, vol. 104, 97.

fewer facing west.[61b] They opened the 1760 summer with 1800 permanent-force troops watching Quebec, 1500 facing Lake Champlain, and 1000 on the upper Saint Lawrence River. Surprisingly, Amherst advanced with his largest army through the Lake Ontario theatre of operations, and used two other forces as diversions to help make it safe for him. The invasion in so great strength that Canada could not hope to turn it back, therefore, came through this hitherto most unpromising of warzones. Why?

It is impossible to be pontifical because definite documentary evidence is lacking. A British officer close to Amherst offered the observation that the general was of "a character so peculiar that nobody was ever able to penetrate his intentions."[61c] It is easy to guess that Amherst, knowing the French felt topographical features made the Lake Ontario theatre safer for them than the others were, would be watching it less carefully -- which was true. He engineered a risky strategical surprise and got away with it.[62] This unexpected

---

61b La Pause, "Mémoire et observations", RAPQ 1931-2, 106.

61c Memoirs of the Chevalier de Johnstone, II, 186.

62 Perhaps he ought not to have. Bourlamaque thought Amherst's 1760 move did "little honour to his military knowledge", exposing his corps to "utter annihilation". His Memorandum on Canada, NYCD, X, 1142-1145. In 1825 Major-General Sir James Carmichael-Smyth wrote an expert summary of Canada's military history for the Duke of Wellington. He found Amherst's victorious campaign to be the second most stupid in 211 years of fighting (the American campaign of 1812 was "almost beneath criticism"). He called it "imprudent and unnecessary", referred

turn of events in the war's last year -- the British endangering so valuable a force on such a little known, ill-omened route -- is perhaps the crowning item in a process of strategical development by which the victorious party changed from a semi-defensive war for limited objectives, in 1754-1756, to an all-out unlimited offensive for the total subjugation of Canada after 1757. The shock of the last campaign reinforces the point of agreement, subsisting between the two sides for most of the war, that the Lake Ontario theatre of operations was in general the least eligible area for British action to breach Canada's ultimate security, and hence the direction in which the defenders breathed easiest.

In some features of their operations both sides revealed a fourth shared attitude -- namely, that war was too important to be dictated solely by military motives. They would have agreed with Clausewitz' 19th century dictum that war is a continuation of policy by other means.[63] They often obeyed that axiom's corollary, using warfare to further diplomatic and political aims.

A case in point is the French destruction of the German Flats in November 1757. German Flats was a farming

---

to its "impropriety", "Impolicy and apparent error". See Sir James Carmichael, editor, Précis of the wars in Canada (London, 1862), especially pp. 84-92, 99, 147, 200.

63 "War is not merely a political act, but also a real political instrument, a continuation of policy carried out by other means". ENCYCLOPAEDIA, XXI, 292.

village, population 300 first-and second-generation German immigrants, eighty miles above Albany on the Mohawk River.[64] Dwelling on an uncomfortably exposed frontier, they got into diplomatic touch with Canada soon after the fall of Oswego. A deputation of Iroquois carried their plea for neutrality to Montreal, wrapped in a riddle. Vaudreuil solved it. I know that nation, he told the Indians, which as you say is neither English, nor French, nor Indian. They belong to a people across the great lake (the Atlantic) which is allied with the French king. If they join the Iroquois or transfer themselves to Canada, they will be safe. If they are double dealing, talking with us and also cooperating with the British authorities, then they stand in great danger.[65]

The German settlers did not boost the British war effort any more than they could avoid. Their community became a centre for illicit trade with Canada when the regular emporium, Albany, filled up with too many suspicious British soldiers.[66] They behaved so obstinately, wrote an American officer in 1757, "that during the Summer when I had the Command at Harkimers they refused to join me when I received an alarm and said if the French or Indians cam there it was to strick the fort & do them no Injury . . . . "[67] Lord Loud-

---

64 Lévis Journal November 1757, Casgrain, I, 108-109. See also the maps accompanying Chapter II.

65 La Pause, "Relation de l'Ambassade des cinq nations", RAPQ 1932-3, 329-330.

66 See the document quoted in chapter VI, p. 399.

67 Captain Thomas Williams, New York Regiment, to [Loudoun?] 9 December 1757, Henry E.Huntington Library and Art Gallery, San Marino, California, USA, Loudoun papers [hereafter cited as LO], 4973.

oun and Sir William Johnson, Indian Superintendent for the Northern Department, were alerted to their "treasonable correspondence" with the French.[68] Nevertheless, Canada decided to obliterate them. When a Canadian-Indian expedition of 300 men approached their village in mid-Novenber 1757, the German-Americans confidently declined adding their militia strength to the region's defence. So their village was burned, their cows and horses slaughtered, and 102 of the men, women and children were led in captivity back to Canada.[69]

Why did the French do it? It was not because the people of German Flats had gone over whole-heartedly to help the enemy.[70] There seem to have been two reasons. For a military motive: the French by this step wiped out one of the furthest advanced farming communities, whose surplus products,without prodigious transportation, could be cheaply gathered to help feed British soldiers on frontier duty. But also, Canada was teaching a diplomatic lesson. German Flats had asked for a special status of neutrality and it had been refused except on certain conditions. It was deemed the con-

---

68 Loudoun to Johnson 9 June 1757, WO 34, vol.38, 30-31.

69 Lévis Journal November 1757, Casgrain, I, 108-109. "Journal de la campagne de M. de Bellestre", Ibid., XI, 127-142. Williams to [Loudoun?] 9 December 1757, LO 4973.

70 The next spring (trying to play down the importance of the French incursion) Johnson told the Iroquois the German Flats folk had a very bad war record, from the British standpoint: they were "bad people, and had richly deserved it; . . ." Malartic Journal 18 April 1758, NYCD, X, 838-839.

ditions were not being strictly adhered to. In the Lake Ontario theatre at that time, Vaudreuil's word could not be shrugged off so lightly. In particular, this was an object lesson and reminder to the Five Nations of what could befall any of the area's peaceable farming communities -- for instance, their own! -- if they gave the French reason to think that discipline were needed.

They were not always so devious and indirect with their diplomatic-cum-military moves. An oft-planned (1757-8) but always postponed filibustering march through charred Oswego down to Schenectady was sketched out frankly with an eye to its impact on the Indians. "This corps is to go by way of the Oswego River, the Mohawk, and the Hudson," recorded Bougainville. "Its object is to cause the Five Nations unanimously to take up the hatchet against the English and then to march in concert to ravage the shores of the Mohawk River and to capture some of the forts in this region, if the opportunity presents."[71] Brigadier-General the Chevalier de Lévis, appointed to command the expedition, described to the Maréchal de Belle-Isle (Minister of War), the triplicate rationale of his "delicate, important, diplomatic [politique] and military" mission. It would create a diversion that should reduce the forces facing Montcalm on Lake St.-Sacrament. The second aim -- Lévis thought this most essential -- was to prevent the reestablishment of Choagen and the con-

---

71 BJ 15 June 1758, pp. 211-213.

> struction of other forts with which the English are planning to fortify the streams in that country in order to achieve their aims, according to the information we have of the movements they are making.[72a]

Finally, they intended to make the Iroquois act offensively against the British -- to intimidate them with a large French force and encourage their active participation in gathering booty, compromising and involving the tribes to the extent that Iroquois-British relations could not help but rupture.

Diplomatic aims of French warfare reached even higher in the scale of civilized communities. The guerilla war against the American frontier came close to persuading some of the colonies to conclude separate peace treaties. Vaudreuil told Versailles he sponsored Indian incursions against outlying homesteads because no other tactic was as effective in making the Americans desire the return of peace.[72b] His officers at Niagara interrogated the captives who were permitted to bring their own scalps, still attached, for the sake of information that could be wrung from "live letters".

> All the prisoners assert that if the French should appear in Pennsylvania, this province would make itself an independent republic under the protection of France . . . . the civilian Governor of Pennsylvania offers to let the Indians pass freely into Virginia, provided that they spare his province.[73]

72a Lévis to Belle-Isle 26 June 1758, Casgrain, II, 186.
72b Vaudreuil to the Minister 8 June 1756, MG 1, C 11 A, vol. 101, 22.
73 BJ 17-31 October 1757, pp. 190-191.

The Quakers told the Indians that although their own blood had been spilled, they neither sought revenge nor blamed the Indians.

> The present war between the English and French does not concern us. It was entered into beyond the Great Lake by the two great kings of England and France we have nothing to do with it nor will we concern ourselves about it. We are resolved to pursue the rules our ancestors laid down to us.[74]

Those rules apparently embraced both the Quakers' notorious pacifism, and how to recognize a seller's market. To show their hearts were in the right place, they were willing to trade to the Indians

> everything fit to kill men with in great plenty, such as guns, swords, hatchets, powder, lead, clothing and provisions . . . . if you should determine to strike the English you must kill the soldiers only and not us, for we have no hand in the war. . . . If you should determine to strike the French we will likewise furnish you plentifully with everything for that purpose.[75]

Nervous prostration in potentially powerful societies was a beneficial, diplomatic result of the loosely organized war of raids and rapes. By utilizing French power on the ocean, La Pause thought that seaboard colonies could be made to feel as exposed as the ones in the forest, and could also be pushed out of the war. One of his plans for 1757 was to send a strong French fleet into Boston, to dicker with the local government. Massachusetts was restive under British quartering laws, and other irksome imperial controls brought by war. Many colonial leaders argued that London was using

---

74 Johnson's third-hand report, 29 January 1758, WO 34, vol. 46B, 22.

75 Ibid.

the fact of hostilities to undermine American liberties. At the warship's muzzle, the people of Massachusetts could be persuaded that France would befriend them.

> They are powerful enough to stand by themselves and to reap all the profit of their own commerce. The English lord it over them; they could get along without the English. Circumstances offer them a favourable occasion for forming a state, and making a treaty of alliance with France and treaties of commerce with all other states; free in their governemnt and in their possessions, they would become steadily stronger by colonists of different nations and different religions, who will flock to live there, and could hope some day to be a flourishing republic.[76]

The British also made military decisions for non-military reasons, chiefly having to do with the political situation in the American colonies. The British empire in North America was so fragmented and centrifugal that firm direction was very difficult. The French realized this fact, and hoped to capitalize upon it. At a convivial pre-Christmas in the Ohio woods in 1753, Captain Philippe-Thomas Chabert de Joncaire told Major George Washington how the French would accomplish all their purposes in the interior while the English were bickering over what to do. Washington wrote,

> The wine, as they dosed themselves pretty plentifully with it, soon banished the restraint which at first appeared in their conversation, and gave a license to their tongues to reveal their sentiments more freely. They told me that it was their absolute design to take possession of the Ohio and, by G--, they would do it; for that although they were sensible the English could raise two men for their one, yet they knew [the American colonies'] motions were too slow and dilatory to prevent any undertaking of theirs.[77]

---

76 La Pause, Plan for 1757, RAPQ 1932-3, 337-338.

77 Washington Journal 5 December 1753, F.H.Severance, An old frontier of France, II, (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1917), 36.

The Duke of Cumberland, Captain-General of the British Army, admitted that laws, government, and popular spirit were all more military in Canada than in the English-speaking provinces. This gave the French a decided edge.

> In whatever Part we attack Canada, the Constitution of their Government gives them an Advantage, that they can transport thither, not only their whole regular Force, but all their Provincials, who are, God knows, many Degrees above ours:. . . 78

On account of defects in the American set-up that inhibited all pulling in harness together, the more statesman-like British leaders sought to shape the war effort so as to maximize colonial unanimity and participation in it. Lord Halifax showed there were several ways to proceed against the French, and the thing to do was decide "Conveniency . . . by which of them Great Britain may be enabled to bring the greatest FORCE to operate most effectually and with the LEAST CHARGE".[79] In other words, encourage the locals. For this reason, he opted against directly attacking the Fort Duquesne "encroachment", for most of the colonies would not cooperate in a war that seemed to be waged solely for Virginia's benefit. In 1758 when the main theatre of the war had shifted northward to the Canadian border, the British campaign against the Ohio was a strategical sideshow on the far periphery of events that were at all likely to be decisive. However, staging such a campaign lent plausibility to calls for military efforts

---

78 Cumberland to Loudoun 2 December 1756, Pargellis, Affairs, 254.

79 Halifax,"Considerations relating the measures to be taken with regard to Affairs in North America" (November 1754), Ibid., 36-39.

from the southern colonies. Their response prevented the northern colonies, who really were needed, from complaining they were over-taxed.[80]

3. Divergent attitudes.

While sharing some principles, there were other matters dealing with how the war should be fought, on which the antagonists disagreed. When the two armies' strategies were fully developed from the middle of the war on, they had different objectives. A second difference, which is perhaps a restatement of the first, is the fact the British waged offensive war, and the French defensive. Finally the French displayed economy of force and the British quite the opposite. While noting these differences, it is essential to keep a watch out for underlying conditions that encouraged the antagonists into these contrary lines of strategy; to separate what was preferred in theory from what was inescapable on account of the circumstances.

A perfectly opposite divergence developed between the objectives of the two armies' military operations. The French fought for positions while the British attacked the French Army.

This is especially clear in the French case, and right from the beginning of the war to its end. In the early

---

80 George Stanley agrees with this: New France: the last phase, 187.

years French strategy was to hold on to threatened positions -- Beauséjour, St.-Frédéric, Frontenac, Duquesne -- and to enhance the security of these points by enlarging the sanitary **englishless** zone nearby. This prudent motive -- and no expansionist urge -- explains the attacks on Forts Oswego and William Henry, and the erection of Carillon. Like a wise and greedy player who seizes squares on the chess board that unlock or demolish powerful combinations, the French command cared only for dominating strong points. As long as these were held, there was perfect indifference if there might be large enemy forces away from Canada's borders in Philadelphia or lower New York colony.

The country's topography -- precisely, its communication routes -- determined where were the points the French would exert themselves to get, or bleed to keep. "I ought to warn you," Lévis wrote to the Duc de Mirepoix, explaining the nature of the war,

> about the lakes and rivers, which are the **roads** we use in this country and from which we can never get very far because it is on them we move about, and it is necessarily by them that we bring forward supplies and munitions.81

"The lakes and rivers are the only outlets, the only open roads in this country; . . . " [82] There will be less trouble conquering Canada, than in getting to it, wrote a British strategist.[83] With routes so few and constricted, the posse-

---

81 Lévis to Maréchal de Mirepoix 4 September 1757, Casgrain, II, 137.

82 BJ 14-24 July 1758, pp.246-247.

83 C.M., "State of Canada in 1758", PAC, MG 18, L 4, packet 57.

ssor of half a dozen major intersections controlled the traffic. On Canada's side, the only objectives in the entire six-year struggle were the fortresses built on these spots. That was why La Pause called the war in Canada a war of posts.[84] The terrain was terrible, so the battle had to be for the road.[85]

On the other hand, British strategy came to covet not only the road and its guardhouse, but also the destinations it led to, and the toll-takers with all their colleagues and friends. While the French were baffling, hoaxing and holding out, the British aimed more simply to destroy the armed power of the enemy.[86] After they penetrated the strongpoints and possessed the communications, they rounded up the French army, every man.

British thinking on this point was not static; there was process. At first they too were fighting a war of posts and positions, trying to correct, as they said, French encroachments, to punish provocations and secure the future. The best-publicized gallic iniquity was Fort Duquesne. Attacks were put in against it -- but the fall of Duquesne would not (did not) diminish French Canada's organized power to wage war. New York's Governor De Lancey was representative of some who looked to cure the cancer nearer its root. He wrote the Board of Trade in 1755 about three ways to attack

---

84 "Mémoire et reflections", RAPQ 1933-4, 161-162.

85 Mercenary Major Mike Hoare, discussing the civil war in Nigeria in the Toronto Globe and Mail 6 December 1967: "The terrain is terrible, so the battle must be for the road, like Burma".

86 The most famous western writer on strategy agrees with this line of conduct. Clauswitz, Principles of war, 45-47.

the French: from the Gulf of Saint Lawrence, at Saint-Frédéric, and at Niagara. Even if an expedition from Virginia to the Ohio resulted in the capture of Fort Duquesne, he said, that would only be "cutting off a toe", while taking Niagara would "lopp off a limb from the French and greatly disable them."[87a] The British campaigns of 1755 and 1756 were aimed at toes and limbs, straightening out deformities in the intercolonial border.

The year 1757 was a time of transition. British strategy-makers began discarding the limited objective of frontier outposts and deciding upon more ambitious and dangerous thrusts. There was no sudden, clean break with the past because William Pitt, the English politician most determined to conquer in North America, began influencing British high strategy in late 1756 but did not take charge with a fairly free hand until the middle of 1757.[87b] Those several months of governmental instability produced the fiascoes of 1757: a massive concentration at Halifax against Louisbourg, devoid of preparations necessary to give an attack reasonable prospects of success; the loss of Fort William Henry on the New York frontier while the troops that could have guarded it were waiting fruitlessly in Halifax. In subsequent years, however, with the empire-builder

---

87a De Lancey to Robinson 7 August 1755, NYCD, VI, 991.

87b In late June. Gipson, VII, 14-22. D. B. Heater, Order and rebellion: a history of Europe in the Eighteenth century (London: Harrap, 1964), 126.

Pitt securely in control of policy, great increases were made in army and navy strength, and in the numbers of men and ships devoted to the North American war. Budgets were unstinted; rhetoric, reminders and especially generous grants encouraged the American colonies to do their utmost. Having provided the means, the British government engaged in methodical, energetic war against the very existence of Canada as a colony in the rival French empire.[87c]

The port city of Quebec became symbol of the British forces' revised and final objective: to crush French armed power in America. Leaving New York for Halifax in HMS SUTHERLAND in June 1757, Lord Loudoun explained that after Louisbourg were cleared out of the way, "Quebec must be taken, and that will finish every thing of consequence to the Northward, for all the others will fall easily afterwards."[88] Other French positions would tumble readily because a Quebec in British hands would put a stranglehold on Montcalm's army, throttling the defenders of so-called encroachments and of Canada too.

The true objective of British strategy from 1758 on must not be obscured by the fact it was always some position or other that was their immediate goal. They no more achieved their aim when they seized these temporary targets, than a

---

87c The army grew to 150,000 men, the navy to 400 ships; Britain's budget for armed forces 15 million pounds by 1760; total reimbursements to the colonies during 1756-1763 about 1,275,000 pounds (two-fifths of their expenses). L. W. Cowie, Eighteenth century Europe (London: Bell, 1963), 229; Basil Williams, The Whig supremacy (Oxford: Clarendon, 1962), 357.

88 Loudoun to Cumberland 22 June 1757, Pargellis, Affairs, 375.

man who takes the first steps has completed the journey he planned. British thrusts on Canada's southern and western borders were aimed at the colony's vital interior.

Quebec in British possession was the ultimate and most desperate escalation of the conflict, even if that possession were peaceful and no muskets were heard. Quebec was like the forts in the back country in that it controlled a communication route. But it was the most key position of all because it was on the most important road -- the road from France, and Canada's only one. The forces in Canada could survive any other road being cut, but not this one. The community was too small, too vulnerable, its defence too dependent upon the Mother-country to be able to sustain such a scission for very long. An enemy seeking to prevent the movement of men and materiel over this road had two methods to choose from. Items of potential strength for French forces in North America could be intercepted en route; or the terminus could be captured so they would have nowhere to arrive.[89a] The first of these methods depended upon the British navy blockading the Atlantic. It is discussed in Chapter VI.[89b] But starving Canada into submission in this indirect manner was

---

89a Strategies characterized by J. C. Wylie as 'cumulative' and 'sequential'. Cumulative strategy -- steady pressure, quite likely exerted far from theatres of principal conflict. Sequential strategy -- the purposive advance of forces across a map towards the heart of the enemy's power, from A to B to C. Military strategy: a general theory of power control (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University press, 1967), 23-26.

89b See especially pp. 435-437.

not fully efficient and could be very time-consuming; the prey might dwindle for years. For a speedier final victory and an absolute severance of Canada's supply line, the British in 1758-1759 aimed at nothing less than forcible possession of the only Canadian port where aid from France could be received.

Quebec was not a position like the others! A British attack there was a direct strike against the French army; success could make it a fatal one.

La Pause in 1759 saw that the British objective, while it might have been limited in early years of the war, had become nothing short of annihilating Canada's organized capacity to resist. In a remarkable paper he posed a hypothetical situation where the French could save either the capital, or the army. His choice was to abandon the position, so as to preserve the only instrument which could possibly win it back later on, provided it were kept intact.[89c] The true objective of British policy, he recognized -- now that it sought a final solution of the Canadian problem -- must be the French forces, and not positions. The attack on Quebec was thus, in essence, an attack on the French army: the most ambitious

---

89c "Campagne 1759: Mémoire en supposant que l'ennemy descende les Rapides", RAPQ 1932-3, 365-368.

and unlimited of objectives had been adopted.[90a]

French strategy was defensive, and British strategy was offensive. The only exception on the French side was the project that triggered the war off. Canada's occupation of the Ohio valley was not a defensive move. From 1755 on, however, the aim of all French operations was merely to hold on. They took the defensive not because the enemy was superior; that was not true at first. They were defensive because they were satisfied with the status quo.

Fighting a defensive war did not mean that French forces never attacked first. Small squads frequently operated behind British lines.[90b] A French naval officer in 1756

90a In J. C. Wylie's terminology, the British controlled the war's pattern and manipulated its centre of gravity to the enemy's most critical and vulnerable weakness. Military strategy, 91.

90b Canadian initiatives behind Anglo-American lines were undertaken for three purposes: to terrorize the civilian population; to interfere with military preparations; and to maintain morale at home. In making these raids over the border, the French employed traditional canadien advantages -- Indian help, knowledge of country and well-proven equipment and techniques. Except for isolated occasions, the British did not disrupt supply or cause consternation by penetrating French lines on land. However, the British did strike at the French rear, and also used a characteristic preeminence of their own to do so. The vulnerable rear of the French army defending Canada was the supply-line over the ocean from metropolitan France. British seapower kept hacking at this vital cord until it parted. It can therefore be said that although their means were different, both sides adopted the strategic principle of initiative against the enemy rear, the British the more potently.

analyzed the situation thus: the loss of Saint-Frédéric or of Niagara would be extremely serious, opening up an entrance into Canada for the enemy. Therefore French policy should be to stay defensive and not hazard anything.[91] The high command agreed with the principle, but concluded that aggressive vigour was the better part of prudence. In 1756 Fort Carillon, twenty miles south of Saint-Frédérick, was built. It deepened the defenses on that front by shutting the British entirely out of Lake Champlain. Simultaneously, the fortified British station on Lake Ontario was besieged, captured and destroyed. Another project of hyper-active defence was planned for 1757, against Fort William Henry. "The lack of provisions prevents us from starting the campaign," wrote Bougainville in mid-May. "All thought of offensive action is impossible for us, and even the defensive, if the enemy comes in force quickly and from several directions is scarcely less so."[92] Nevertheless, once some food had arrived from overseas they lost no time in bringing the bulk of the regular, Marine, militia and Indian forces into a defence-motivated advance upon the British position. William Henry's collapse extended to fifty miles the cordon sanitaire south of Carillon, bolstering that gateway's security.[93]

---

91 Plessis journal 1756, RAPQ 1928-9, 221-224.
92 BJ 12-25 May 1757, pp. 108-109.
93 During the 1757/8 winter the staff in Canada carried out planning for a similar seizure of Fort Edward. La Pause, "Relation de ce qui s'est passe en Canada du commencement de la campagne . . . " (1758), RAPQ 1932-3, 351. Although this operation was never undertaken, the fact that its details were worked out shows again the French fondness for agressive defence.

All these operations, although they presented French forces marching ahead, assaulting, pushing and even winning new ground temporarily, were impelled by defensive purposes. Neither Oswego nor William Henry were occupied. During the fortunate early years of the war the French took no steps towards turning military victories into permanent conquests. Their initiatives were meant to prevent the enemy from launching conquests of his own. The spirit of this strategy was urged by Bougainville at the beginning of the 1758 summer. While Vaudreuil was plotting to send a composite army around the British left to strike towards Schenectady (from Oswego), Bougainville thought a repeat of the previous year's preepmtive strike to the south was better.

> We must march at once with the Indians, the best of the Canadians, the regulars, and the colony troops. They [i.e., the British] will not yet be ready for a defence. Persuaded, according to the report of prisoners, that shortage of provisions renders us unable to assemble an army, they are less on their guard and do not think of accelerating their works. An unexpected and vigorous attack will bowl them over and will end the campaign in this direction. 94

What Bougainville wanted epitomizes the French command's steadfast strategic hope. Not conquest, but an end to the campaign -- to the war -- without defeat. Even when most greedy they sought security, not victory. They attacked to avoid being subject to attack.

It was only in the last two campaigns that their consistently defensive principle showed the expected surface manifestations as, pushed back

---

94 BJ 27 June 1758, p. 220.

step by step, they sought to delay the British advance and make the miles painful to gain.[95a]

While the French were steadily defensive from the start of large-scale hostilities, the British gradually developed their strategy to one of full offensive. In 1755 and 1756 they tried, with little success, to correct French encroachments by local action. The defeats they suffered concentrated their minds on thoughts of defence.[95b] But from 1757 on, waxing in strength, they were determined to carry the war into French-held territory without limitation. Waiters never win, Pitt had decided, and his forces made sure the French kept the defensive by always pressing hard and in all places at once. "It is laid down as a universal Maxim in Warr, by the greatest Generals," read one planning group's report,

> to be particularly attentive; especially at the opening of the first Campaign, not to let the adversary reap the smallest advantage, least in the beginning of the Warr, he suffer it to change from the Offensive to a Warr upon equal Terms; much less dwindle to a defensive One. a strickt Observance of the same Rule becomes a Sea General as well as Land. (for what is lost in one Campaign, may not perhaps be regained in three or four.)[95c]

"Warr upon equal Terms" is what Great Britain's strong financial

---

95a "Win time -- that is all that can be expected of the most skilful general": Frederick the Great's recipe for defensive war when badly outnumbered. Luvaas, 336. For Vaudreuil's modest instructions to preserve some small part of the colony, see 1759 correspondence in PAC, MG 1, B, vol. 109, 409, 415.

95b For instance, panic-striken calls for aid from the American colonies after the fall of Oswego. PAC, MG 5, B 1, vol. 10, ff. 259-261. D. E. Leach, The northern colonial frontier 1607-1763 (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966), 201.

and strategic policies prevented. As British strength swelled in comparison to the French, they were sometimes enabled to carry the war to where it was not expected. "Frontenac is a great stroke", wrote Wolfe to Amherst in September 1758.

> An offensive daring kind of war will awe the Indians & ruin the French -- blockhouses & trembling defensive encourages the meanest scoundrels to attack us ---- If you will attempt to cut up New France by the roots I will come back with pleasure to assist. [96]

On the British side unremitting offensive -- though not always daring -- characterized the war's direction during the last three campaigns.[97]

95c "Joint Proposal by Admiral Knowles & Colo Hopson, conerning an Attack upon Louisbourg. 1757". Pargellis, Affairs, 311.

96 Wolfe to Amherst 30 September 1758, PAC, MG 18, L 4, packet 8.

97 La Pause thought they worked too slowly, too methodically, "resting in the shadow of their laurels; . . . they are neglecting to make themselves masters of the whole country" (August-September 1759). "Continuation du journal de la campagne 1759", RAPQ 1933-4, 133.

As the conqueror inched ahead, methodically, irresistibly -- the glacier is the toughest natural force to stop -- defensive strategy procured some advantages for the French. It meant they were usually fighting over territory in which they had already occupied and fortified the most important positions. The terrain was familiar and they had maps, while the British had neither knowledge nor experience in the region.[98] In the final stages -- as the French gave up, one after the other, their carefully protected defensive fortresses to the on-coming British -- their own supply lines became shorter and more manageable while British lines were stretched and awkward, hampering.

The characteristic weakness of a defensive strategy, however, is the difficulty of maintaining the fighters' morale. This became a serious problem in 1760 when desertions and general unwillingness prevented some important schemes from being carried out. It was very difficult to keep the Indians and the Canadian militia to the task when withdrawals -- even well-phased, competent ones -- were in the orders. Troops seem to contract pessimism from walking backwards. On paper, La Pause was able to sketch out a brilliant final campaign, in which surrounded French forces would combine against several invading armies one after the other. It would mean, though, that on several occasions a unit that had been watching and delaying the enemy would have to break off contact, give up ground, and rush efficiently to join a new concentration

---

98 Clausewitz discusses these advantages (Principles of War, 53-57).

against some other opponent. How would the men bear up during these retreats? "To join in a single unit with all forces, in order to attack the enemy, would be the military thing to do, but would one be able to dispose of the militia and to make it act with zeal in such circumstances?"[99]

Analysis of the campaigns brings plainly forth one last divergence of principle. The French practised economy of force and the British did not. A brief look at the lay of the land reveals the major reason for this mis-mating of strategic options.

The French enjoyed interior lines of communication, while the Anglo-American forces operated on exterior lines. From Quebec to Fort Frontenac was merely four hundred miles on the direct water-route the French used. For the British, however, the haul from Quebec to Boston or New York was 1400 miles by unpredictable sea airs; overland to their Lake Ontario outpost of Oswego -- the matchpiece for Frontenac -- was another 350 or more. These inescapable distances had the result that, even within the brief space of time a summer fighting season allowed, the French were quite easily able to move men and gear from one theatre of operations to another, while the British were more tied to the dispositions they planned and set from the springtime.

---

99 La Pause, Memorandum of November 1759, RAPQ 1933-4, 137.

Appendix 1 shows the time taken to send messages between the different theatres. On the British side the minimum times were: from Quebec to the Atlantic seaboard (e.g., Boston) 28 days; from the seacoast to Albany (hub of land operations) another 5 days. From Albany to Lake Ontario was four or five days; to Lake Champlain two or three; between Lake Champlain and Lake Ontario add them together. The total time that it took messages to move from one end of the war zone to the other was thus 37/38 days -- five and a half weeks. The French had much quicker correspondence between the same extremities. Their letters needed three days to go from Quebec to Montreal, and six from Montreal to Fort Frontenac. These times were halved if the messages were travelling down river. The best time between Frontenac and Carillon was nine days. So the French right wing was a full month earlier than the British left, in knowing what the people in the east were experiencing.[100]

When it came to shifting men around, the French had the same proportional advantage. The Béarn regiment moved out of Quebec 23 and 24 May 1756, and arrived at Fort Frontenac 4 and 5 June: 13 days from the eastern theatre to the western.[101a] The previous summer various squads proceeding from Montreal to Fort Frontenac had taken 11, 15 and 16 days.[101b] In July 1756 Bougainville was in a

---

100 See Appendix 1.

101a RAPQ 1944-5, 78-79.

101b Malartic journal, MG 4, A 1, vol. 3405, pièce 108, 10; pièce 118, 3-7.

party of fifty men who climbed up from Montreal to Lake Ontario as quickly as possible for the surprise attack on Oswego. He left Lachine 5:30 a.m. on 22 July, averaged over 12 hours a day travelling time during the next seven days (4:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. was the sweatshop standard aimed at), put in a 16-hour stopover at La Présentation, and arrived at Fort Frontenac at 10 a.m. the 29th. [102] (Illustrating the faster travel downstream, when the Frontenac garrison was captured, paroled and sent to Montreal in August 1758, they made the journey in four days.) [103] In August 1759 Lévis, after taking a detachment of 800 from Quebec to Montreal in three days, continued on with 400 of them to arrive at Cataraqui on the eighth day after quitting Montreal. [104] These are typical examples of French troop movements when haste was involved, showing actual times.

There are few British examples to select for citation. The British never moved men from another theatre to Quebec, or vice versa, in the course of a campaign season. Responding to a crisis in 1757, several thousand troops whom Loudoun had fruitlessly taken to Halifax left there on 16 August. It took them over three weeks to begin arriving at Albany. [105] Brad-

---

102 BJ, pp. 14-19.
103 NYCD, X, 852-853.
104 Lévis journal, PAC, MG 18, K 8, vol.12, 147 ff.
105 Arthur G. Doughty, editor, An historical journal of the campaigns in North America by Captain John Knox (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1914-1916), I, 41-53. Pringle to his brother 2 September 1757, PAC, MG 18, L 8, 60-63.

street in 1758 needed from July 13th to August 21 st to move a large force of several thousand American provincials and some artillery from Lake George to Oswego, en route Frontenac. In 1759 Gage made the same trip with fewer (300) men and more expeditiously; passing from one interior theatre to the other in 18 days.[106] In 1756 the French had made an identical shift in reverse (Ontario to Champlain) with two regiments in only thirteen days.[107]

To shorter interior communications were apparently added greater French skill in moving men (superior techniques, better planning), and urgent necessity. Result: the French used economy of force as a prime principle directing their conduct of the war. Economy of force is an idea strategists love, but cannot always manage, or dare, to practise. Companion piece to the principle of concentration, economy means efficiency and proportion -- "the judicious expenditure of resources and the balanced employment of forces".[108] If there is a boy's errand, send

---

106 Timetable: left Carillon 29 July 1759, at noon; arrived Albany 1 August; presumably left Albany 3 August; arrived Fort Stanwix 10 August in the morning; arrived Oswego at noon 16 August. WO 34, vol. 38, 155 and vol. 46A, 83, 85-90. Johnson diary 16 August 1759, Milton W. Hamilton, "Sir William Johnson" (unpublished typescript), 515.

107 BJ, pp. 28-34.

108 Eccles, Military concepts, 110.

109a Montreuil to the Minister 16 August 1755, PAC, MG 4, A 1, vol. 3405, pièce 34.

a boy -- make sure he's a big enough boy -- but not a redundant troop of men. Measure and move resources around to attain maximum service from them. Do not overspend by investing soldiers on a quiet front when their aid is sorely needed somewhere else.

In 1755 the French denuded Lake Ontario to concentrate most of their force at the south end of Lake Champlain, although it did not do them any good.[109a] In early 1756 when some troops were dispatched to each of the threatened areas Lake Champlain and Lake Ontario, the Royal Roussillon regiment was routed out of winter quarters and put on an active footing at Montreal -- junction of highways -- ready to proceed on any notice either south or west. The Commander in Chief too: "M. de Montcalm is going to remain at Montreal so as to be ready to move more easily to wherever his presence will be necessary."[109b] During July he put in an appearance at Carillon, then moved swiftly with his staff and escort to join several thousand troops at the lower end of Lake Ontario, while Béarn came down from Niagara.[110] The siege of Oswego followed. Following that success, the whole army except for the La Sarre regiment and 150 other men rushed back to Lake Champlain.[111]

Rapid French moves along their interior lines awed and unsettled the British command. They always had to be

---

109b Plessis journal 1756, RAPQ 1928-9, 221.

110 La Pause, Account of the 1756 campaign, RAPQ 1932-3, 322.

111 Ibid., 325.

turning to look both ways. When Loudoun conceded the loss of Oswego he canvassed the enemy's alternatives for the Duke of Cumberland's benefit. One and two, they might dig in at Oswego, or at Oswego Falls, stopping the approach to the Lake. Three, they might

> push on, and secure as many of the Forts on the way thither, as they can;[four] as they are plentifully provided in Boats to Transport them, there is another Plan they may have, which is to send off a Detachment cross the Lake, down the River St. Lawrence, across from Le Préau [La Prairie] fifteen miles good Road to Lake Champlain; those will be very troublesome there, . . . [112]

Loudoun tried to shape plans for 1757 that would overcome French mobility and economy of force. He advocated striking Quebec from seaward:

> I really see no other Point we are so likely to succeed in as in that, which is the main Point; for where ever we make our Point, we must fight the whole Force of Canada before we arrive at it; as their Power over [their] People can bring the Whole to what ever Place they are wanted. . . . In my opnion I must leave at least two Batallions here [Albany], to defend the Forts and prevent their coming in whilst we are going round to attack them, otherwise they could make a very distressfull Attack here and be back time enough to meet us there. [113]

Cumberland's reply was that besides a British army at Quebec, another should be gathered on Lake Champlain. These troops

> must either keep a great Number of the Enemy at Tienderoga, who would, else, be employed in the Defense of Quebec; or, if the Enemy should withdraw the whole From that Part, that Body might march on & take Possession of Montréal, . . [114]

The British vowed they would be ready to seize any benefits that

---

112 Loudoun to Cumberland 20 August 1756, Pargellis, Affairs, 228.
113 Loudoun to Cumberland 2 October 1756, Ibid., 235-236.
114 Cumberland to Loudoun 2 December 1756, Ibid., 254-255.

might be derived from the French tendency to shift men around on the fly. If French troops were gathered from several locations to oppose a British approach to Quebec, "The men by the Advantage of Water Carriage might possibly be drawn together upon an Alarm, but Stores, Provisions & Artillery not so easily -- if withdrawn from their present Posts, these must be abandon'd." [115] There must always be squads ready, wrote the planner, to march in and take over any posts or dumps the French were so economical as to leave behind.

The French kept following the same "troublesome" strategy in the war's middle years. In 1757 the Lake Ontario area was quiet, but the British were operating on the eastern seaboard, contemplating reaching up to Quebec, and the French knew it. Nevertheless, they still planned using one army on all fronts. After destroying Fort William Henry "Montcalm retired and said he hoped to see L L at Quebec -- " [116] Pownall complained the British

> must be reduced to watch the motions of the French & to endeavour (though that is not possible in the nature of the thing) to assist & relieve the country wherever the enemy comes down upon it. The enemy by their possession of all the communication through the country could do this with ease while from our being destitute of such communication tis impossible for us. 117

They took William Henry, he went on, while Lord Loudoun was in Nova Scotia; now that he is coming back to the Lake Champlain

---

115 Anonymous, "Considerations Offered by [?] upon a Scheme for Attacking Louisbourg & Quebec. 1757", Ibid., 296-298.

116 Pringle to family 2 September 1757, PAC, MG 18, L 8, 62.

117 Pownall to General Napier 4 September 1757, WO 34, vol. 25, 31-34.

area they will probably go to Nova Scotia themselves, or else attack in the west -- and our intelligence is so bad we will not know what is occurring until much too late. A mad rush along French interior lines began in 1758, to endure more and more breathlessly for over two years as Canada's thin defences stretched taut to snapping. In June 1758 a 1200-man army destined for the west was turned south at the last moment. The British copied French flexibility for the only important time in the war when Bradstreet was diverted from Lake Champlain in mid-summer, and sent to Lake Ontario to destroy Fort Frontenac. In August-September 1758 Canadian militia who had stood at Carillon and returned home, were turned out again to go to Lake Ontario. After a scout reported the British gone from Oswego, some movements to the west were halted and reversed into the direction of Lake Champlain.[118]

To French economy of force, the British opposed plenitude: a separate and respectable army on every front. This was necessitated by long exterior lines and -- luckily for them -- was within the scope of their ampler resources. Some British planners sought to devise schemes to thrust themselves into the centre of the circle and make the French play the outside. One such plan was a "Sketch for [the 1756] Campaign in North America", author unsure.[119] "The obvious Business of next Campaign is the Reduction of Montreal and Quebec . . . "

---

118 Malartic journal 18 September 1758, NYCD, X, 855.
119 Probably written by Robert Napier, Adjutant-General, Pargellis, Affairs, 133-136.

Method: go down the Richelieu river; build armed vessels to control the Saint Lawrence between the two cities of Canada; then keep either one of them -- and the forces stationed there -- in check, ringed out from the main action while attacking the other one. Such a plan if followed would have placed a major British force between two wings of the French army and given it all the advantages of news, reaction, mobility and concentration which the French usually owned. However, it never worked. The official, workable British plans of all the war's final years tiresomely repeated the same boring theme of surrounding to separately overwhelm.

Pitt's directive for 1758 summoned the governments of the southern colonies to make war against the nearest part of the French possessions (Ohio) while the northern forces were sent towards Laurentia -- "which, it is hoped, will oblige them so to divide their attention and Forces, as will render the several attempts more easy & successful."[120] In 1759 he wanted the land operations carefully coordinated with the sea-assault upon Quebec, by "putting the forces early in motion, on the other frontiers of Canada, . . . thereby distracting the Enemy and obliging them to divide their strength."[121] He wrote Amherst that the king "relies on your approved Zeal for the Honor of his Arms, and on the Sense, You must have of the great Utility of pressing the Enemy in different Parts, . . ." The selfsame instruction was repeated in the orders of 1760,

---

120 Pitt to northern governors 30 December 1757, NYCD, VII, 339-341.

121 Pitt to Amherst 29 December 1758, NYCD, VII, 359-360.

with only punctuation and capitalization of letters (arbitrary choices in the anarchy of Eighteenth century English) being changed.[122]

The classic campaigns of the Canadian war occurred in 1759 and 1760. More than ever the strategic tendencies of both sides, and the practical possibilities inherent in the situation, found fulfilment and proof. More than ever the French fought several wars with one army, while the British surrounded and squandered force to beat in a gateway, any gateway, any gateway at all.

French planners agreed on utilizing to the full their interior mobility during hard-pressed 1759. Economy of force was a prominent theme of La Pause' prolific thoughts. "It was a question of drawing together our defences towards the centre, to be in greater force and at the same time to give mutual support."[123] Vaudreuil decided that feints and trickery would have to augment the slim numbers he would be able to provide for the Lake Champlain sector.[124] Like Montcalm, unlike Vaudreuil, Bourlamaque thought it best to abandon too

---

122 Pitt to Amherst 23 January 1759, Gertrude S. Kimball, editor, Correspondence of William Pitt (New York: Macmillan, 1906), II, 14-15. Pitt to Amherst 7 January 1760, NYCD, VII, 423.

123 "Mémoire et réflexions", RAPQ 1933-4, 167.

124 He told Bourlamaque to prepare "un projet de chicane". Letter of 16 May 1759, MG 3, K, carton 3455.

distant frontiers: both Lake Ontario and Lake Champlain.

> 'Tis the settlements of the Colony that require to be defended. These do not extend beyond the Rapids of Cataracoui and terminate five leagues below Ile aux Noix. To draw one's forces within a smaller compass in order to augment them, is an axiom so much the more true, . . . in the case under consideration, [because] it will not produce any loss, . . . [125]

Bougainville presented a paper at court during the 1758-1759 winter in which economy of force was again stressed. In a situation where the army in Canada was heavily menaced on three sides at once, and outnumbered,

> I believe that should we divide into three squads [pelotons] that would be the way to lose everything. We must hold ourselves together, and fly to the first place attacked, or if several attacks are made simultaneously, proceed to where we have the most advantages, blend ruse with audacity and fight fiercely.[126]

Fascinating details on advance cerebration for economy and concentration are further spelled out in the most intricate strategical work the war produced -- La Pause' "1759 campaign: memorandum supposing that the enemy descends the rapids".[127] The same themes reappear in the directive the French Minister of War sent Montcalm for what proved to be

---

125 He advocated a drastic strategy. "The worst that will happen will be, after many reverses, to behold one-fourth of the settlements of the Colony destroyed." Memoir on Canada, NYCD, X, 1143-1144.

126 "Reflexions sur la campagne prochaine . . . ", RAPQ 1923-4, 16.

127 RAPQ 1932-3, 365-368. See another set of contingency plans for 1759, also by La Pause, at ibid., 371-372.

his final campaign.

> As it is expected that the entire efforts of the English will be directed against Canada, and that they will attack you at different points at once, it will be necessary that you confine your plan of defence to those points that are most essential and most connected, in order that being concentrated on a smaller extent of country, you may be always enabled mutually to help one another, to communicate with and to support each other.[128]

Vaudreuil's initial dispositions for the 1759 campaign sent indispensable cadres and garrisons -- and a little extra besides -- to the frontiers, but kept a large reserve at Montreal. In early May three regular regiments with 1000 Marines and Canadians were sent from Quebec to Montreal, to get into the centre and be ready to move anywhere.[131] These troops were beckoned to Lake Champlain by an enemy approach -- where a skilful retreat, pre-prepared, soon produced a more compact defence posture for

---

128 Belle-Isle to Montcalm 19 February 1759, NYCD, X, 944.
129 [none]
130 [none]
131 Méloizes journal 1759, RAPQ 1928-9, 29-30.

the colony.

On 8 August Montcalm warned Bourlamaque he might be calling on him to detach some troops to assist in the Lake Ontario area.[132] However, when the news of Niagara's capture arrived next day, Montcalm decided it would be wiser to diminish his own army rather than the one on the Montreal-Albany road. Trusting in Lady Luck, as he said,[133] he sent 800 men with Lévis to help oppose a British thrust from the west if one occurred. Lévis put 400 of them onto Montreal-area farms to get the crop in, and positioned the others to make a stand above the rapids, and if necessary to fight a slow retreat back towards Montreal.

The British operations in Lake Ontario therefore acted as a significant diversion. The men whom Montcalm detached never met the enemy that autumn, and were missing from the role of actors on the Plains of Abraham. French economy of force was detrimental to concentration on this vital occasion.

---

132 Montcalm to Bourlamaque 8 August 1759, Casgrain, V, 343.

133 "Dans le critique de cette circonstance, on résolut de donner un peu à la bonne fortune"; Lévis journal 1759, MG 18, K 8, vol. 12, 147.

Amherst, British Commander-in-Chief, in 1759 relied upon a two-fold complication to give the French more than they could handle. He had a third army in the field, at Niagara, but did not at first expect it to approach the built-up part of Canada. The forces at Quebec and on Lake Champlain were to do that job. "The enemy cannot defend both avenues . . . Canada one way or other perhaps both ways must be ours this campaign." [134]

The 1759 campaign well illustrates the difficulties the British had to contend with in trying to communicate between and concert their various units. Amherst, operating north of Albany, early in August wanted to establish contact with Wolfe near Quebec to stir him up, send recent information, and ask for news. Captain Quinson Kennedy, 17th regiment, was dispatched from Pointe à la Chevelure on 8 August, with an eight-man party, chiefly Indian scouts, some routine orders -- the most sensitive messages confided to memory -- and a parcel of ribald personal greetings between individual acquaintances in the two armies. While punching his way through rough country to get to Wolfe, Kennedy was to pay a diplomatic visit to the French Indians in the St.-François river valley and procure their neutrality. It was some of those same Abenaki who rounded up Kennedy and his party as they stumbled along and brought them in to the authorities, but not before the alert British courier had the presence of mind to eat some

---

134 Amherst to Gage 13 June 1759, WO 34, vol. 46A, 335-336.

of the letters he carried.[135] That clarified neither the strategic situation, nor the digestive. At the same time the Ranger partisan Captain Touch was sent via the rapids on the upper Saint Lawrence to contact the British army on Lake Ontario.[136] The French also took him into custody.

Two whole months after arriving in the vicinity of Quebec members of Wolfe's force had still to admit: "As yet we have had no authentic accounts of General Amherst [except] what we can collect from prisoners and deserters. . . ."[137] At the beginning of September they still did not know for sure (there were rumours) about the perfect British success at Niagara which, occurring 25 July, was known on Lake Champlain August 2nd and to the French command at Quebec on August 9th. Finally, a British corporal and four Mohawk Indian guides got through on the 4th of September, sixteen days en route from Crown Point.[138] Then Wolfe had an inkling of Amherst's progress (if taking two forts without fighting and calling a ten-week standstill to apprentice the troops in architecture can be called progress); but Amherst, the Commander-in-Chief, was still in the dark. "I have no news from Major General

---

135 Amherst's instructions for Kennedy are in Méloizes journal 6 September 1759, RAPQ 1928-9, 67. See also Bigot to Lévis 26 August 1759, PAC, MG 18, K 8, vol. 8. pièce 39, where it appears that not all the soldiers took the war as seriously as they should. Among the letters in Kennedy's mail-sack was a note to Bougainville in which the English officer who wrote it implores the Frenchman to hold for him "du vin de Champagne. . . et une jolie Canadienne . . . ."

136 Mémoire du Canada, RAPQ 1924-5, 164-165. Gage to Amherst 2 October 1759, WO 34, vol.36A, 101-104.

137 Cotton to Secretary of State 27 August 1759, PAC, MG 18, L 5, vol.4, p. (renumbered) 12.

138 Cotton to unknown 6 September 1759, Ibid., 16,

Wolfe," Amherst wrote Governor De Lancey on 25 September, twelve days after the battle on the Plains of Abraham. [139] Three more weeks passed. Finally on 15 October -- 32 days after the event -- Amherst, or rather his secretary Appy, for the man himself was down on the Lake, heard about it through the back door. From Lake Ontario came word that Quebec had been delivered up to the British a few days after a terrific battle on the lucky thirteenth. The news was retailed by Brigadier Gage, who got it from three Frenchmen taken prisoner near La Présentation. [140]

When the French by wild efforts and cold weather managed to stave off final defeat that year, in 1760 Amherst raised his wager to three armies.

> As the enemy must now, center their whole Force for the Defence of Montreal, the Avenues to which they will certainly try to guard, and to keep us at as great distance as they can, they they may subsist; For this, they must divide their Troops, and the more we can oblige them to do so, the weaker they will be in Every part. I therefore intend, to advance on them in three places -- From Quebec, up the River St.Lawrence -- From Crown Point, by the Isle au Noix -- From Oswego, Down the River St.Lawrence. [141]

Unknown to Earl Halifax 5 September 1759, from the LIZARD at Ile aux Coudres, PAC, MG 18, N 15, 55. This may be the same messenger Parkman identifies as Ensign Hutchins of the Rangers, who left St.-Frédéric 7 August and reached Wolfe via the circuitous Kennebec route "in about a month". Francis Parkman, Montcalm and Wolfe (Boston: Little, Brown, 1927), II, 261.

139 Amherst to De Lancey 25 September 1759, WO 34, vol.30, 163-164.

140 Appy to Pownall 18 October 1759, WO 34, vol.27, 347-348. See also Amherst (actually Appy) to De Lancey 18 October 1759, WO 34, vol.30, 175-176.

141 Amherst to Murray 15 April 1760, PAC, MG 11, Colonial Office 5, vol.58, 184.

This strategy was part choice and part necessity. On the British side, fighting fronts were so disconnected and distant that their pressure-thrusts had to be fully separate. The whole force could not be concentrated for one attack without giving the French such an obvious breathing space that they could clearly foretell the plot and move troops in good time to be ready to repell the enemy in a new quarter. Not only was movement of troops from one theatre to another very difficult and slow, but the British had little intelligence connecting their scattered formations. The more theoretical plans, such as one Colonel James Montresor drew up, stressed the need for information smoothly exchanged between various armies.[142] However -- as we saw by the attempts made in 1759 -- this was woefully hard to arrange. Arthur Dobbs, in his pre-war "Essay on colonies", had seen the French advantages in interior communications whenever the showdown came in North America.[143] Bourlamaque estimated this boon so highly he thought it could snatch victory for Canada's defenders even after Quebec had been occupied.

> The three corps of troops which are to defend Canada, if it be simultaneously attacked on its three frontiers, have the advantage of being able to form a junction again whenever judged proper, in order to fight the enemy whose position will be the more uneasy, and afterwards return, each to its own district; whilst the enemy cannot establish any communication nor even any precise concert between the different corps he will put in motion.[144]

Their customary economical thinking dominated French

---

142 Plan for 1759 dated 29 December 1758, NYCD, X, 910-912.
143 PAC, MG 18, D 4, vol. 6.
144 Bourlamaque, Memoir on Canada, NYCD, X, 1144-1145.

strategy in 1760. Again troop movements from one theatre to another were planned. La Pause urged creation of a centralized food depot at Montreal, including 150,000 rations of biscuit. "It would be good to have a great number of bark canoes" at the same strategic location, "at least, about 150 with capacity for six, eight or ten men, in order to be able to make a quick movement towards the Rapids with a considerable corps." [145] After the withdrawal from before Quebec, Lévis counted on 1800 men around Pointe-aux-Trembles and Jacques-Cartier, plus the river's navigational difficulties, to impede and frustrate the British advance and, short of food, sent the rest of his regulars back to winter quarters. From Montreal he wrote the Minister of Marine they were waiting for the British to show themselves. "In this vexed position, as our greatest forces are in this region, we will try then to get them together, and, if the enemy units do not regulate their movements well, we shall give battle to the corps of their troops which is the first to debouch." [146] "We had decided as a last resort," remembered La Pause, "to assemble all our forces, . . . and go to attack the first enemy body to appear, and to march immediately against another if we were successful, . . . " [147]

---

145 La Pause, Memorandum of November 1759, RAPQ 1933-4, 135.
146 Lévis to Berryer 28 June 1760, PAC, MG 18, K 8, vol. 11, 406-407.
147 La Pause, "Mémoire et réflexions", RAPQ 1933-4, 160.

All the campaigns after 1757 settled into a routine. British armies marched from every angle, blind and deaf; while back and forth the French shuttled their troops -- and in the final stages their dwindled magazines and fizzling hopes too -- trying to stop up too many holes in the dyke with too few thumbs.

- - - - -

Since they both trained in the same school of warfare, read the same books, admired the same examples and used similar tools, it is not surprising that the Europe-oriented armies fighting in North America shared many attitudes. Concentration of force is, anyway, an obvious and universal doctrine. Security is what war is all about. In agreeing for most of the war to give lowest priority to the Lake Ontario theatre, both earned A in mapreading -- quite a modest achievement.

It is where French and British strategical principles differed that explanations must be sought. From 1757 on, the British army was on the offensive in North America, and French forces became the main objective of British operations. London was no longer satisfied with a war of posts, but wanted to remove every military/diplomatic pretext for a restoration of the pre-war status quo. The French opposed the defensive to this ambition because Paris would not finance a more forward strategy. They made strongpoints-- for the static, inexpensive control of territory-- the objective of their plans, on account of straitened circumstances. These two French principles -- the defensive, and fighting for fortresses --

twinned as comfortably with each other as did the contrasting British views: press the offence, and seek to destoy the enemy forces. That which has been expressed as a difference, could as well have been called a similarity -- both North American headquarters found the strategy that best carried out the home government's policy.

Position dictated French interior lines, and the British long haul. The Vaudreuil-Montcalm headquarters, having adopted the strategy of concentrating force, were encouraged by geography to multiply its effects by practising economy of force as well. What geography permitted, necessity demanded. The French principle of economy was not a wise choice; it was wise, but it was no choice. The French were pushed into parsimony. Their manoeuvres evidenced economy's risky doctrine, and they became adept at stretching and shifting elements of strength, because they had relatively so little to work with. Their aim overreached the means available to a very challenging extent. Meanwhile, the British were enabled to be prodigal with less-stinted resources. The doctrine they espoused, of plentitude of force on every front, meant their troops were sometimes underemployed, and did not fulfil their whole potential. They were wasteful -- and winning.

The principles of French strategy were more cohesive and complementary than the British, and concentration was the key. Economy sharpened French concentrations, because they really ran risks elsewhere when mustering a maximum force at a vital point. The low danger which the Ontario area pre-

sented after 1756 assisted them more whole-heartedly to devote attention and troops elsewhere. (In 1758 Bradstreet took advantage of the way the French begrudged resources to the Lake Ontario theatre, and Amherst no doubt had the same tendency in mind in forming the 1760 campaign plan.)

The principal contradiction in French strategy was that, to the extent they tried to achieve concentration at one place by raids and feints somewhere else -- and committed men and supplies in making these peripheral displays -- to that extent they weakened the massing of strength which the principle of concentration demands. The same contradiction appeared in British strategy in a heightened degree. They sought concentration through diverting the French; the diversions were strengthened into major efforts;[148] they finished by being more concerned with keeping French forces split up than with collecting and using their own in a compact mass. Canada's invasion by three separate armies even imperilled the security

---

148 This tendency was the subject of strategical debate in British upper echelons. See De Lancey's letters in 1759 objecting to Amherst's plan to attack Niagara as well as Carillon and Quebec. "Ticonderoga being the strongest post the enemy have the nearest to us whence we have suffered most & whence we are most desireous the enemy should be removed as opening a way into the heart of their country it is natural it should be uppermost in our thoughts and I find Your Excellency intends to give them a warming without giving them room to say they were overwhelmed with numbers." De Lancey to Amherst 30 April and 25 June 1759, WO 34, vol. 29, 65, 83-84.

of one or two of these forces (if the French managed to concentrate against them one at a time) although it did make more likely a breakthrough somewhere or other. From 1758 on, British strategy abandoned the positive side of the principle of concentration, and was chiefly dominated by attempts to prevent the French massing their own men together.

The greatest divergence between the two sides -- and the greatest departure from standard Eighteenth century approaches to strategy -- was the British pressure, in the war's second half, towards unlimited escalation of the conflict and inflation of the objective fought for. Utter, thoroughgoing conquest became their ultimate ambition. In Europe, such lack of moderation was quite uncharacteristic of the times -- but this was the new world, a new setting calling forth its own responses.

CHAPTER II

FACTORS DETERMINING POWER AND STRATEGY : GEOGRAPHY

Geography is the sum of interactions between men and their environment. It is twofold, comprising an area's natural features -- which would be the same whether men were concerned with them or not; and also the reactions and behaviour which those features call forth in the people who do have business there. The particular business we are trying to understand is the rationale of military decisions taken by two military headquarters, respecting the Lake Ontario theatre of operations. Nothing was a more potent determinant of possibilities and plans than the region's geography.

The aspect of geography which exerted most influence upon strategical decisions was the lay of the land -- specifically, its extent and surface configuration. For troops making war in the touching hinterlands of Canada and New York, it is a striking fact that they were a relatively long time travelling through the area and bringing up their supplies, for every relatively short period they spent in contact with the enemy. Warfare consisted of movement more than anything else. The length of routes, their directness, the ease or otherwise of river transport -- speed of current, depth of water, number and length of portages -- these were prime factors that convinced commanders to use the west as an approach to their war's aims, or frightened them off to other

(Am impartial account of Lieut. Col. Bradstreet's expedition to Fort Frontenac, p. 4)

regions.

Among geographical features with strategical implications, those next in importance after topography were the area's climate, population and production.

The two commands sought to maximize their knowledge of the region, and to perfect the organization and technique which would enable them to use its apparently hostile natural conditions for their own ends. They even tried -- with only some slight success during the 1750's -- to change the face of the landscape more into keeping with man's will. The men who directed these campaigns from either end of the Montreal-Lake Ontario-Albany semi-circle could hope for a confrontation -- that happy climax of strategists' brainy intercourse -- only after burdensome travail and a long, hard haul. They often shunned the task. Western geography had therefore two types of effect upon strategy. It profoundly shaped the conduct of campaigns in the region; and explains why more troops were usually committed elsewhere.

1. Topography.

There were no good roads, and it was impossible to build them. "In this Country," wrote a British officer, water carriage "ought to be preferr'd to Land Carriage wherever it could be had. -- " [1] This was very much of an understate-

---

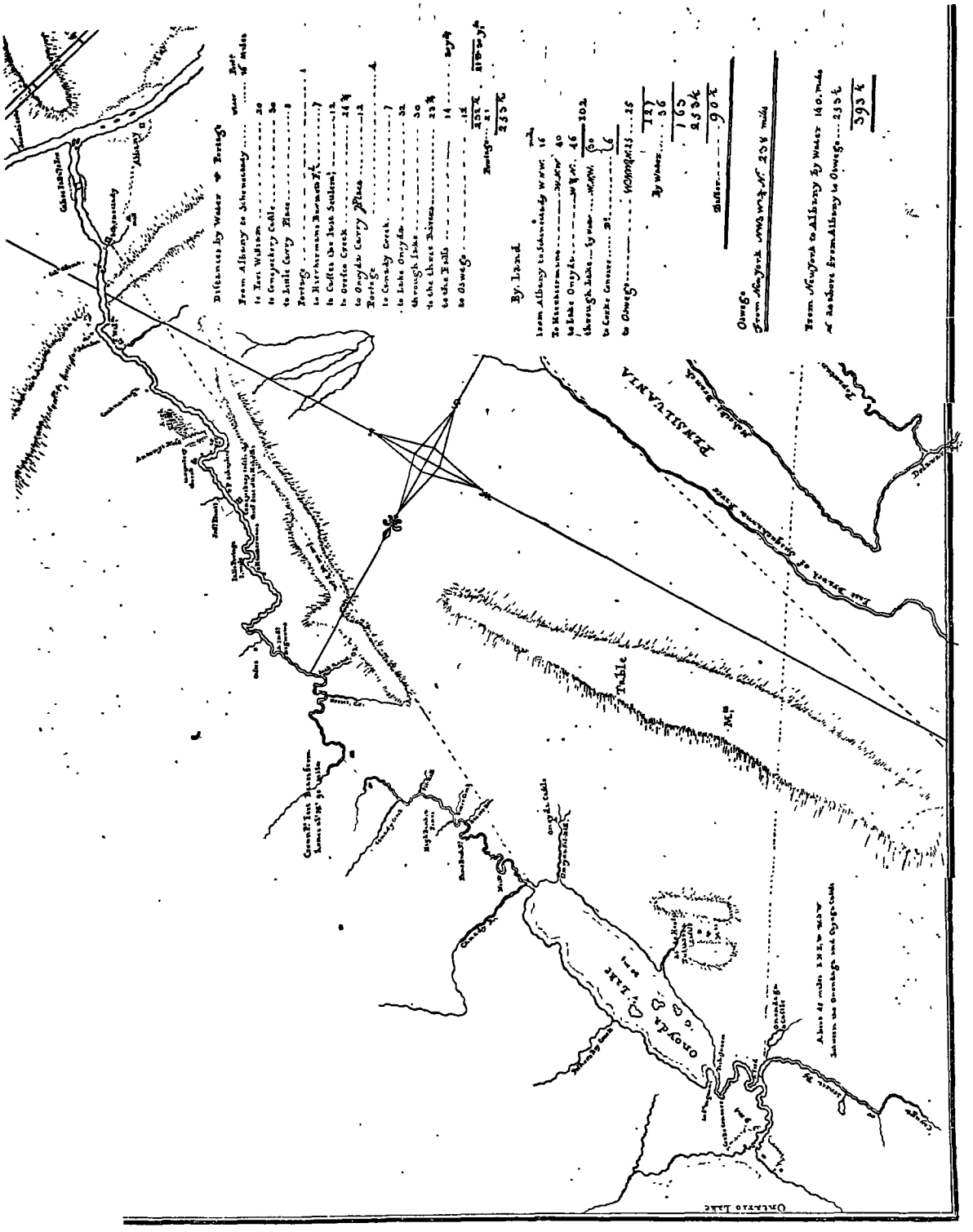
1 William Martin, memorandum of 7 December 1757, LO 6846.

ment, since the alternative -- long distance transport over land -- was practically unthinkable. Braddock's was the only one of the war's expeditions that tried it, and none came to a sadder end. Since water carriage was the first rule of warfare, and the soldier's predominating task, the way in which surface features facilitated or frustrated it was the outstanding geographical consideration in shaping strategy.

The principal British route in the region was the waterway that led from Albany to Oswego on Lake Ontario. According to a rather precise map dating from 1755-1758, the length of the route was 253½ miles.[2] The proverbial crow would arrive after flying only three-fifths of the distance; indeed, the same map showed where roads on land could be developed that would reduce the trek to 163 miles. During the 1750's, however, the direct link was an imaginary swath through tangled brush and bottomless swampland. There were roads on one or both sides of the Mohawk valley for all of its 130-mile length -- and this was over half of the route -- but they were almost as serpentine as the river was, and too soft for heavy wheeled traffic during most of the spring,

---

2 Map, "Distances by Water & Portage", Huntington Miscellaneous 15453, Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery, San Marino, California, USA. The map is after 1755 because it shows posts built that year, and before 1758 because it does not show Fort Stanwix. See also Lt. Charles Rivez' very careful map of the same period, "A Map of the Province of New-York & Part of New Jersey", Huntington Miscellaneous 15447.



MAP OF THE ALBANY TO OSWEGO ROUTE, about 1756
(Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery, Huntington Miscellaneous 15453)

summer and fall.[3] Water was the only dependable medium for transporting any considerable number of people, or a weight of supplies.

Here is how the contemporary map's legend analyzed the route:[4]

Distances by Water & Portage

	WATER	PORT
From Albany to Schenectady.....		16 Miles
to Fort Williams.....	20	
to Conejockery Castle.....	30	
to Little Carry Place.....	8	
Portage.....		1
to Herkirmans Burnets Fd.....	7	
to Casses the last Settlems.....	12	
to Oresco Creek.....	24 and 3/4	
to Onoyda Carry g Place.....	12	
Portage.....		4
to Canady Creek.....	7	
to Lake Onoyda.....	32	
through Lake.....	30	
to the three Rivers.....	23 and 3/4	
to the Falls.....	14	30 yds.
to Oswego.....	12	
	232 ½	21 & 30 yds.
Portage	21	
	253 ½	

3 In November 1757 Belestre reported the road from Oneida Carrying Place to Fort Herkermer, on the south side of the Mohawk, "passable for sleds in winter and during the summer, and it can be easily passed on horseback at all times, though in some places there is a great deal of mud." Belestre's "Itinerary from the mouth of the River Chouegen in Lake Ontario to Lake Oneida; then up Vilcreek to the summit level, which is the source of the River of the Moack, or des Agniés, by which we can descend to Corlar or Chenectedi, whence Albany or Orange can be reached", NYCD, X, 676. PAC, MG 1, C 11 A, vol. 102, 322-330.

4 These distances were quite accurate; compare John H. Thompson, editor, Geography of New York State (Syracuse:

On a river-route, vertical distance was also of great significance. The perpendicular rise and fall determined how quickly one could descend, or with what labour climb, a flowing stream. In places where the river descended too abruptly boat-traffic was impossible and the need to portage cargo delayed the trip.

The Albany-Oswego route was divided into four sections of unequal length. First, a 16-mile link by road between Albany on the Hudson River and Schenectady on the Mohawk. Then a stretch of the Mohawk River, about 115 miles long, from Schenectady up to the headwaters. The climb was from 210 to about 400 feet above sea level.[5] The third stage was the Great or Oneida Carrying Place -- a portage from the upper Mohawk to Wood Creek. Its length varied from about one to seven miles, depending on the season of the year and the ingenuity of the user. Once over this separation between watersheds and afloat on Wood Creek, voyageurs followed a string of connecting streams and lakes down to Oswego, dropping 165 feet along a distance of 120 miles.[6]

Syracuse University Press, 1966), 506-507 and any good map of New York. Belestre's measurement, given in uncertain leagues, was 80-81 leagues from Oswego to Albany by the same route. NYCD, X, 674-679.

5 Lionel D. Wyld, Low bridge! (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1962), 8, 46. Chart showing "Profile of the levels of the Grand Erie canal", David Hosack, Memoir of DeWitt Clinton (New York: Seymour, 1829), following p. 135.

6 Ibid. Thompson, 504, end-pocket map. The elevation of Oneida Lake is 369 feet.

The first stage was done on land because although Albany and Schenectady were connected by water, the passage was interrupted by Cohoes Falls.[7] There the 300-yard wide Mohawk River, ending its course from the western war zone, fell suddenly seventy feet for its merging into the Hudson.[8] Since the area was well populated, the road was kept in passable condition for most seasons.

The Mohawk valley was the route's second section. The bottom land in the bowl of the valley usually extended between one and two miles from the water's edge.[9] By 1755 many lengthy portions of it had been cleared and brought under cultivation, supporting a farming population on both sides of the river of which a substantial percentage was chased out of the country by the war. The river, 300 yards wide at Schenectady, narrowed gradually as one ascended it. "Often ornamented with elegant islands," quoth the equally elegant travelogue.[10] Between Schenectady and the east end of the

---

7 Very infrequently, when the Albany-Schenectady road was plugged with other traffic, parties might be sent by river all the way, necessitating portage around Cohoes Falls. E.g., Amherst's orders for a detachment of 63 New York troops 5 June 1760, WO 34, vol. 84, 264.

8 Huntington Miscellaneous 15453, Huntington Library, San Marino, California. The Cohoes were a "formidable" barrier: Wyld, 2. They were 1½ miles from the Mohawk's confluence with the Hudson River, and possessed "no small degree of majesty". Timothy Dwight, Travels in New England and New York (Cambridge: The Belknap press, 1969), 149.

9 Dwight, 118. Thompson, 26-34.

10 Dwight, 118.

Oneida portage trail, there was but one feature which inescapably interrupted the navigation.

The Little (or Canajoharie) Falls on the Mohawk River are 58 miles above Schenectady. A British visitor in 1814 said that the region contained

> some of the wildest and most romatic scenery that nature ever drew. The Mohawk after winding through a fine plain of twenty or thirty miles extent above the falls, is all at once stopped by a vast ridge of rocks, probably 300 feet above the level of the river below, through which, with violent force, he breaks his way, foaming, dashing, and roaring, from one descent to another, until finally having gained the bottom, he glides through an immense chasm, seemingly cut out of the solid rock by art, . . . [11]

Twenty years earlier, an American traveller more calmly noted that the river "passing between two mountains, runs over a rift of rocks scarcely two thirds of a mile in length, and in this distance descends between thirty and forty feet."[12] Getting back to the era of the War of the Conquest, we find commentators chiefly preoccupied with the additional labour in transportation which the Little Falls caused.

> I went up as far as the Canajoharie Falls on the Mohawk River; Here is a carrying place about a mile in length & all Boats going down or up the River are obliged to unload, & be carryed over land, which is a great detriment not only on account of the delay it occasions, but from the damage done to the Boats and Cargo, which suffer greatly by the common method of proceeding with them; . . . [13]

---

11 Rev. Joshua Marsden, The narrative of a mission to Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and the Somers Islands (New York: Johnson, 1966), 187-188.

12 Dwight, 140-141.

13 Governor Moore to Earl Hillsborough 17 August 1768, NYCD, VIII, 93.

The leader of the Canadian party that raided the region in 1757 reported, "The portage at the Little Falls is a quarter of a league, and is passed with carts. There is a road on both sides of the river, but that on the left bank is preferable, . . . " [14]

On its upper reaches, fifty miles above the Little Falls, the Mohawk is an insignificant little stream less than sixty yards in width. On this part of the route, shallowness sometimes caused extra worry and work. [15] A Pennsylvania trooper who worked the Mohawk at the beginning of the 1760 summer reported the navigation bad -- "Water being swift, and in many places so low that we were obliged to get our Batteaus over by lifting by main Strength; . . . " [16] In the springtime or a rainy summer, the difficulties here were much less.

Stage three, and the biggest bottleneck on the route, was the Oneida Carrying Place. A fairly good road ran from the Mohawk River (Fort Williams, later Fort Stan-

---

14 Belestre's "Itinerary", NYCD, X, 678. Six miles above Little Falls there were gentle rapids at German Flats. A canal was built here in the 1790's to avoid them (Thompson, 158-159). Edpeditions of the 1750's never transshipped here, even upbound.

15 At Utica (twenty-five miles below the Great Portage), the Mohawk's width is 200-260 feet. Dwight, 118. On low water in this part of the route, see Gage to Amherst 12 July 1760, WO 34, vol. 46A, 259-260.

16 Pennsylvania Gazette, 21 August 1760, quoted in Milton W. Hamilton, "Sir William Johnson" (unpublished typescript), 528.

wix) end to the Wood Creek end (Fort Bull). Horse-drawn vehicles did the work; waggons rattled in summer, sleds whispered in winter.[17] Prior to 1756 the length of the regular portage was four miles. In very dry weather it was even longer.

> The English had constructed a road there over which all the carriages passed. They were obliged to bridge a portion of it [corduroy road], extending from Fort Bull to a small stream near which a fort [Newport] had been begun, though not finished; it was to be intermediate between the two Forts, having been located precisely on the summit level.[18]

During the war the British found a way to shorten the length and labour of the carry-over, by temporarily backing up water in Wood Creek until it became deep enough to float transport craft. These contrivances were one-way, and of no use to expeditions approaching the portage from the direction of Oswego. For them, the Great Carrying Place could sometimes be greater than four miles. Boats approaching the portage from the west found Wood Creek passable with difficulty for an "ordinary bateau load of 14 to 1500 weight," except

> When the waters of this stream are low, an ordinary bateau load cannot go by the river further than a league [probably the lieue commune, equal to 2.76 miles] of Fort Bull. It becomes necessary then to unload and make

---

17 On 27 March 1756 Canadian raiders captured sleds carrying nine bateaux loads. Léry journal, RAPQ 1926-7, 385-386.

18 Belestre's "Itinerary", NYCD, X, 675.

> a carrying place of the remainder by a road constructed to the Fort, or to send back the bateau for the other half load. 19

The route's last segment was the waterway from the Carrying Place to Oswego formed by Wood Creek, Oneida Lake and the Oneida and Oswego Rivers. The struggles of Lieutenant-Colonel John Bradstreet's army in 1758 show why this was the most frustrating part of the passage. The men first of all had to march a half dozen miles on from Fort Bull to Canada Creek,

> where they embark'd on board their respective batteaus, eighteen men in each . . . In this manner we advanced to the Spack Bergh, about four miles from Canada Creek; which with the greatest difficulty we reach'd by sun-set, meeting with the utmost obstruction from the trees, which had fallen a-cross the creek, and in many places entirely block'd up its passage; these we were oblig'd to cut away, to make an opening for our boats; by the addition of the waters from Canada Creek, this part of the Wood Creek has a considerable depth; its navigation will, however, always be attended with difficulties, arising from its not being above fifty yards wide, and the trees falling a-cross from each side, unless all the woods on its banks should be cleared off; and even then, from its extreme serpentine course, and the rapidity of the current, it will ever remain an unpleasant navigation: The lands on each side are low and very rich, cover'd with large timber; they likewise abound with poisonous shrubs and woods of various kinds; the falling of whose leaves, impregnate the ponds and rivulets with their unwholesome qualities; hence, these waters are not to be drank without manifest bad effects; indeed I observed, that most of the men employed to bring down the batteaus from fort Newport, who were obliged to be continually in the water, had the skin entirely taken from their feet, in which a very high inflammation was rais'd;

---

19 Ibid. Using the word "league", French records rarely specify whether they mean the official league (2.42 miles), the common league (2.76 miles) or the nautical league (3.45 miles). Marcel Trudel, Introduction to New France (Toronto: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968), 222.

> if such was the effect on the external parts, how much more injurious must its efficacy have been, on the stomach and bowels, as they were under the necessity of making it their common drink whilst in their passage. [20]

The water-borne part of the day's wrestling match (it could hardly be called a trip) achieved the standstill speed of about a half-mile per hour. The following day the expedition, encountering similar obstacles, nevertheless covered about 28 miles down to Oneida Lake in fourteen hours of nonstop navigation: two miles an hour, accelerating. [21] Every year and every expedition it was the same. More curses were flung in the Wood Creek part of the road to Oswego than all the rest of it; (no matter what day of the week British soldiers came through here, they always seemed to talk as if it were Sunday). Sometimes this particular section ate up all the days of the week. One soldier in 1760 found Wood Creek "full of Loggs, and the Water so low, that we were obliged to lift over the Loggs; I was eight days going the length of the Creek which is not 40 Miles." [22] He may have exaggerated. But in June the same year a welldocumented bateau-party took five entire days to get over the distance. Their cargo was the worst because the heaviest: six 24-pounder cannon, two 18's, and some smaller. The water was

---

20 An impartial account of Lieut. Col. Bradstreet's Expedition to fort Frontenac (Toronto: Rous & Mann, 1940), 10-11.

21 Ibid., 12.

22 Pennsylvania Gazette, 21 August 1760, quoted in Hamilton, "Johnson", 528.

low, and many logs impeded the course. "Stuck for hours", read the captain's sweat-stained note.[23] He calculated his overall speed towards the destination at less than a mile per hour for the whole week, and nobody was ever dry. Yet this was still the spring of the year, a relatively wet season with benefits still accruing to rivermen from the run-off of winter snows. "Sorry to learn that the boats were too heavily loaded; if they rub their bottoms on the gravel now that the water is so high what must they do by and by?"[24]

Oneida Lake was a welcome relief.

> This Lake is about thirty-two miles in length and eight in breadth; it affords a most delightful prospect, the lands which surround it, are low and well timber'd; it abounds with a variety of fish, . . . For about half a mile from the shore, it is shallow, and the bottom cover'd with redish stone, though farther distant it is very deep. . . In the spring, its waters are tolerably good, though in the summer generally covered with a scum, when they are very unwholesome.[25]

Best of all, the navigation of Oneida Lake was always "beautiful and practicable . . . best on the right of the Lake, which is on the north side."[26] Bradstreet's men covered thirty-eight miles the day they swished through this body of water -- as much as on the two preceeding days together.[27]

---

23 Osborne to Commanding Officer Fort Stanwix 9 June 1760, WO 34, vol. 53, 42.

24 Amherst to Massey 11 June 1760, WO 34, vol.53, 185.

25 An impartial account, 12. The actual maximum depth of Oneida Lake is 55 feet. Thompson, 504.

26 Belestre, "Itinerary", NYCD, X, 675.

27 An impartial account, 12.

The next day's leg to the west was easy too. The river flowing out of Oneida Lake was between 70 and 200 yards wide, "passable at all times with loaded vessels . . . . neither fall nor rapid at its entrance" from the lake.[28] After meandering eighteen miles through lands "very rich and level, covered with hickory, butternut and Linwood",[29] the stream received tributaries from the Onondaga and Cayuga countries at the junction called "Three rivers", took one last turn to the north-west, then ran to Oswego both straight and rather fast. An American frontiersman who visited the area before the war recorded that as he approached the three rivers on the deep and placid Cayuga, it began to flow more swiftly. They came to the Oneida river, "down which the ALBANY trader comes to OSWEGO, half a mile farther we came to a rippling, which carried us with prodigious swiftness down the stream, soon after we encountered a second, and a mile farther a third, very rough."[30] These rapids could be run safely by parties headed downstream. But on the upward journey the worst spot necessitated everyone getting out of the craft to lighten it; then the boatmen "tracked" or dragged it up the stream by means of ropes, stumbling over the boulders of the

---

28 Ibid., 14. Belestre, "Itinerary", NYCD, X, 674-675.
29 An impartial account, 14.
30 John Bartram, Travels in Pennsylvania and Canada (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1966), 46-47.

river-bed or walking on the bank alongside.[31]

"In about an hour by the sun, after many other ripplings, we found our selves at the great fall, the whole breadth of the river which is above 100 yards wide."[32]

> This cataract is about twelve miles from Oswego; it . . . is impossible to be pass'd with any degree of safety, by any boats whatsoever; several attempts have formerly been made, but they all prov'd fatal to the adventurers. The perpendicular fall, is in some places eight or ten feet, in others not so great. 33

The waterfall of the Oswego River was the last break in the route which compelled downbound travellers to portage. Coming up, crews would track their boats to the foot of the fall and have then a carry of only 180 feet or a little less.[34] On the way down, the length of the portage depended on the bulk of the lading and the mood of the boatmen. If they were moving light with a flimsy and easily portable craft, they would pick up everything and walk a mile, avoiding a section of the river below the fall that was full of rocks and rapids.[35]

---

31 On 28 July 1743 John Bartram, Lewis Evans and their Iroquois hosts were proceeding up the Oswego River above the Falls. "At half an hour after ten [a.m.], we got to the first fall, above the great one, the INDIANS brought the canoe to shore and made sign for us to disembark and walk along ashore, while they stept into the river, and hawled the canoe up the fall about a quarter of a mile, . . . " Bartram, 55.

32 Ibid., 46-47.

33 An impartial account, 14-15.

34 Bartram, 47. Belestre, "Itinerary", NYCD, X, 674-675. The map in Huntington Miscellaneous 15453 says 30 yards -- probably too optimistic. An impartial account calls this portage "about fifty yards" (p. 14).

35 An impartial account, 14-15.

> Here we hawled our canoe ashore, took out all our baggage, and carried it on our backs a mile to a little [Iroquois] town, of about four or five cabins, they chiefly subsist by catching fish and assisting the ALCANY [sic] people to hawl their BATEAUS, and carry their goods round the falls, . . . 36

If, however, a downbound party had heavy boats and loads, they often saved time and labour by making the shortest portage possible. Goods were borne on men's backs while the bateaux were dragged along the ground. If there was horsepower available, or plenty of manpower, it was even speedier not to unload the boats, but to transport them overland as found. Rollers helped.[37] Right below the falls -- providing the whisky held out, courage did not flag nor prudence intervene -- they embarked on a boulder-congested stream whose waters raced at twenty miler per hour. The recorder of Bradstreet's 1758 expedition wrote,

> Whale boats are here drawn by hand a-cross the neck of the land, opposite the falls, that is, from a few yards above the falls, to where the force of water, which descends the precipice, is somewhat abated. Here they are again launch'd into the river, and by four men convey'd down the rifts, to a cove, where the water is still and smooth, about a mile distant. Those who are so fortunate as to

---

36 Bartram, 46-47.

37 "On the 20th at day break, we began to draw over our boats, which we never unloaded; . . . " An impartial account, 15. The journal of Francis Grant, who made this trip in 1767, says: "The batteaus at this place are carried 30 yards on rollers into the river below the fall, which for about a mile is full of rifts which make the navigation dangerous and often exposes the goods in the batteaus to damage by water. We were informed that in coming up the river the batteaus must be unloaded at this place." Quoted in Hamilton, "Johnson", 36 .

> keep the channel, and avoid touching the rocks, are generally about three minutes passing this distance, which is a proof of the great rapidity of the current. Thro' the want of experienced navigators, several batteaus were driven against the rocks, . . . 38

"Indeed," said one voyageur, the river "runs pretty swift all the way to OSWEGO." [39] The last twelve miles were "encumbered by large rocks. Good pilots, familiar with the shoals, are requisite . . . " [40] It was "middling land, some white pine and spruce groves to pass through." [41] Roads again appeared, for in the environs of New York's fur-trading outpost the traffic of Iroquois civilization coming to the store had beat out several definite paths through the woods. [42]

Oswego was the American (as Fort Frontenac was the Canadian) foyer to the inland empire of Lake Ontario. From those two seaports in the Lake's eastern corners, the water reached 200 miles towards the west and the Niagara corridor to Lake Erie. The average width of the lake is 40 miles.

---

38 An impartial account, 14-15. "Then they launch again into the river, and down the foaming stream that furiously on all sides dashes one half against the rocks, near a mile before theyccome to still water, . . . " (Bartram, 46-47).

39 Bartram, 46-47.

40 Belestre, "Itinerary", NYCD, X, 674-675.

41 Bartram, 48.

42 After the French capture of Oswego in 1756, Bougainville "was sent this morning to reconnoitre the road through the woods which leads to the Five Nations. Found several brushed out, but one which I followed for some distance was well marked with wheel tracks and seemed to me to be the true road." BJ 17 August 1756, p. 27.

The territory around this miniature ocean was capable of supporting a huge agricultural population. On the south side of the lake, the land improved as one went westward.

> The lands near Oswego, and bordering on the north east banks of it, are but ordinary in quality, that is, for cultivation; they are however, well cover'd with pine timber; a few miles south westward, the soil is very different. There the barren sands, give place to a strong black mould; and instead of pines, tall oaks, hickery and chesnut, rear their tops, and extend their branches.
>
> But farther westward (as the Indian traders have inform'd me) about an hundred miles from Oswego . . . The lands are, by the description they gave me, as fertile, rich and luxuriant, as perhaps any in the universe; this country, and that of the Seneca's and Cayuga's, which borders on it, they tell me, abound with rich plains, some of them many miles in extent, equal in quality to the best lands on the Mohocks river. [43]

Had this observer of the 1750's been granted a three-generation glimpse ahead in time, he would have noted that the western end of the lake, and most of the north shore leading back towards Montreal, was awaiting the plow's most careless caress to spring up a wealthy fruitland and continuous market garden. Only on the east and north-east shores of Lake Ontario did the skimpiness of soil beneath the trees make it not worth the farmer's trouble to clear the forest out of the way.[44]

---

43 An impartial account, 15-16.

44 The Aldine world atlas (Toronto: Dent, 1961), 67. Both the Saint Lawrence shores for some distance below Cataraqui were only barely fit for agriculture, or worse. Surveyor Samuel Holland reported in 1783, "From the head of the long Sault to the Top of the uppermost rapid, where the Nav-

In the War of the Conquest, the main importance of Lake Ontario was not its agricultural potential or the population it did or might support, not even its furs. That resource was already somewhat depleted through overkill. The lake was a grand object of French and British ambitions in its own right, as an avenue to the west and to wealth. This was the best road for colonial merchants to keep up contact with Indians in the interior whose source of furs was not exhausted, and whose appetite for European trade goods supported a vast, oceanic commerce. Ontario waters could be developed for friendly transport, and denied to an enemy. Rival empires fought for possession of this region so as to hold the highway, quite apart from the equally vital fact that the lake was the natural western access route to settled parts of Canada and of New York.

Lake Ontario was a wide spot on the water-way west. Hence, it was harder to control, because harder to watch except at its terminal ends. It was also more difficult to ex-

---

igation begins the Country has a most favorable appearance, from hence to Cataraqui the shore is high and Rocky, but opening here and there into beautiful Coves and Bays, where the view extends a great way into fine natural Meadows, and though the Shore appears rough and uninviting the Soil is rich at some distance fit for all purposes of Agriculture, as I have been informed," The same year, a party under Captain Justin Sherwood viewed the whole stretch. "On the whole, the Land may all be said to be of the very best quality from the Lake St. Francis all the way up the River [to] 12 miles above Oswegatchie [La Présentation] . . . all the rest of their March [to] within five Miles of Cataraqui the Land was exceeding bad, being a constant succession of Stoney Ledges and Sunken Swamps altogether unfit for Cultivation, for three miles at least back from the Lake [River]." Ruth McKenzie, Leeds and Grenville (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1967), 6.

ploit and use, calling for more sturdy instruments of navigation than the streams did. Boats fit for river travel had to be very cautious venturing out on the broad lake. "It is to all purposes of human vision an ocean, the same majestic motion in its billows," [45] That motion could easily send the burden-bearing bateau to the bottom. When Bradstreet's army pushed off from Oswego in August 1758, they were delighted to have a good day: "The weather being calm and favourable, the opportunity of advancing, as far as possible, was not to be neglected; for on the least rise of wind, the swell is very great; this obliged us to keep along shore, that we might land, and draw up our boats whenever the wind heighten'd." [46] After the first twelve hours of hard pulling, it is easy to guess the men became less charmed with good weather, and wished it might squall a bit. "We continued rowing, till about twelve o'clock in the morning, . . ." Many Ontario days being treacherous, small boat users had to capitalize on opportunities. They also experimented with designs. In 1759-1760 British officers debated what type of rowing craft best suited this particular sea: the flat-bottomed bateau or the keeled whaleboat.

> Poor DeNormandie has lost his life by a whaleboat It blew hard & the lake was rough He pushed to get to Niagara at

---

45 Gouverneur Morris to John Parish 20 December 1800, Hosack, 256.

46 An impartial account, 16-17.

> night . . . DeNormandie's whaleboat opened from stem to stern he swam for his life & was lost. The crew saved themselves by getting on shore by the help of the shattered whaleboat. [47]

Lieutenant De Normandie "was one of the great advocates for whaleboats, & has fallen a victim to his opinion." [48]

"If you sail with a fair wind there seems no inconvenience in the navigation," wrote another British officer -- but he presupposed the possession of sailing craft. [49] The many hardships associated with trying to develop a sailing fleet for the inland sea, outlined in chapter IV, meant that too often there had to be reliance upon the smaller boats, dangerous as they were. But even sailing vessels could not be sure of safe passage. In the first few months after reestablishing Oswego as a naval port, the British got two ships into commission, and lost them both almost immediately to the perils of freshwater navigation. The French struggle with the difficulties of Lake Ontario was just as elemental, and also had tragic episodes. Mariners on the French side would have agreed with Colonel Gage's obituary: ". . . hope the misfortunes that have lately happened to our marine, will be sufficient to convince us, that lake Ontario, is not to be trifled with." [50]

---

47 Amherst to Gage 4 July 1760, WO 34, vol.46A, 465-466.
48 Gage to Amherst 9 June 1760, WO 34, vol.46A, 245-246.
49 Colonel Dundas to the Duke of Clarence 9 June 1783, Report of the Ontario Archives 1904, 23.
50 Gage to Amherst 24 December 1759, WO 34, vol.46A,

The French route into the Lake Ontario region was the upper Saint Lawrence River, 185 miles between Fort Frontenac and Montreal. Whereas prior to the war the Mohawk-Oneida route was used sparingly, Canada's extensive commercial and military empire in the pays d'en haut caused the Saint Lawrence, during the early decades of the Eighteenth century, to become a busy transport route six months of the year. Never perhaps was so travelled a route so little occupied. Almost no settled population interposed between the shores of Lac Saint-Louis at Montreal island and Fort Frontenac -- or Niagara, for that matter. There was, in fact, no concentration of more than one or two dozen people until 1749, when Father François Picquet started a mission settlement at La Présentation which soon attracted several hundred Christian Iroquois there.[51]

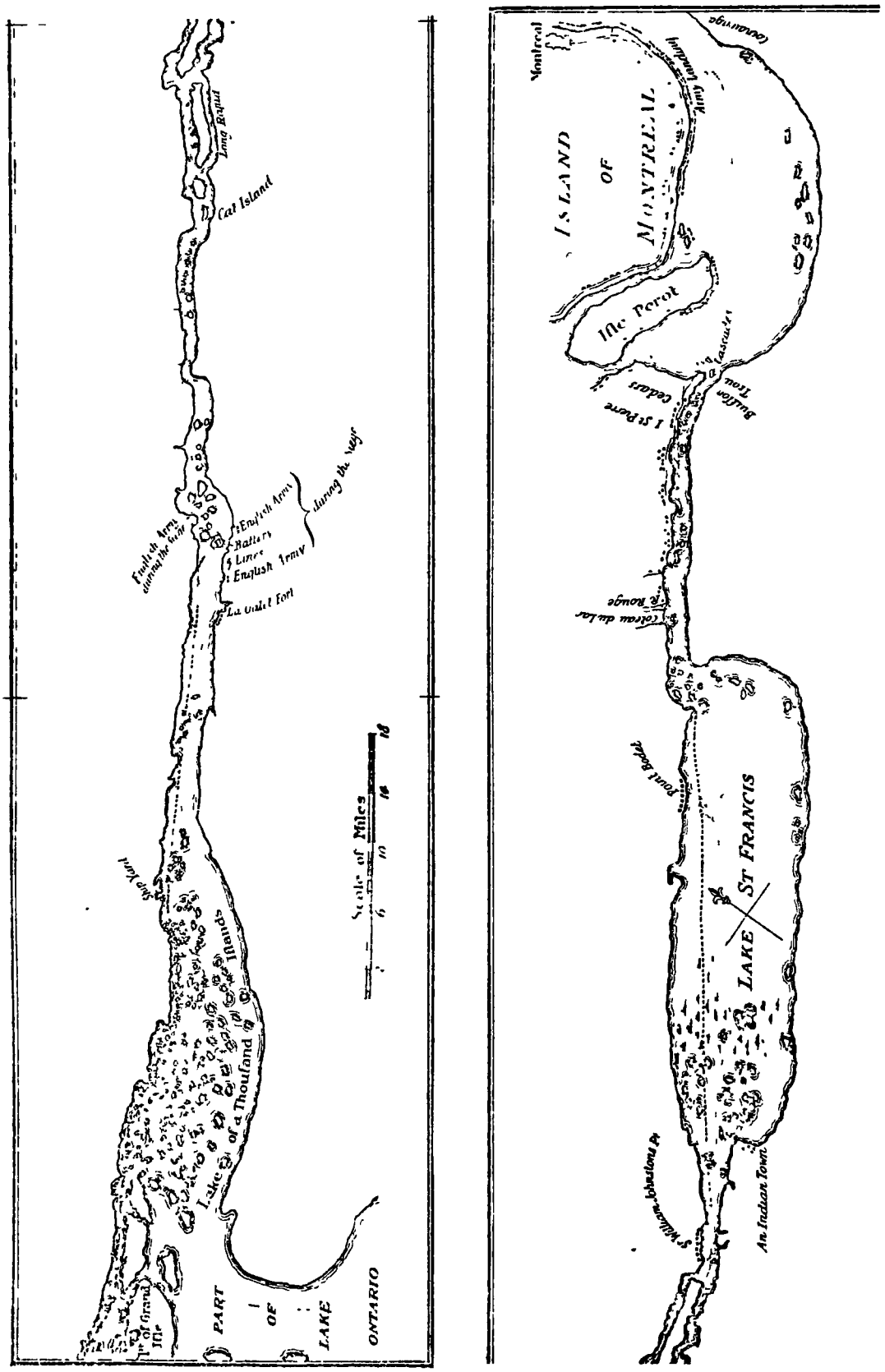
Along this deserted, sylvan watercourse, then, spring and autumn brigades of bateaux and of the standard government-issue bark canoe -- thirty three feet long and five wide; in peacetime Canadian authorities purchased twenty of them each year, from the Trois-Rivières boatyard[52] -- toiled

---

135. Gage to Haldimand 5 May 1760, PAC, MG 21, G 2, vol.2-1, 63-64.

51 For the La Présentation mission's rapid progress, see chapter III, pp. 184-186.

52 At 300 livres apiece. Franquet, Voyages et mémoires sur le Canada en 1752-1753 par [Louis] Franquet (Toronto: Canadiana House, 1968), 17.



SAINT LAWRENCE RIVER FROM LAKE ONTARIO TO MONTREAL ISLAND, 1760
(Doughty, Knox Journal, II, 558)

up and slid down between Montreal and the upper country. Bateaux rowers had a fixed working schedule, stepping on shore every two hours for a smoke. These stopping places became known as "pipes". The same word also became attached to the intervals between rests, so that the distance from one prominent landmark to another was so many pipes. [53] If the voyageurs were stemming a particularly hard current, or the wind was strong against them, they had to work prodigiously hard to make headway up. In these cases they were "obliged to rest a little every half hour. The Canadians row at the rate of three miles an hour when the weather is perfectly calm, and, of course, rather more when they have a favourable breeze to assist them; . . . " [54] Boatmen stopping for a pipe, a plate of beans, or a sleep, named all the features of the upper river, although nobody lived there: Isle aux Citrons -- lemons must have fallen in the water, they never grew; Anse aux Corbeaux with raucous treetops; [55] Pointe au Baptême -- "so called because of a baptism carried out there, as they do on the Grand Banks"; [56] Pointe au Baril, where two sailors escaped from a sinking boat by floating a-

---

53 McKenzie, Leeds, 4-5.

54 John Howison, Sketches of upper Canada (n.p., S.R. Publishers, 1965), 37

55 Raven Creek (today's Landon Bay) is located in Malcolm MacLeod, "Simcoe's Schooner ONONDAGA", Ontario History, LIX, p. 26, note 4.

56 BJ 28 July 1756, p.17. See Malcolm MacLeod, "Ceremony on sighting the banks of Newfoundland, and upon entering the Canadian 'pays d'en haut'", The Mariner's Mirror, vol.54, 298-300.

shore on a barrel (or did they drink the barrel dry to celebrate?);[57] La Galette, island shaped like a sea biscuit;[58] very descriptive Drunkard's Point; very sobering Isle aux Têtes, "so called because of an execution M. de Frontenac had carried out there, . . . "[59] The rapids had innocent names straight from nature, giving a peaceable repuation to evil-intentioned waters: Coteau du Lac (lakeside), the Cedars, Le Buisson (thicket).

The first 70 miles downstream from Fort Frontenac was the Thousand Islands section of the route -- a confusing labyrinth of channels, some of them dead-end, easy to fool a newcomer. In 1760 both vessels of the British Lake Ontario navy "got out of the right channel and could not get down, notwithstanding," wrote Amherst, "I had given the best Pilots I could procure."[60] But if one knew the way to thread it, there was no particular difficulty with this part's navigation. The river flows smoothly, with lots of depth and width, and over the whole distance does not lose as much as two feet from the level of Lake Ontario.[61]

Then the Saint Lawrence begins to fall, very definitely, yet nowhere so abruptly as to make downward passage

---

57 McKenzie, Leeds, 3-4.
58 Ibid., 4-5.
59 BJ 25 July 1756, p.16.
60 Amherst Journal 15 August 1760, Knox's Historical Journal, III, 86.
61 Lake Ontario is 245 feet above sea level. The top

impossible provided that boatmen exercise a high degree of skill and alertness. In 90 miles from the top of the topmost rapid -- the Galops (the river begins to run) -- it descends an average of two feet per mile, from an elevation of 244 feet to 64 feet above mean sea level at the head of the Lachine rapids (Sault Saint-Louis, at Montreal). There are seven major rapids along this part of the route.[62]

RAPID	HORIZONTAL LENGTH	VERTICAL DROP	RATE OF DESCENT
Galops	7.miles	15.9 feet	2.3 feet per mile
Rapide Plat (the flat rapid)	3.5	11.6	3.3
Long Sault	11.	45.8	4.2
Coteau du Lac	1.	19.	19.
the Cedars	1.	39.6	39.6
Buisson (Split Rock)	1.	(24.2	about 8.
Cascades	2.	(	about 8.

The magic number seemed to be about four feet drop per mile. In the two rapids highest up the river, where the drop was more gentle than that, no portage at all was necessary. Boats coming down shot through quite handily, and craft going up could be rowed, poled and tracked without any unloading. Although descending traffic regularly shot the other five rapids, parties working up from Montreal had to unload,

---

of the Saint Lawrence rapids is 244 feet.

62 Canada, Department of Transport, The Great Lakes - Saint Lawrence deep waterwar (Ottawa, 1949), pp. 4-18 and the plates, especially No.8, "Profile. Lake Ontario to Montreal". Marcel Trudel, Atlas de la Nouvelle-France (Quebec: Les

pack, portage and load again at each of the Long Sault, Coteau, Cedars, Buisson and Cascades.[63]

"The lands which are in the upper part of the Montreal region on the route from Fort Frontenac," wrote Catalogne in his 1712 report, "are the best in the country, where fish and game never lack; but the rapids, which are very bad there, pose a difficulty to their being settled, . . . "[64]

> The rapids are of various descriptions. They are either whirlpools, occasioned by rocks, against which the water strikes in its course, or strong declinations of the bed of the river, the rapid motion of which is checked by few or no obstructions. Carried by rapids of this nature, ships may advance sixteen miles in an hour. Those of the former description are the most dangerous, though misfortunes but seldom occur.[65]

"Tedious," said a one-time traveller, with conspicuous and aristocratic ennui -- "but the novelty of the scene and of the mode of getting along keeps the attention fully occupied."[66]

The Galops was the first of these novel scenes encountered on the way from Lake Ontario to Montreal. Above it, on the north shore, was Pole Cove: "So named because the

---

presses de l'Université Laval, 1968), 116-117.

63 The map "Carte des Frontieres Francoises, et Angloises . . . " in M.Pouchot, Memoir upon the late war in North America, II (Roxbury: Woodward, 1866) has the label "Channel for Bateaux to avoid the Cascades rapides". However, parties upbound portaged the Cascades; e.g., Léry in June 1749 (RAPQ 1926-7, 334-338); Guyenne regiment in July-August 1755 (RAPQ 1931-2, 11-14); Montcalm and staff, July 1756 (BJ,pp.14-18).

64 William Bennett Munro, Documents relating to the seigneurial tenure in Canada, 1598-1854 (Toronto: Champlain Society, 1908), 145.

65 La Rochefoucault, using Guillemard's account, Report of the Ontario Archives 1916, 99.

66 Colonel Dundas to the Duke of Clarence 9 June 1788,

river [for those upbound] is now free from rapids as far as Frontenac so the boatmen no longer need poles and throw them away here." [67] The Galops was a rapid of the gentler sort, without obstructions. "The water is in many places very strong, & a variety of Eddies which in some places run equally strong back as in in others forwards." [68] The flat rapid, meeting its name's promise, was similarly innocuous.

The Long Sault was the first of the rapids where upward portage was necessary. There were no draft animals or waggons at this site during the War of the Conquest -- even Major-Generals had to walk along the shore, like ordinary people. [69] Below this long leap was the easy two-way stretch of Lake St.-François, thirty miles in length. Sails were set if any useful breeze were stirring, the river was broad, but not broad enough to ever be very rough, and it was quiet. As voyageurs approached the foot of the lake the agitated murmur of hurrying waters first made a buzzing background for idyllic navigation, then provided an explanation why the boat seemed to lurch into a gear that gave greater speed.

Below Lake St.-François the river looped to the left

Report of the Ontario Archives 1904, 23.

67 BJ 26 July 1756, p.16.
68 Williamson Journal 31 August 1760, PAC, MG 18, N 21.
69 BJ 25 July 1756, p.16.

out of its established trajectory for a sixteen-mile rush through narrower banks. This section of the route contained the other four rapids.

There were two portages at Coteau rapid. The highest was a long one: about three miles. [70] Further down was a carry of 400 feet over Pointe au Diable. The nuisance of this break in the trip was sometimes lessened by leaving the bateau in the river, made fast to trees on the shore, while three-quarters of its cargo was unloaded and carried on land. "Two men remain in the bateau," to fend it off rocks, "one in the bow and one in the stern; the others haul on the rope." But, "it often happens that when the rope breaks the bateau goes down the falls and the men drown." [71]

The worst spot on the whole route was next to come. For eight or nine miles below Coteau du Lac the Saint Lawrence averages one and a half miles in width. Then it narrows again. The Cedars rapid presents

> one perturbed expanse of foam, rushing over a rocky bed with terrific grandeur and vehemence. The river is half a mile broad here, and such is the rapidity of the current, that the water, when it strikes against the projecting rocks, is thrown up in large jets many feet high. The channel must be composed of immense jutting and fantastic-shaped rocks, for the river is so torn and convulsed by the inequalities over which it is whirled, that it presents an appearance truly frightful. Distinct bodies of water appear to dispute the passage, and to rush against each other, without intermingling. In some places, the stream glides in a state of glassy smoothness over beds

---

70 Ibid., 23 July 1756, p.15.

71 "Journal de la campagne que le Sieur de Léry . . . a faite au Detroit en l'année 1749 . . . ", RAPQ 1926-7, 336.

> of stone, till, impeded by fragments of rock, it is dashed into a state of comminution, and partly whirled into the air in clouds of spray, and in these, minature rainbows may be seen forming and disappearing at intervals. The middle of the Rapids is occupied by a small island, which, being richly wooded, adds much to the splendour of the scene. 72

Dropping forty feet in the space of one mile, the Cedars was the most nerve-racking rapid to shoot -- which, however, the downbound traffic routinely did. Accidents were more frequent on this passage than any other part of the route. "When a boat does fill, or upset, the crew inevitably perish".[73] The portage for upbound movement was two miles long.[74] As late as 1749 there was no good portage road developed; Léry offered a suggestion that facilities should be built at Montreuil and Petite Rivière for getting around this rapid and the ones immediately below it, with the inhabitants of The Cedars furnishing the carts and animals under proper hire by the government.[75]

The Buisson-Cascades complex of rapides -- a one-two punch -- was the last site where brigades daring their wet way down would see other rivermen struggling up with their boats, home, cargo and kitchen om their backs.

---

72 Howison, 15-16, "Comminution" has no political overtones. To comminute is to pulverize, reduce to tiny particles.

73 Ibid., 16. La Rochefoucault, Report of the Ontario Archives 1916, 99.

74 Bougainville's three-quarters of a league. BJ 23 July 1756, p.15.

75 Léry journal 8 June 1749, RAPQ 1926-7, 335-336.

Soldiers being transported had to walk. A carrying-place of about three miles avoided both rapids. Emerging below the Cascades, downbound traffic had but fifteen level miles more, to arrive at the terminus of the river-road. Lachine on Montreal island was the starting point for voyages upriver. With Lachine as the terminus water-traffic was enabled to avoid the last of the Saint Lawrence River's great descents, Sault St.-Louis, where the water boiled down 27 feet in three miles. [76] It was nine miles by good road from the port of Montreal, where goods and people arrived from Quebec and Europe. During the 1750's logistics support for military operations often filled the Montreal-Lachine artery with waggons and carts rumbling up supplies. The government had military magazines at Lachine, and the fur companies had warehouses.

From 1735 on Montreal had a fairly good road connection with Quebec. The road was used for local traffic, and for swift movement of mail and passengers between the two cities, but bulk shipments always went by water. Montreal was not well equipped to handle its vital, inescapeable cargoes, having no developed harbour facilities, and no wharves. Nor was it an ocean port during the French regime. It bespeaks extreme caution on the part of sea-farers, or unfortunate results of Quebec-Montreal rivalry, that goods which could have

---

76 Canada, Department of Transport, The Great Lakes-Saint Lawrence deep waterway, 4-18.

arrived in the heart of Canada direct from Bordeaux or La Rochelle, were instead transshipped at the colony's capital 180 miles down river, and carried up to the hub in vessels of no more than 80 tons burden. Albany, Montreal's strategic equivalent as the British/American gate to the western front, was about the same distance from a principal ocean port -- New York -- but its cargoes often arrived without transshipment. An English invasion fleet in 1760 brought the first ocean-going ships to Montreal, easily. [77]

There were other routes into the Lake Ontario region besides the constricted Mohawk-Oneida and upper Saint Lawrence traffic lanes. Each side had a back door.

For the French this was the route of the Ottawa River and the Mattawa-French Creek portages over into Lake Huron. A very roundabout way to get to Detroit or Niagara, this was nonetheless the route chiefly used from its discovery until the early 18th century, when the Iroquois menace on the upper Saint Lawrence finally disappeared, permitting more direct links. The back door from the American colonies was through the Allegheny region in western Virginia and Pennsylvania onto upper Ohio waters; then via the Duquesne-Presqu'ile route to Lake Erie, thence Niagara. Easier to imag-

---

77 Chevalier de Raymond, "Mémoire sur les postes du Canada", RAPQ 1927-8, 351. E.R.Adair, "The evolution of Montreal under the French regime", Canadian Historical Association Report [hereafter cited as CHAR], 1942, 31-32.

ine and project than complete, this trip was planned for whole armies in 1755, 1758 and 1759, before a small British squad actually got through to the Lake Ontario theatre from the southward in 1760.

Within the theatre itself, there were secondary routes that were even more tedious and slow than the principal paths from Albany and Montreal. One avenue -- used more by Indians than Europeans -- led between La Présentation and the Great Carrying Place. This was a war path, good for secret approaches since it was fully uninhabited. Its water links were inefficient, and there was a lot of labour and wandering. The party that burned the fledgling mission at La Présentation in 1749 no doubt came this way from the Mohawk country.[78] A well-documented use of the trail was the march of a 366-man Canadian raiding party in March 1756. In wintertime, they walked all the way.[79] Leaving La Présentation, the last French post, each man carried forty-six pounds of provisions. Their progress, interspersed with whole days' delay caused by bad weather and Indian negotiations, was:

DATE	DETAILS	ADVANCE
11 March 1756	Left La Présentation. Followed the course of the	

78 Céloron journal, Collections of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, XVIII (Madison: the Society, 1908), 56-57.

79 Two primary accounts of this expedition are Léry journal, RAPQ 1926-7, 372-390; and Charly[illegible] journal, P.-G.

DATE	DETAILS	ADVANCE
	River Chouegalsy (Owegatchie river)	About 4 miles
12 March 1756	Same	4
14	Same	8
16	Left off following the river (near De Kalb, New York?)	17
17	Through the woods	14
18	Arrived on the River Chouegalsy again in the evening	14
20	Arrived at noon at the Rivière aux Ecorces (some part of the Beaver River system; the Black River near Lowville, NY?) This was the unofficial border of enemy territory. Crossing it seemed to encourage the raiders' interest in religious exercises; the chaplain had not been called on to say mass up to this point, but he did so several times in the following days. The men laid low in the afternoon, and crossed the river on rafts at night.	8
21	Overland	17
23	Same	6
24	Same	14
25	Same	17
26	Arrived within a half-mile of the portage road between the Mohawk and Oneida watersheds, the target of their raid	11

According to these figures, which assume that francophone journal-keepers meant the lieue commune of 2.76 English miles when they used the word "league", 134 miles was

---

Roy, editor, Inventaire des papiers de Léry (Quebec, 1939-40), 39-49. In the following table, the distance of advance given for March 20, 23 and 25 are estimates.

covered in twelve days of travelling on foot overland in winter (average 11 miles per day). (If they meant the lieue marine, nautical league, then their 48 leagues represented 165 miles of distance.)[80] A straight line on today's map shows 120 miles. Since, on foot, they did not depend on following the streams, they were free to go as directly as their knowledge or compass would lead them. But they could have moved along more quickly had they been afloat.

One of the plans the British considered for 1759 was to send an army of 300 men by this route. According to their faulty information, it was 80-90 miles long: "An Indian path often made use of by the enemy's parties to come to the Mohawk river, and are seldom more than three days in performing it".[81]

Fearful of pursuit after destroying Fort Bull, the 1756 raiding party from Canada took another way back. Striking straight through the woods, they covered sixty-five miles to the Bay de Niaouré (Sackett's Harbour, New York) in seven and a half days. They had good weather, but "unvelieveable difficulties transporting the wounded through the mountains, the stretchers being repeatedly broken when the

---

80 Marcel Trudel, Introduction to New France (Toronto: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1968), 222.

81 Montresor's plan dated 29 December 1758, NYCD, X, 907-912.

people carrying them tumbled down." [82] The transport they expected to meet them at Niaouré and take them off by bateaux arrived late, and they were busy building rafts to cross the Black River when help finally appeared.

Another route the French used to approach Britsh territory unbeknownst was followed by a guerilla group of 300 men under Marine officer François-Marie Picoté de Belestre in 1757. They departed La Présentation 24 October with a month's provisions. On 6 November, avoiding Oswego, they rowed their bateaux into the Famine River twenty miles to the eastward and ascended it about 12 miles. The boats were left there with guards. The main party advanced overland to Oneida Lake, picked up the regular Oswego-Albany trail, and were on the Great Carrying Place November 10th. [83] They struck and burned German Flats two days later at dawn, exchanged insults with the tiny garrison of nearby Fort Herkimer, rested and revelled the 13th until evening, [84] then went back the way they came without being bothered by pursuit, and arrived at Montreal with 102 prisoners on the 29th. [85]

---

82 Léry journal 27 March - 3 April 1756, RAPQ 1926-7, 388-390. Charly mentions 30½ leagues: either 84 or 105 miles. Roy, Léry, III, 47-49. See also Picquet to Commanding officer Fort Frontenac 22 March 1756, PAC, MG 24, L 3, vol.3, 1452-1453.

83 Belestre, "Itinerary", NYCD, X, 675. Lévis journal, Casgrain, I, 106-109.

84 "At eight in the morning on the 12th they destroyed the settlement on the north side the river above Herkimers that night they sent of their prisoners next day they were very drunk and went of in the evening". Loudoun to Pownall 17 November 1757, WO 34, vol.27, 74, See also [Loudoun] to Pownall 15 November 1757, LO 4838.

85 Lévis journal, Casgrain, I, 108-109.

They had been 24 days getting from Montreal to German Flats, and 16 days returning.[86]

A final back alley -- this time, one over which the French worried - was said to be a possible way the British could launch from the south and appear in the basin of Montreal island at Chateauguay. An English deserter told his French captors in July 1759, that Sir William Johnson would be leading a party

> from the Corlar river through the woods. This last news [wrote a Canadian commentator] made one think that this officer could carry out such a manoeuvre to great advantage, with a corps large enough to cut M. Bourlamaque's retreat [from Lake Champlain]. He could do it by using a route known to the Mohawk Indians, which leads from a locale named Germain Flatx, where the Flemings are established, and comes out at Chateauguay, . . . 87

---

86 In 1759-60 Amherst ordered an investigation into ways of getting onto the Mohawk-Oneida route without coming through Oswego. An undated chart in the Huntington Library, San Marino, California, was the result of an exploration done by Francis Pfister, engineer officer. Every second stream seems to have been named "Canady" creek -- an indication of nervousness. The particular Canada creek that Pfister traced was a tributary of Wood Creek. The map shows "The course of the Creek taken by Order of His Excelency General AMHERST. NB All the turns are taken with an Instrument & the Distance by Paces --" The stream is shown meandering for seven to eight miles, generally in a south-south-west direction. Pfister and his rodman apparently walked up this brook for two days in a careful surveying way, and put down everything they found: "high land on both sides; Low land on both sides; high Land's; Low Land on both side's; Encampd [the first night; three miles in a straight line from "Scluce" at Wood Creek]; Beaver dam; Medow; Second Beaver dam we destroy'd them both; Low Land on both side; swamp; Little Fall; Riffts; Low Land on both side; high Land; Old Indian hut"; and at the source where the stream began in a network of rivulets, "Swamp, Medow, Robert's Hill", and "a very high Hill where we Encampd the second Night." Huntington Miscellaneous 15475.

87 "Mémoire du Canada", RAPQ 1924-5, 156.

The chief use which the two enemies wanted to make of the Lake Ontario area was to move through it -- to the west, or to attack important portions of each other's settled territory. Therefore the region's topographical features that most affected strategy were those that directed, aided or impeded travel. The limited number of good waterways was important; so was distance, and the fact that Montreal and Lake Ontario were in the same watershed, while the British approach was over a height of land. In just what ways did these, and other aspects of the physical lay-out in the Albany-Niagara-Montreal triangle, impact upon the hopes and fears of military planners?

2. Effects of topography upon strategy.

The theatre's physical structure had these effects upon strategy. 1) The routes into the country imposed a formidable timetable. 2) Distance plus the unfriendly lay of the land put difficulties in the way of military projects; which 3) the two sides tried to overcome by mustering energies, organization and caution to the cause. 4) Topography directly influenced Headquarters decisions of what to attempt, or what to expect, in the Ontario region, compared with other fighting sectors.

With respect to the timetable for moving military units or large quantities of supplies into or out of the

Lake Ontario area, the Saint Lawrence route gave the French the advantage of quicker transport.[88]

For the Anglo-Americans, the Mohawk River -- on the Albany side of the Atlantic-Ontario divide -- lent itself to trips of four and a half to seven days bateauing from Schenectady up to the Great Oneida Portage, and from two to four days coming down.[89]

The Great Carrying Place usually accounted for at least one day in either direction, and tended to be a bottleneck whenever a large movement was underway. In the spring of 1760 Brigadier-General Thomas Gage, acting as traffic master, reported to Amherst about seven regiments of troops clustering westward for the invasion of Canada. They had taken four days to get all their bateaux, whaleboats, baggage and men over the Little Falls, 2-6 June. Now, one regiment had gone down Wood Creek the previous day in the

---

88 In addition to the evidence mustered in the next half dozen paragraphs, see also Appendix 1, "The speed of communications", keeping always in mind that the quickest times shown there were for urgent messages from high-ranking officers. Sped along by special express arrangements, these letters moved much faster than ordinary army or supply units could possibly do.

89 Belestre, an interloper, said the times needed between Schenectady and the Great Carrying Place were: 4½ days going up, two coming down. His "Itinerary", NYCD, X, 678. Experienced British hands planning to move 774½ barrels of provisions to Fort Stanwix in the fall of 1758 -- using 65 batteaux and 310 men -- allowed 13 days for the round trip between Albany and the portage. This included one day by wagon each end of the trip on the Albany-Schenectady road. WO 34, vol. 45, 29.

morning; another was over the Great Carrying Place waiting at the head of that stream; a third was moving on the portage; a fourth was camped repairing its whaleboats which had been strained by the drag around Little Falls and bumpily tracking a mild rapid at German Flats; and three more were due to arrive at Fort Stanwix (Mohawk River end of the Great Portage) during the next two days. Gear tended to get lost and damaged; food to open and spoil; men to stray, get separated from their transport, or get caught up in a unit going the opposite direction. In a competition for wagons, horses and rope amid a medley of orders, the firmest hand was needed to keep control over the switch from water to land and back again. The mess of a big portage movement called for a clean-up man. "Major Campbell has directions to see everything whatever that may be left or lagged behind over the portage before he sets off . . . . " [90]

On the route's Lake Ontario slope, the best times were four days going down to Oswego, and eight coming up. Bradstreet's army took five days getting from the top of Wood Creek to the foot of the Oswego River. This included two frustrating days of very slow progress in the dried-up higher reaches of Wood Creek; many man-hours consumed trying to fish up stuff from boats wrecked at Oswego Falls; and at the foot of the falls, a "whole morning . . . taken up in unloading some of the boats which were leaky, and in repairing and caulking them". [91]

---

90 Gage to Amherst 9 June 1760, WO 34, vol.46A, 245-246.
91 An impartial account, 15.

Of course, the upper streams were often too low of water to float anything, and falls and portages regularly took toll of the vehicles. The five days was typical of the time needed for a complex and unwieldy army under excellent driving leadership, that was actually sending men to their death through unremitting fatigue.[92] Many expeditions used even more time.[93]

In sum then, the average schedule for the Albany to Oswego trip was:

- 1 day on the road to Schenectady
- about 6 days to the Great Carrying Place
- 1 day over
- 5 days down to Oswego
- total 13 days

Movements to the east took a similar amount of time, differently distributed:

- about 8 days from Oswego to Fort Bull
- 1 day over the Great Carrying Place
- 2-3 days down to Scenectady
- 1 day to Albany
- total 12-13 days

Whether moving east or west, parties took the same length of time on the British communication route because it climbed up a divide and down again. They had a stream pushing them for half the journey, but had to stem a current the other half. The French route was one-way for the water, and so was very different in strategical implications depending on which dir-

---

92 Bradstreet to Abercromby 13 September 1758, AB 653. Stanwix to Abercromby 29 September 1758. WO 34, vol.45, 31-34.

93 E.g., Gage's trip with 300 men in 1759. Johnson Diary 16 August 1759, quoted in Hamilton, "Johnson", 515.

ection soldiers or supplies were headed. Going upcountry, making the many portages between Montreal and Fort Frontenac and tracking the boats in the rest of the rapids, took a minimum of eight days, seven from Lachine. Montcalm and Bougainville with 50 men (1756), and Lévis with 400 (1759) had the same timetable.[94] Larger bodies took a little longer. Supply convoys, if there were no particular military urgency to their trip, usually experienced that a "loaded batteau with five men in it is eight or ten days going from Montreal to La Galette."[95] This rate of advance put them into Frontenac on the twelth or thirteenth day. Thus a rather leisurely French trip took the same time as the best British schedule to Oswego. If they had to, the French could stem their river into Ontario 4 to 5 days quicker than the enemy could reach the lake.[96]

The French advantage emerging from the Ontario theatre was even more marked. While the British took 12-13 days to climb out of Lake Ontario's bowl -- that was the as-

---

94 BJ 22-29 July 1756, pp. 14-19. Lévis journal 14-22 August 1759, Casgrain, I, 194-203.

95 Information of La Terreur, prisoner of war, October 1759, WO 34, vol.46A, 111-112.

96 In "A Memorial concerning the Fur Trade of the province of New-York" (1724), Cadwallader Colden said the route to Lake Ontario from Albany was "much easier" than that from Montreal, "because the stream of the Mohawk River is not near so strong as the river Saint Lawrence . . . , and there is no fall in the river save one short one; whereas there are, as I have said, at least five in the river Saint Law-

pect its topography presented on their side of it -- the French shot through the Saint Lawrence crack where the bowl would not hold water. They could descend from Frontenac to Montreal in a week less than the British needed to reach Albany. In 1756 Captain Joseph-Gaspard Chaussegros de Léry, anxious to bring the Governor good news about his success at Fort Bull, superpowered his bateaux by assigning extra oarsmen. They came down the upper Saint Lawrence in just two and a half days with the wind unfavourable. One bateau broke up shooting the Cedars rapids, but nobody was drowned.[97] This was exceptionally quick. Usually the descent to Montreal took 4 to 6 days.[98]

The nature of the routes tended to control what could be carried on them, no matter how ready for grief and work the teamsters were. Bradstreet's experience at Oswego Falls was typical of many scenes over the years at Little Falls, the Cedars, the Cascades and other rough places.

> Thro' the want of experienced navigators, several batteaus were driven against the rocks, some fill'd with water instantly, others by the violence of the force, were split asunder and sunk, and with difficulty their crews reach'd

---

rence, where the canoes must be unloaded." Hosack, 239. This special pleading ignored some of the most difficult features on the British route, west of the Mohawk Valley.

97 Left an island at the head of the Saint Lawrence, 6:30 a.m. 6 April. Arrived La Présentation 10:30 p.m. that night. Left La Présentation 5 a.m. 8 April; arrived Montreal 3 p.m. the 9th. Léry journal RAPQ 1926-7, 390-391.

98 August 1756: Army staff, Béearn and Guienne reg-

> the shore.
>
> On the 20th at day break, we began to draw over our boats, which we never unloaded: one of the batteaus with a piece of cannon and a mortar, in its passage down the rifts, stove on the rocks: an empty boat was sent up immediately, and with great labour the artillery was raised out of the water and put on board, which arrived safe at the landing place.99

Naval stores -- ironwork, rope, tar and pitch, canvas, cables, anchors, arnaments -- were bulky; so was everything else. When the MISSISSAUGA was wrecked on Lake Ontario over the 1759-60 winter, Gage prayed Haldimand to at least save the rigging, "which will be a material circumstance considering the difficulty of getting naval & I may say all stores, whatever up to Oswego." [100] The spring's movement of supplies proved his point.

> The artillery for Oswego has met with obstructions the boats employed were bad; one sunk & two countrymen drowned. I have sent orders to every post to forward them from the one to the other as fast as they arrive not more than two at a time for then our loss will not be great if an accident should happen. 101

---

iments came down in 5-6 days. BJ, pp. 28-30. Lévis in 1759: from Frontenac to the Galops 22-23 August; Galops to Montreal 4-5 September; total 4 days. Lévis journal, Casgrain, I, 197-202. In 1758 a courier of alarm left Fort Frontenac at 10 p.m. 22 August, and arrived Montreal at 1 a.m. the 26th -- a trip of 3 days and 3 hours, perhaps with no stops. BJ 6-12 September 1758, p.275; Malartic journal 26 August 1758, NYCD, X, 852.

99 An impartial account, 14-15.

100 Gage to Haldimand 21 April 1760, PAC, MG 21, G 2, vol.2-1, 58-59. Amherst to Haldimand 21 May 1760, Ibid., vol. 1, 56-57.

101 Gage to Amherst 27 April 1760, WO 34, vol. 46A, 237-238.

A month later naval Captain Joshua Loring wrote that most of the iron work for the new ship ONONDAGA, building at Niagara,[102] had been lost going down Oswego Falls. The twine for making sails was gone too. That could be replaced at Albany, but a second two-ton shipment of iron would probably have to be ordered all the way from New York city.[103]

A more convenient accident that happened about the same time and at the same sinister location was the break-up of two bateaux full of clothing.[104] The boats were written off, but floating cargo was often fished out downstream; uniforms would not even mildew if the bundles were opened and aired soon enough.

Boats breaking up was a big problem for the British. In August 1759 Gage surveyed 200 craft at Oswego, and found thirty-five fit for service. After an energetic repair program, over seventy were still "returned unsufficient the greatest complaints are made against such boats as were built at Schenectady & I hope the builders will not be paid. All these repairs retard other work."[105] Not only were

---

102 Malcolm MacLeod, "Fight at the west gate, 1760", Ontario History, LVIII, 178.

103 Amherst to Gage 20 June 1760, WO 34, vol. 46A, 455-456.

104 Amherst to Haldimand 21 May 1760, PAC, MG 21, G 2, vol. 1, 57.

105 Gage to Amherst 30 August 1759, WO 34, vol. 46A, 97-98.

there doubts about feather-bedding Schenectady shipwrights, but the very fact that boats had to travel over a back-breaking route to reach Oswego harbour and do duty there, made it inevitable that many would never make it, or would be no good for navigation if they did leak through. Gage became a champion of building craft for Lake Ontario at the Oswego end of the route.

> The boats more particularly the whaleboats must be in a far better condition for service when they avoid the several shallows, rifts & carrying places betwixt Schenectady & Oswego; and it's very requisite that the craft used on lake Ontario should be in perfect good condition.[106]

Bradstreet, however, objected to doing it that way. The carpenters might be clumsy at Schenectady, but there were none at all at Oswego unless the government specially hired them. Then there were high rates of pay on account of danger and isolation, and expensive subsistence. Also "on account of the proper timber not lying so commodious. . . ."[107] Amherst settled the quarrel among his subordinates by letting Bradstreet be the expert. Builders were busy at Schenectady well in advance of the 1760 campaigning season, for which the fantastic total of 822 (!) whaleboats and bateaux were hammered and gathered together. During the course of the spring these were all sent off to climb the Mohawk, scrape

---

106 Gage to Amherst 27 February 1760, WO 34, vol. 46A, 180-181.

107 Ibid.

over the Great Carrying Place, be pushed and pulled through the inadequate, clogged trickles that were its western waters, enjoy Lake Oneida, and rocket down to Oswego. Reports of riverine disasters filtered back, and the general had second thoughts. I see, Amherst remarked wryly, that our new bateaux are not the best.[108] Proceeding to Oswego himself, he noticed how

> the batteaus and whale boats are taken over some rollers for sixty yards to avoid the [Oswego River] Falls without unloading them. They are then launched in the water again & go down a very rapid & bad stream where they seldom miss being much damaged, so that it appears to me to be a very extravagant measure to build the batteaus and whale boats at Albany. It would be much cheaper & better to build them at the lake [Ontario].[109]

On the other hand, the earlier there was activity and preparation at Oswego, the earlier French intelligence-gatherers would know something was afoot for the Lake Ontario theatre.[110]

The movement of Major Gladwin's force from Schenectady to Presqu'ile was the acme of this disappointing process. He was dispatched at the end of May, 1760, with fifty-six whaleboats -- "which I look upon," wrote Amherst,

---

108 Amherst to Haldimand 21 May 1760, PAC, MG 21, G 2, vol. 1, 57.

109 J.C.Webster, editor, Journal of Jeffrey Amherst 1756-1763 (Toronto: 1931), 217-218.

110 The French certainly kept Oswego under surveillance, watching for signs. See for instance Vaudreuil to Lévis 24 April 1760: "The fort at Oswego is in the same condition as in the fall, and there have not been constructed any more boats than they had there then." PAC, MG 18, K 8, V, pièce 100.

"ye best craft for dispatch on ye Lakes,"[111] and the most likely ones for hauling up the Niagara portage. Five of Gladwin's whaleboats were lost en route Oswego; seven more had to be left at Oswego Falls too leaky to use -- that's already over a 20% wastage on the Oswego road -- and when he left that port every boat he took with him was damaged.

> This is a very bad account of our batteaux; pray tell Col. Bradstreet that Col. Haldimand says there is nothing remaining at Oswego to repair the batteaux with -- notwithstanding the above losses I hear the provision was all saved. 112

French records of the 1750's do not contain the same complaints about boats, boatwork and navigational disasters. The principal explanation is that the great river of Canada had a far bigger volume of water in it than the American streams did. On the upper Saint Lawrence, the average volume passing a given point is 239,000 cubic feet per second; but on the Oswego river only 6,420 and on the Mohawk 5,693.[113] Generous amounts of water usually meant greater depth, holding fragile craft off the rocks of the bottom. The cushion was rough and bouncy, but

---

111 Amherst to Lt.-Col. Eyre (C.O. Niagara) 13 May 1760, PAC, MG 21, G 2, vol. 1, 50-51. Gladwin's group was to establish a food dump at Presqu'ile, for the use of a squad pushing light from Pittsburgh to Niagara.

112 Amherst to Gage 20 June 1760, WO 34, vol. 46A, 455-456.

113 Readings at Ogdensburg (La Présentation), Oswego and Cohoes Falls. Thompson, 506-507.

it protected. It seems also that manpower on the French side was more competent. By the 1750's the Canadian community contained a sizeable labour force of voyageurs who were bred to the upper river, disdained its dangers and damages, and handled the curves and bumps with exceptional skill. As long ago as 1696, in connection with an attack on the Iroquois, Canadian boatmen had managed the feat of tracking upward to Lake Ontario a flatboat bearing Governor Callière's horse.[114] Men following a tradition which achieved the impossible were not much discomfited by mere difficulties.

This is not to say Canadian boats never had accidents. In 1672 Louis Joliet, having been to the latitude of northern Louisiana in a flimsy canoe without getting his feet wet, was ironically swamped in the last of the Saint Lawrence rapids as he returned, and lost the maps and journals which proved he really had found unexplored lands.[115] In 1749 a 260-man expedition bound to the Ohio was camped on the Cedars portage two days after leaving Lachine. Already, many canoes had been "stove in" (crevés) and needed repair. At Coteau du Lac next day, "m. de Joncaire was shipwrecked, his canoe smashed, one man drowned

---

114 W.J. Eccles, Canada under Louis XIV (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1964), 200.

115 Alain Grandbois, Born in Quebec (Montreal: Palm, 1964), 149-150.

and the greater part of the cargo lost."[116] "It often happens" wrote Léry of the Coteau rapid, "when the rope breaks the bateau goes down the falls and the men drown."[117] One of his own boats broke up in the Cedars rapid in 1756. The good people of that area, like lighthouse dwellers (who sometimes make a beacon in the wrong place) everywhere, were compensated for living in an isolated spot where travel was hazardous, by the riches of flotsam they were able to pick up below the chutes. Every shipwreck does some good to someone. Besides death, injury and actual losses, spoilage also contributed to high cost on the Canadian route.

> The craft of which one can make use are bark canoes or very small batteaux -- very unsubstantial vehicles, and still less fit for conserving provisions and goods. These are incessantly exposed to the rain and the waves of lakes and streams;. . . on most occasions they arrive rotten or damaged.[118]

Nevertheless, while British military administrators sometimes appeared nonplussed by the frictions of their route to Lake Ontario, the French never did. They were more accustomed to large-scale western movements from pre-war days. And more careful. To the advantages of a larger river and well-developed skills, the directors of French military

---

116 Céloron's journal 15-17 June 1749, PAC, MG 1/20, Série F3, vol. 13, 459.

117 Léry journal 1749, RAPQ 1926-7, 336.

118 Mémoire du Canada, RAPQ 1924-5, 124.

transport added prudence. No French cannon or ship-rig-gear went to the bottom between Galops and Lachine during 1755-60; on the other hand, of all the big store of British guns captured in Braddock's defeat (1755), not one piece was brought lower down than Fort Lévis (head of the rapids). Some of this artillery could have been put to better use in other areas, but the high command apparently did not want to pay the percentage-loss that would no doubt occur trying to float such cumbersome weights out of the Lake Ontario theatre.

In that era, the British route to Oswego -- and especially its last few miles-- produced a relatively great loss of boats and gear too. No similar pattern emerges from the records of the Saint Lawrence. But both sides had constantly to keep in mind, when planning logistics, what could be carried easily and safely, what could not, what fraction would likely get through, and what it would cost. The strategy adopted was predicated upon the ups and downs of the communications, and the overhead which geography exacted from transport efforts.

Logistical problems posed by attempts to undertake military action in the Ontario area, multiplied by the fractured topography for getting in and out of there, were not attacked only by brute strength and tricky acquatic judgment.

Mere willingness to get wet -- river spray or portage sweat -- was not enough. There had to be organization, technique.

Guides were one desideratum, especially for the British, and especially when they thought about undertaking the descent of the foreign French waterway. When Amherst was finally poised on the lip of the Galops rapid in 1760, and had captured his first group of 100 French prisoners, sailors from the OUTAOUAISE: "I have taken 22 to serve as Pilots down the River."[119] Another thing that was organized was speed-up facilities at the portages. Good roads were built. A labour force of men and draft animals was contracted for. At French Niagara dozens of Seneca Indians, regular employees, operated horse-drawn cartage up and down the slope.[120] On a smaller scale, Oneidas of the little village near Oswego Falls took a hand for pay in moving goods. At the Great Carrying Place German settlers sometimes offered cartage service using farm wagons. At other times local Indians made an offer which could not be refused, using threats of force to exact tolls from traders passing through, and insisting upon being employed at high wages to help carry.[121] The British were more attentive to their need for

---

119 WO 34, vol. 8, 47.

120 Bougainville, "Mémoire sur l'Etat de la Nouvelle-France", RAPQ 1923-4, 44-45.

121 Complaint made in 1754. Hamilton, "Johnson", 34. A work

such services towards the end of the war than they were at the beginning. One of the reasons ascribed for the too-slow build-up of strength at Oswego in 1756 was "want of horses & slaves at the carrying places."[122]

At the Albany end of the supply trail, local farmers were hired into the army transport service for the first (road) leg of the trip. When the attraction of army pay failed to make them come forward in sufficient numbers, they were conscripted. "The Church was Surrounded this Morning with a Party of Soldiers to Assist the Constables in Pressing all the young men to Transport the troups to Neiagra."[123] Similarly -- at the French route's eastern terminus -- the movement of supplies from the port of Montreal to Lachine was highly organized. Teamsters hauling military supplies were employees of the government, working on commission.

---

which thoroughly describes the development of carriage services on the Albany to Oswego route is Charles Roscoe Canedy III, "An entrepreneurial history of the New York frontier, 1739-1776" (Ph. D. thesis, Case Western Reserve University, 1967). See pp. 140-142.

122 Broadley to the Admiralty 20 May 1756, MG 12, A, Admiralty 1, vol. 1487. Canedy, 179.

123 Arent Stevens to Wraxall 27 July 1755, The papers of Sir William Johnson (Albany: The University of the state of New York, 1921-1965), [hereafter cited as JP for Johnson Papers] I, 784.

Further upriver, the people of the Cedars were encouraged to acquire wagons and help out. Tradition and obvious necessity took over where active administration left off -- how else did hundreds of long sticks, deposited regularly at Pole Cove above the Galops rapids, find their way down again to near the Cascades to be used over and over by successive brigades climbing the river?

The chief thing to organize was the bateau-brigades themselves. One series of documents in the Public Archives of Canada shows a schedule for supply convoys to Lake Ontario in the fall of the war's second year. On Saturday, 28 August 1756, twenty bateaux, each capable of carrying three to four tons, loaded at Lachine for Frontenac. Each had four crewmen. Eighty-four militiamen from Trois-Rivières made up the crews of the next brigade: 21 bateaux this time. They left Lachine 29 September. Exactly four weeks later, another 19 bateaux and 76 men were away.[124] All these crews were from the Canadian militia; the greatest service which that outfit performed during the war was the indispensable and dangerous but seemingly unmartial duty of transport. They were called up by law and made to work for their keep, no pay.

---

124 Under Louis Mador, Pierre Deschamps and Pierre Potevin. The lists show bowmen and sternmen in each boat. Final document is signed "D'Artigny". PAC, MG 24, L 3, vol. 46, 29726-29738.

Men was one thing; money was another. A paper written in 1754 tells what it cost the Canadian government for the logistics support of the upper country in peacetime. The Chevalier de Raymond recommended a permanent company of fifteen bateaux to make five or six voyages per year to Fort Frontenac, between May and October, allowing one month for each round trip. The total weight delivered upon each arrival at Fort Frontenac would be about 50 tons. The cost of the service for paying and feeding the voyageurs would be about 25,000 livres plus an outlay of 4500 livres for building the bateaux, and whatever it took for maintenance and to shelter them in winter. The outstanding advantage of water transport can be seen in the fact that the annual cost of transporting the goods from Montreal to Lachine by road (less than ten miles), was the same as Raymond's estimate for hauling them up 175 miles of often difficult waterway: both 25,000 livres.[125]

Although proposals for perfecting it were entertained, Canada before 1754 already had a well developed military transport system for the western front. During the war years it remained the same in all respects except that it was busier, grew to involve more militia -- many of whom were already familiar with the routine and the rapides --

---

125 Chevalier de Raymond, Mémoire Sur les postes du Canada, RAPQ 1927-8, 351.

and moved more men and goods.[126a]

It was a flexible service, equally capable of meeting strenuous routines and of rising to unforseen emergencies. For example: in late August 1758 Fort Frontenac, its storehouses bulging with goods waiting for on-shipment to posts further west, was destroyed. Now the whole spring and summer's labour in carrying supplies up from Montreal had hurriedly to be repeated in the brief respite before winter struck. By October Vaudreuil had "3000 Canadians busy transporting provisions".[126b] The final great operation was a convoy of almost sixty bateaux: "The season being advanced, voyageurs who were familiar with the lake were reluctant to attempt this voyage."[126c] The time of year, fear of enemy attack and too much haste were the worst of conditions for a massive resupply operation. Militiamen inconveniently hauled off their farms at harvest time showed their unhappiness by desertion and pillage.[126d] Rotten sacks of wheat flour arrived at Niagara, kegs of brandy were half water and rowers were half brandy, many packs of merchandise were damp or dirty, storms made the

---

126a For an example of how military transport services benefitted from civilian fur-trade boatmen using the same route, see Malartic journal 27 October 1755, MG 4, A 1, vol. 3405, pièce 108, 8.

126b Lévis journal 4 October 1758, Casgrain, I, 154.

126c "Mémoire du Canada", RAPQ 1924-5, 144.

126d Ibid., 144-145.

undertaking lengthy; nevertheless, the goods got through. With aching muscles crews of men -- more damp and dirty even than were the cargoes they carried -- turned around at Niagara to row back towards civilization. At the end of November officers who had directed the detachment once more appeared in the streets of Montreal, boasting the hardships of men who had "with fifteen hundred Canadians taken food to Niagara; this detachment suffered greatly, since the season for navigating Lake Ontario had really ended."[126e]

On the other hand, the British did not have such an adaptable and responsive transport service when the war began, and had to create one as they went along. They had to find, or make, voyageurs, prior to getting them organized. "In order to prevent His Majesty's service from suffering in this campaign the many inconveniences & disappointments which happened to it last year for want of a sufficient number of batteaumen to transport the necessary provisions" to Lakes Ontario and Champlain -- in 1756 Shirley was explaining to a newcomer from England how one familiar with the

---

126e Lévis journal November 1758, Casgrain, I, 164.

colonial scene went about organizing for war --

> I caused to be enlisted early this spring 40 companies of batteaumen consisting of 50 men each, a captain & assistant, the whole to be under the command of a Director General of the batteaus, . . .
>
> The raising of these companies was the more necessary as the road [that is, the waterway] between Schenectada & Oswego has been greatly infested by the French Indians all this year so that small parties of batteaus which attempted to go thither have been cut off.[126f]

It was a special difficulty for the British that the voyageurs they trained and sent on the Oswego trail had to be ready, as they moved along, to repel an attack any instant.[126g] When Loudoun inherited Shirley's problems as Commander-in-Chief, he told Cumberland it would be very hard to re-take Oswego. The French were capable of attacking the communication in so many places that a whole army was needed just to protect

---

126f Shirley to Abercromby 27 June 1756, WO 34, vol. 46B, 1. Large parties of bateaux were also roughly handled; a narrative of the 1756 campaign in PAC, MG 5, B 1, vol. 10, ff. 262-264 tells of 500 British killed or taken prisoner when Villiers attacked one large convoy.

126g They were not always overly keen. In 1759 bateaumen who had been pressganged into service were tied together in pairs for the night, to discourage desertion. Canedy, 196.

the route from Albany to Oswego, let alone move materiel along it. With naval control of the lake, the French could easily thwart a British bid to re-establish Oswego.

> If they chose it they can before we are cover'd land what Forces they please within what Distance of the Place they please, and give us Battle, though I think they would rather choose to starve us, as we could not leave People enough to keep up the communication at every Place where they could attack us. [127]

Eventually, plentiful manpower enabled this semi-geographical dilemma to be solved. Organization really developed when Amherst was Commander-in-Chief. During the September 1759 rush to get supplies in for the winter, there were 300 New York and New Hampshire troops engaged in transport on the Mohawk River, while other men with eighty boats worked the Fort Stanwix-Oswego section.[128] This second group was itself divided into two squads. One plyed regularly between the Oneida Portage and Oswego Falls, and the other did the short haul from there to Oswego.[129] The following year there were three sections west of Fort Stanwix. A new camp was set up at the west end of Oneida Lake, whose men were responsible for forwarding everything that arrived there on to Oswego Falls in a new

---

127 Loudoun to Cumberland 2 October 1756, Pargellis, Affairs, 237-238.

128 Gage to Amherst 2 October 1759, WO 34, vol. 46A, 101.

129 Gage to Amherst 30 August 1759, WO 34, vol. 46A, 97.

and more commodious kind of craft. Gage had proposed that several large scows be built for Oneida Lake, to carry livestock as well as provision-barrels. By division of labour and employing specialized equipment the British sped their transport service, delivered boats from the wear and tear of portages, and gave live beef being driven to Oswego's mess-kitchens a relaxing life for part of their last, lowing journey.[130]

The influence of topography on military operations consistently limited what could be accomplished. Its impact on decisions about what would be undertaken in the future was always considerable, and often controlling.

The lower Oswego River invited attempts to interdict traffic. In July 1756 Vaudreuil ordered a body of 1700 Canadians and Marines to go first to the Bay of Niaouré to help regular troops disembark, and then advance and establish a "reconnaissance camp [camp d'observation] between the Falls of the Choueguen River and the fort, for the purpose of preventing assistance relief reaching the place while the Troupes de Terre are making the siege."[131]

---

130 Gage to Amherst 27 February 1760, WO 34, vol. 46A, 181. Amherst to Haldimand 11 June 1760, PAC, MG 21, G 2, vol. 1, 87-88.

131 Léry journal, RAPQ 1926-7, 395-396.

La Pause thought well-conducted detachments straddling both banks of the Oswego River would always be able to stop an enemy advance to Lake Ontario, on account of the difficulty of the communication route.[132]

Although they were sometimes able to interfere with British use of the British route, the French had no qualms about setting out from Oswego to travel towards Albany themselves. We saw Belestre's party on a long section of the trail. Plans for an invasion of the Mohawk valley from this direction were on the brink of execution in 1758 before being called off; the French were not in the least discouraged by the difficulties of the route, and never gave it a moment's worry, nor space in their dispatches that considered the project. They did not plan to take cannon, however.[133] While granting good French knowledge of the country and ability to move through it, the British depended upon this limitation. In the first winter of Fort Stanwix' existence, they were satisfied to have it proof against a small-arms coup de main.[134]

The strategic importance of the theatre's topo-

---

132 "Mémoire et observations", RAPQ 1931-2, 88-89.

133 Only two small campaign guns -- very small ordnance for an army of 1600 uniformed troops plus 1000 or more Indians.

134 Abercromby to Stanwix 30 October 1758, WO 34, vol. 45, 366.

graphy was greatest in connection with the upper Saint Lawrence route. Long before the War of the Conquest, it was a view traditionally held in Canada that should one party oppose the ascent or descent of another in actual fighting operations along that route, all the advantage would lie with the army that was trying to prevent movement. In a document from the era of the second Iroquois war (1690's), one observer noted the Indians had not done as much harm to the French as they could have done, since communication between Montreal and the Lake Ontario outposts was still permitted.

> There is nothing easier than for a hundred men to destroy ten thousand both in the frequent portages that must be made, and in the rapids, where the canoers must drag their canoes all along the edge of the river, without being able to do otherwise, in whatever season it may be.

Niagara and Frontenac had finally to be abandoned, "for, in earnest these two Posts are indefensible, by reason of the inaccessible Cataracts, upon which an Ambuscado of ten Iroquese may repulse a thousand Frenchmen by the throwing of Stones."[135]

---

135 Letter dated at Quebec 28 September 1689. Stephen Leacock, editor, Lahontan's voyages (Ottawa: Graphic, 1932), 110-111.

Sixty years later the river was the same, and French officers of the 1750's found reassurance in its rapids. Doreil did not think the British enemy could possibly pass Fort Frontenac and come down to reach the settlements. To him, Frontenac was on a one-way alley; it was "the door of Lake Ontario, the key of the Upper countries."[136] He did not call it a doorway to Laurentian Canada, a key to the settlements. Vaudreuil, agreeing with Montcalm in the spring of 1759 that the rapids should be surveyed, did not expect to have to defend them. "The information which I have myself about these rapids does not give me any inquietude about an enterprise [against Montreal] coming from there."[137] Montcalm's evaluation was the same. He decided in March to "regard the Carillon front as the most seriously menaced; counting a little on good fortune, the difficulty of the river and the rapides for the côtes of Quebec and La

---

136 My italics. Doreil to Massiac 31 August 1758, NYCD, X, 828-829.

137 Joint memorandum on the approaching campaign, 21 March 1759. PAC, MG 18, K 8, XIII, 370-372.

Présentation."[138] He was sending no regular troops to the west, he told Bourlamaque: "Voilà les Rapides: the upper country in good shape; . . ."[139]

The clearest expression of this reassurance came from Intendant Francois Bigot, who was not a military man. "I will be tranquil," he told Lévis, considering what moves the British army on Lake Ontario might be up to,

> when you have yourself seen what the rapids are like; but . . . something tells me that the enemy will by no means shoot them . . . If in fact you were to defeat them there and General Amherst did not break through [from Lake Champlain], how could they possibly manage a retreat? 140
> I hope that, seeing you are there, the enemy will be beaten if they try to descend the rapids; but I doubt that they will attempt it, unless they come there with an extraordinary force for they would have no chance at all to retreat . . . 141

When the fighting was over Bourlamaque laid theoretical plans for a future French defence of Canada if the colony were reacquired.

---

138 Ibid., 373-374.

139 Montcalm to Bourlamaque 31 March 1759, Casgrain, V, 305-306.

140 Bigot to Lévis 15 August 1759, PAC, MG 18, K 8, VIII, pièce 37.

141 Bigot to Lévis 1 September 1759, Ibid., pièce 40.

> On the Lake Ontario side no great fear need be entertained, if people are willing to remain at the Rapids of Cataracoui. That frontier will be impenetrable, if ever so little advantage be taken of the favorable positions those Rapids afford. A few properly located forts and troops very inferior to the assailants, will be sufficient for defence. 142

The British tended to agree strongly with this opinion, that the upper Saint Lawrence route was impregnable. De Lancey in 1755 supported the idea of western operations only against Niagara or as far as the head of the rapids.[143]

The anonymous strategist, C.M., advocating a push forward on the Lake Champlain line, wrote that when the French realized it was coming

> no diversion made to the westward will induce them to divide their force on the contrary they will draw everybody from there indians & all if possible for they will willingly sacrifice the Ohio & the lakes to protract the reduction of Montreal for another year. 144

The unspoken assumption behind his thought is that there could be a credible threat against Montreal only from the south, not from the west.[145] Governor Thomas Pownall

---

142 Bourlamaque, Memoir on Canada, NYCD,X,1142.

143 De Lancey to Robinson 7 August 1755, NYCD,VI, 991-992.

144 C.M., Plan for the 1758 campaign, PAC, MG 18, L 4, packet 57.

145 The Lake Champlain-Richelieu River line was already the traditional Anglo-American invasion route into Canada on which, for instance, land armies had been scheduled to move in synchronization with sea-assaults in 1690 and 1711.

of Massachusetts agreed. Posting Anglo-American forces on Lake Ontario had beneficial shock value, but posed little menace to Canada's settled parts -- "An Appearance of an Attack on Canada by that Way must greatly Alarm the Enemy at Montreal . . . . though I do verily believe we shall never succeed to make an Effectual Irruption that Way, . . ."[146]

In general orders to Amherst for the 1759 campaign, Prime Minister Pitt allowed the possibility of invading Canada via La Présentation, but thought it was much more likely to break through on Lake Champlain. If a force dispatched to reestablish Oswego were to be sent further on, it should go to Niagara.[147] Writing to the government of Massachusetts he disregarded the western theatre, and said the colonies would be called on to furnish men "for invading Canada by the way of Crown Point, & carrying war into the heart of the enemy's possessions."[148] Sir William Johnson, of vast western

---

146 Pownall, "Idea of the service in America for the Year 1759", WO 34, vol. 25, 329-330.

147 Pitt to Amherst 29 December 1758, NYCD, VII, 357-358.

148 Pitt to the Governor of Massachusetts Bay 9 December 1758, PAC, MG 18, L 4, packet 10, 11-16.

experience, thought the same way when that summer he acceded to command of the Niagara army. Opening sealed orders, he learned it was now his job to launch the force down the Canadian river against Montreal. "The Chevalier does not seem at all happy," a bystander observed. "He told me the general wishes to sacrifice this army in order to parvenir a son point [sic]."[149] (He knew what the Iroquois knew. When Mohawk leaders were consulted about a proposed expedition against Montreal from Lake Ontario, they counselled the British to take a great deal of extra artillery, since some of it was bound to be sunk en route.)[150] Gage replaced Johnson in command. Amherst wanted him to advance, telling him after seizing La Présentation to engage French troops even "if the passage from La Galette to Montreal should be found Impracticable." He admitted "your taking that place [Montreal] would be much easier than Your getting at it."[151] A particularly stark proof of the

---

149 To "win through on his own front". Munster to Haldimand 1 August 1759, PAC, MG 21, G 2, vol. 68, 45-48.

150 Saoten's report 30 June 1760, Pouchot, II, 5.

151 Amherst to Gage 28 July 1759, PAC, MG 11, Colonial Office 5, vol. 56, 138.

respect, not to say awe, in which British soldiers held the Saint Lawrence rapids, was the fact that the Brigadier, faced with this positive order, would not even move from Oswego, let alone test the rapids.

There were, however, a few observers on each side who thought that Canada could be attacked from the west successfully.

La Pause was the most tenacious and thorough of the war's strategists whose written thoughts have survived. Given a problem, he teased it until every possibility had been worried out. On the rapids, there were two things to consider, and each of them had two sides. First, capability. Either the British could descend the rapids, or they couldn't. Second, undertakings. The British either would attempt to approach from that angle, or they would not. The combinations -- though it is tedious to list them: they could, but would not; they could and would; they could not and would not; they could not but they'd try.

In May 1759 La Pause thought the liklihood of an attack via the upper Saint Lawrence more remote than trouble elsewhere. "One fears for the rapids and principally for Carillon."[152] His reasoning was the same

---

152 La Pause, "Mémoire et observations", RAPQ 1931-2, 89.

as Bigot's -- the slim chance that a military man in his right mind would choose to commit an army on this route where committal was final after a certain point and there was no turning back. The British, if defeated in an engagement on the upper river, would

> be in danger of being destroyed, unable to reascend the rapids, and obliged to retire by land through the woods, over a considerable distance and a very difficult country. I believe that the fear of such an outcome will hold them back very powerfully, . . . 153

Natural advantages in the Lake Ontario region, he thought, should influence French defence plans for other theatres. More troops could be stationed at Quebec and Carillon. They could be summoned to fight west of Montreal if any need actually arose. Even if such a concentration was not possible, a very few troops at the lower rapids could give a good account of themselves, delaying, halting or defeating much superior enemy forces.[154]

After 1759's reshuffling of fortunes, La Pause still put the Ontario area last on his list of theatres to watch, "I consider the front of Quebec to be the one where the enemy will act earliest, that of l'isle aux Noix [Lake Champlain] as the most essential". Few

---

153 La Pause, "Projet pour la défense du Canada pendant la campagne 1759, ...", RAPQ 1932-3, 370-371.

154 Ibid.

resources could therefore be spared to defend the upper river.[155]

Nevertheless, La Pause's denial of the Saint Lawrence route to the British was not absolute. He thought they would not come that way -- but they could, and all eventualities had to be foreseen and provided against. To his November 1759 paper playing down western danger, he added "An afterthought: supposing they do prefer the attack by the rapids over that on l'isle aux Noix, it would be necessary to make arrangements for a reinforcement to this front of 2000 men and a good leader."[156]

Pre-1759 plans give further insights into La Pause's view of the upper Saint Lawrence rapids as a barrier to invasion. One lengthy thesis contains complicated day-by-day recommendations of the best strategy for French forces to follow in the contingency that the British did send an army along that avenue.[157] Another of his papers looks down from Lake Ontario with British eyes. Their method of advance would be to land a large body on the river's north shore somewhere below Cataraqui. "They will be little troubled to attack la point au Baril which will

---

155 La Pause, Mémoire fait au mois de 9bre 1759," RAPQ 1933-4, 136.

156 Ibid.

157 RAPQ 1932-3, 365-368.

fall all by itself." La Pause believed these troops

> will not push further ahead right away, unless they aim to strike a decisive blow, or find nobody to oppose them on that front, but they will seek, feeling their way, to make themselves master of the river's banks and establish entrenched posts at intervals to guard their communications. If our weakness and the facilities they may discover for proceeding by land inbue them with confidence to come on, they will descend as far as the entrance of the lake [Lac Saint-François], where they will dig in on the islands and make dispositions for attacking Coteau de Lac and Les Cèdres. If they are successful and establish themselves there, they could consider themselves on the brink of becoming masters of the colony. 158

Later, reflecting upon the whole period of French Canada's war and demise, he seemed to think the rapids no great obstacle to waterborne invaion. He reviewed the British plan in 1755 to have one army from the Ohio meet another at Oswego, and together penetrate to Montreal while another force approached from the south. "It does not seem natural that an invasion so well concerted did not succeed."[159] He did think they should have loaded the Lake Ontario army with more power, and ignored Fort Duquesne. That would have speeded things up, and from Oswego "they would not have had any obstacle blocking their descent to Montreal, other than the rapids."[160]

---

158 La Pause, "Projet pour . . . 1759, . . .", RAPQ 1932-3, 368-369.

159 La Pause, "Mémoire et réflexions 1746-1760", RAPQ 1933-4, 149.

160 Ibid.

La Pause was not the only Frenchman who thought an invasion from Lake Ontario possible. Bougainville recorded in March 1757 how

> The Marquis de Vaudreuil appears to fear through Indian warnings an invasion by way of Les Cédres [sic]. It has been proposed to him to reestablish the palisades of a sort of fort which is there and to put a colony ensign and 25 or 30 soldiers there with signals to communicate with Isle Perrault and other neighboring parishes, the militia of which would turn out promptly if any expedition should appear. 161

On the British side, there was perhaps only one man who sincerely thought Canada's settled part could be attacked via the upper Saint Lawrence -- but he was the decision-maker. General Amherst's army proved in 1760 that those who said it could be done were right; at the same time, the rapids' rough water vindicated their treacherous reputation. With plenty of artillery, and an extraordinary force of 10,000 men, the British Commander-in-Chief launched the main invasion of Canada from Oswego in August. He did not act flippantly. "In common with the whole army," wrote Captain Pierre Pouchot, Amherst "appeared especially to dread the passage of the rapids."[162] Why did they pause two weeks to besiege and take Fort Lévis, half way down to Montreal, when they were anxious to get on and could have gone by in the night with little damage? For the sake of river pilots they picked from Fort Lévis' captured garrison.[163]

---

161 BJ 18 March 1757, pp. 93-94.

162 Pouchot, II, 40-41.

163 Ibid.

Careful precautions got them through the Long Sault without much incident. A covering party marched along the shore while the bateaux, rowing in single file and some distance from each other, came down the rapid. Amherst wrote that the current of the river was violent, and the surface covered with waves, so that all the boats took some water. Four men were drowned[164] -- a trifling loss in such a host. Overconfident and prematurely, the Britishers thought the rapids, from what they had seen so far, "more frightful than dangerous" -- "until we reached the Cedars where the country is inhabited . . ."[165] A total of sixty-four whaleboats and bateaux were stove in and lost "by the falls which were high & full of broken waves: . . ."[166] "The only disaster we sustained was owing to the horrid falls of the river St. Lawrence", wrote a Highland Lieutenant.[167] Another Scot who made this western campaign told his wife that in his unit, "Since we left New

---

164 Amherst to Pitt 8 September 1760, referring to August 31st. Louis de Cognets, Jr., Amherst and Canada (Princeton, 1962), 288.

165 Mair narrative, PAC, MG 18, L 4, packet 64, 13-41.

166 Ibid.

167 Lt. Alex Farqueson, 42nd Highlanders to Mr. Jacob Feneik at Albany 16 September 1760, PAC, MG 24, L 3, vol. 3, 1747-1748.

York our loss is six men. One grenadier hanged at Schenecattady -- 2 killed at the siege of Fort Levi, . . . & 3 drowned going down the Rapids at the Cedar Falls."[168]

Thus the British found western topography rougher than the enemy was; neutral Nature tore more gaps in their ranks than could the malevolent French and Canadians. In fighting through the French attempt to block the passage at the head of the rapids, the British army incurred twenty-nine fatal casualties. The descent to Montreal through boiling water cost them three times as heavily -- eighty-eight men drowned. And as the Mohawks had predicted, seventeen bateaux-loads of their artillery stayed on the river bottom.[169] The outcome proved that an approach to Canada from the west was not to be entered upon lightly or wantonly, but reverently, discretely and advisedly, with sober reflections.

The unavoidable minimum time-lapse which topography imposed upon the movement of British expeditions into or out of the Lake Ontario theatre was nearly two weeks. The French had the same delay reaching Lake Ontario, but could transfer forces out of that region in just five or

---

168 Lt.-Col. Alexander Murray to [his wife?] 4 October 1760 PAC, MG 18, L 2 .

169 MacLeod, "Fight at the west gate", 190-191.

six days. Chastening experiences with lost gear and wrecked bateaux exerted a pressure on both sides to fight the war in other theatres where travel was easier. The difficulties and hazards could be minimized by finding the personnel and equipment best fitted for the transport chore, and getting the whole operation under a co-ordinated administration that could identify problems and attack them directly. The British made more progress under these headings during the war, and needed to. Finally, topography influenced strategy by seeming to make certain movements so very expensive and risky as to put them outside the scope of rational endeavour. Until 1760, this is how most French and British leaders felt about a hostile approach to Montreal from Lake Ontario: you can't get there from here.

This opinion -- shown as confidence in Canada's defenders, resignation in the attackers -- is the outstanding feature of all the western campaigns except the last. Since Nature seemed to give Montreal an invulnerable bulwark to the west, the military contest in Ontario was limited to the prize of the west itself. Possession of Canada's settled portion was not an issue. British plans to descend the upper Saint Lawrence, always an unpromising prospect, were not executed. French precautions against such a march proved to be unnecessary reinforce-

ment of a naturally advantageous terrain.

3. Other geographical aspects.

Other aspects of the Ontario theatre's geography that affected the strategy for forces operating there -- though much less importantly than topography did -- were the area's climate , its population with the various human activities that were carried on there, and organized, reliable knowledge, on one side or the other, of all the environment's features.

Given the state of Eighteenth century technology, there were some places on the face of the globe where warfare couldhandily be carried on all year round. The Canadian border was not one of them, on account of the climate. Champlain early stressed the cold of our winters in a joking remark about Tadoussac: "If there is an ounce of cold 40 leagues up the river, there will be a pound of it here."[170] Nicolas-Gaspard Boucault attempted a more scientific analysis, pondering in his 1754 "Etat présent du Canada" why parts of Canada that were in the same latitude as parts of France had a so much fiercer climate. For one thing, he reasoned, since the country was heavily wooded and not cleared, snow laid a long time where the

---

170 Morris Bishop, Champlain: the life of fortitude (New York: Knopf, 1948), 36.

sun could not get at it. Its unmelting "glacial chill" was communicated everywhere. Secondly, he found the north-west wind the most frequent to blow in the Wintertime, continually replenishing the weather in the settled parts with unsupportably cold reminders of the neighbouring arctic.[171]

Moreover, the winter was long. The river-routes froze up in November or early December. Then for several months the out-of-doors on the fighting fronts became inhospitable for all man's works, and for life itself. Lake Ontario too was unfit for navigation in the winter. After the middle of November precarious weather made it unsafe to venture on the lake in rowing craft at any distance from the shore.[172] Cold weather squalls could upset larger vessels as well. Gage reported from Albany on Christmas Eve 1759 that two British schooners had been wrecked near Oswego: "both drove on shore one beaten to pieces & no liklihood of saving the other the crews were saved but so hurt with the frost that many limbs will be lost . . . All communication with Niagara is now shut for some months the lake being froze round the

---

171 RAPQ 1920-1, 23-44.

172 John Christopher Hartwick (Chaplain, 44th regiment) to Amherst December 1759, WO 34, vol. 53, 21-22.

shore."[173]

At the other end of the winter waiting period, April 20th was the earliest date La Pause considered for launching an army from Montreal against Oswego.[174] In many years it was several weeks after that, well into May, before the country opened. One year, although the first team of officers left to inspect the western forts' spring condition as early as 24 April, it was not until 3 May that the first supply-brigade pushed off from Lachine.[175] In 1756 the commanding officer at Toronto reported, 18 May, that the Mississauga villagers who were clients of his post could leave their winter quarters only with difficulty, "ten leagues from here inland, they say there is still snow and ice, . . ."[176]

In 1757 and 1758, the inefficiency of resupply arrangements from France, plus bad spring conditions in the lower river and Gulf of Saint Lawrence, delayed the year's first large troop movement until

---

173 Gage to Amherst 24 December 1759, WO 34, vol. 46A, 135.

174 La Pause, "Projet sy les ennemis menaceroient le Languedoc", RAPQ 1932-3, 318-319.

175 Malartic journal, NYCD,X,838-839.

176 Noyelle to [Lavaltrie] 18 May 1756, PAC, MG 24, L 3, vol. 3, 1480-1482.

after mid-June.[177]

The climate's principal effect upon military operations was to make the war a seasonal one. Canada was conquered by the Americans with their Mother country's aid in six very neat and tidy campaigns. Each was a self-contained package with a spring beginning and autumn close, separated from the other by a lengthy interval of disengagement and between-season preparation.

The year had a very definite rhythm. There was no relentless push against the enemy. Instead, whether the fruit of campaigns was victory or failure, the uniform aim in September was to shake free from contact with hostile forces and close down major operations for the winter. Plans thus were synchronized with nature. If fort-building was the main task going on, it had to be scheduled for a finish in the fall -- at least completed enough to give shelter to the men appointed to garrison it, who would perish without that shelter. If troops were being withdrawn from the region, the movement had to get underway in good time -- final departures from Lake Ontario at the end of October -- so that all could arrive back at Montreal or Albany before the roads froze.

---

177 La Pause, "Relation des affaires du Canada depuis l'automne [1756] . . ." and "Relation de ce qui s'est passé en Canada du commencement de la campagne[1758] . . .," RAPQ 1932-3, 347-348, 351-352.

Small-scale war survived the freeze-up, and the winter was treacherous to the participants. When guerilla parties were ambushed going to and fro between the lines, many men who came through the fighting unscathed did not survive the climate trying the make their independent and wary way back to the base. Of four soldiers who deserted Carillon in December 1757, heading for British lines, three perished.[179] Even men on routine duties could fall victim to the weather.[180]

On many occasions during the 1750's frontier garrisons were badly provided from the dietary point of view. Deficiency diseases, including dozens of deaths from scurvy, were the result. The felt and unfelt threats, and monotony, made morale in winter garrisons plummet. Duels, disobedience, insubordination, drunkenness and mutiny, even insanity, were much more prevalent in the winter than other seasons, and especially on the interior fronts far from the distractions of town life.[181]

---

178 [none]

179 Interrogation of Bois, prisoner of war, LO 5132.

180 Captain Dunbar's report of the loss of Ensign Richardson while on patrol in December 1759, WO 34, vol. 46A, 141-144.

181 All these evils are prominent in the correspondence with British Niagara, 1759-1760. See WO 34, vol. 21, 17-20, 93, 185-188, 211-214; vol. 23, 51-52; vol. 46A, 115-116. There was a remarkable fray at Pittsburgh one winter: "Lt. Donnellan and

While fighting off the cold and suffering psychic traumas, soldiers left to winter in the west still had to fear the foe. There was always the possibility the enemy might make a surprise attack. Therefore the inside of forts had to be kept clear for moving artillery and men, and winter garrisons degenerated into massive snow-removal operations.[182]

For most of the war, the British were more nervous about winter attacks than were the French. Johnson promised in

---

Surgeon Boyd have been fighting with fists and cudgels without decisive results for three days"! Ecuyer to Bouquet 9 April 1763, Charles Morse Stotz, "Defense in the winderness", Drums in the forest (Pittsburgh: The historical society of Western Pennsylvania, 1958), 108. Captain De Montigny wrote a friend overseas that the least someone in France could do to help one buried in colonial forests to while away the time was to send "Le Courier d'avignon". MG 4, A 1, vol.3405, pièce 112. Troops and their officers often put on pressure to get off frontier duty in the winter: see WO 34, vol. 19, 37; vol. 53, 8; vol. 60, 151. The French had the same problem; see Doreil to unknown 28 October 1755, RAPQ 1944-5, 56. At Carillon one winter the troops were so unsteady that authorities stooped to every means to control them, not excluding murder. "One of the most mutinous" of the Carillon garrison, wrote Bougainville, "had the pox. They had him given a triple dose of mercury to put him out of the way of doing any harm". BJ [January-February 1758], p. 195.

182 Montresor's report on Fort Edward 4 November 1757, LO 4754.

December 1758,

> I shall still continue to send parties out whilst it's practicable without snowshoes with which I am not provided . . . It is not improbable that the enemy may make an attempt on Stoneraby [north side of the Mohawk River, below Canajohari] or one of those places which lie exposed when the ice & snow is favourable they being always provided with requisites for a winter expedition.[183]

A returned British prisoner wrote that he had

> Traveld with the Indians & Canadians, for upwards of two Months in Frost & Snow, seen how much they despise the rigour of that season, known their various enterprises against the English, as well as journies to their own distant Forts in Winter, . . . [184]

---

183 Johnson to Stanwix 16 December 1758, WO 34, vol. 39, 135-138.

184 "Remarks on a winter expedition . . . ", December 1757, LO 6846.

If the British wanted to conduct hostilities in the cold, he recommended, the thing to do was learn and copy French technique.

The major off-season expedition that occurred in the Lake Ontario theatre during the war was the march of Captain J.-G. Chaussegros de Léry's force from Montreal to the Oneida portage in March 1756. The records of this transaction show the difficulties and discomforts of attempting to strike a far-away enemy when there was snow on the ground. The Canadian force had to walk all the way. When Governor Vaudreuil reviewed the troops before they set out, he sorted out some militia members whom he considered too feeble to go. One man crashed through a half-frozen stream and drowned. Provisions for the force were packed in bateaux, so they could take advantage of water carriage along those stretches of the upper Saint Lawrence which sometimes remained open the winter ("as the violent Rifts prevent that River from freezing in some places.")[185] Most of the time the bateaux were hoisted onto sleds and drawn over the ice by manpower. The sleds kept breaking down. On one occasion the boats were put in the water -- and next morning they were stuck so fast in ice it caused a delay of several hours chopping them free again. After the soldiers got wet they were ordered to halt, build a fire and dry their

---

185 Three Kanassarago spies to Johnson 14 April 1759, NYCD, VII, 382-383.

clothes. "The greater part of the troops, unused to making campaigns like this, burned them."[186]

Such an expedition was an extraordinary exertion. For the most part both sides left the wintertime free of active operations. It was stagnant, for planning. By the time inland navigation was again possible, they would have worked out in detail what units and what weights of equipment and supplies would go to the Lake Ontario area for the coming summer. Everything would be gathered at the jumping-off places. (One winter wily Vaudreuil took the precaution of wintering bateaux above the Cedars and dispatching thither on the ice stocks of ammunition, ship-rigging and provisions.[187] Beginning thus, the French had a head start over their adversary when the rivers opened.) Just before the break-up of the ice came the season of worst transport. "This relief could not have happened more unseasonably," Gage wrote to Amherst 25 March 1759, "the frost just breaking up neither waggon or sleigh can stir & the river so full of ice as to stop the navigation . . . ."[188]

---

186 Léry journal, RAPQ 1926-7, 375-376. Charly journal, Roy, Papiers de Léry, III, 40-43.

187 Vandreuil's summary of 1759 campaign plan 1 April 1759, NYCD, X, 953.

188 Gage to Amherst 25 March 1759, WO 34, vol. 46A, 45-48.

In a few weeks in May and June came the principal movement towards Lake Ontario, by both British and French. Thereafter, during the summer, the French were quite flexible, and could communicate between Montreal and Fort Frontenac as easily in August as in June. There was more pressure on the British to do all their westbound transport work early, because the slighter streams they used for carriage tended to dry up in hot weather, as well as freeze in the cold. Urging a quick attack on Niagara, Johnson said, "No time should be lost, as the Transportation to Lake Ontario grows more and more difficult as the Summer Advances."[189]

The seasonal rhythm -- outstanding climatological effect upon the war's strategy -- was basically the same for both sides. In one remark, La Pause referred to the British having the advantage of climate in being able to get their spring push underway fifteen to twenty days earlier than the French could.[190] Except in the case of campaigns centered around the Ohio valley -- movements from Virginia could be initiated significantly earlier than from Montreal -- it was a slip he made. There was not, in the case of the Lake Champlain or Lake Ontario areas, any particular or dependable difference in the

---

189 Johnson to Amherst 22 April 1759, Hamilton, "Johnson", 476.

190 "Mémoire et observations", RAPQ 1931-2, 64. See also Vaudreuil to the Minister 8 February 1756, PAC, MG 1, C 11 A, vol. 101, 6.

climate as it affected the two combatants. It did not tend to retard one side while favouring the other. The timetable for muddy roads and unfreezing streams was very much the same in the Albany-Oswego reach, and in the Lake Ontario-Montreal corridor only a hundred miles -- less than two degrees of latitude -- to the north. No doubt the climate then was very similar to what it is now. Mean monthly temperatures, 1931-1955, for spots mid-way along the two communication routes, were:[191]

MEAN MONTHLY TEMPERATURES IN DEGREES FAHRENHEIT

Month	La Présentation (Saint Lawrence River)	Little Falls (Mohawk River)
January	18.0	21.5
February	19.7	21.7
March	29.4	30.7
April	43.8	44.0
May	55.8	56.6
June	65.5	65.6
July	70.9	70.6
August	68.9	68.5
September	60.8	60.8
October	50.2	50.1
November	37.4	37.4
December	23.0	24.4
Average for year	45.3	46.0

These figures show that at La Présentation, in the average year, the first day with a temperature of 32 degrees Fahrenheit comes 21 March, while Little Falls typically rises through the melting point on the 18th. Precisely three days was the springtime advantage of the British.

---

191 Thompson, 59.

In the fall the two temperature patterns are even more closely synchronized, and just one day intervenes between La Présentation's mean 32 degrees on 26/27 November, and Little Falls' on 27/28 November.

The delay La Pause complained of was probably the slow arrival of supply ships from France. This was a function of weather conditions on the eastward approaches, but also of the straitened circumstances in which French leaders tried to fight this war. If they had wisely stockpiled in advance a year's supply of everything, then the exact date of replenishment would not have affected their plans at all, and they would have been that much more independent of the climate.

Although the weather with which the French and British contended was the same, it nevertheless did favour one party over the other. The climate's influence was on the side of the defence. In the early years of the war, British Oswego was more secure because the French had to interrupt their plans for assault when autumn arrived. Later, the French benefitted whenever the season interfered in operations and prevented the British from exploiting their gains, as it did in 1758 and 1759. While the victor was forced to let up, winter gave hard-pressed defenders a breathing space in which to adopt a better

posture, to resupply, and to consolidate against further deterioration of the front. Since winter, indifferent to men's fortunes, was every year the winner, it was vital that an ambitious, assaulting party should move to the attack at the very soonest springtime opportunity.[192]

The main feature of population in the Ontario theatre was that there was very little of it. The Six Nations, about 10,000 people, were the largest constituent. Their communities stretched out over 200 miles of territory, from the upper Mohawk valley to the eastern end of Lake Erie, generally ten to thirty miles south of Lake Ontario. Smaller Indian villages -- mostly Mississauga and Chippewa -- were thinly scattered through the woods on the north side of the lake. If one army or the other could have depended upon the Indians as firm allies or as subjects, these communities and their production might have been weighty factors in strategic planning. However, the native people of the Ontario

---

192 A clear appreciation of this is in Robertson to Morton 19 December 1758, complaining that a planned early spring start against Fort Duquesne in 1758 had been postponed. "But had this Place been attacked at the time Lord Loudoun proposed Presquile, Venango and Niagara would soon have shared it's fate, . . . ". Pargellis, Affairs, 430-432.

region for the most part declared themselves independent of the white man's war. Individuals and small groups who were willing to gather intelligence were well placed to report suspicious, interesting moves to one headquarters or the other -- or both. This was the greatest utility of the local residents, from the official European viewpoints. The gain, however, was more than overbalanced by the successful diplomatic insistence, on the part of Indian governments, that they were at least semisovereign in the territory they inhabited, and deserved to be consulted, and their permission sought, before either side sent warparties through it. Constant dickering and conciliation was the price to be paid for peaceful entry to some parts of the Lake Ontario theatre. This was a nuisance, yet preferable to having the locals actively hostile. Since the native population was not productive enough to ease the supply problem, yet too large and secluded to be easily cowed into cooperation, it would have been better for the staffs directing the war effort if the region had been an absolute no-man's land. But it was not that simple.

Of European settlers, except for about 5000 members of farming families in the lower 150 miles of the

Mohawk valley,[193] there were practically none. Lake Ontario's margin was still too far from salt water, and from the colonies first planted in North America. Fluctuating handfuls of Europeans, associated with Indian commerce, intermittently resided in the vicinity of Oswego, Niagara, Toronto and Frontenac.

The possibility of intelligence, and the political botheration of having to deal with Indian governments, were the two positive ways in which the theatre's population affected questions of strategy. The negative effect was more important. As Amherst wrote in 1760 when his stores people received from Lake Erie a requisitiion for certain items of supply -- the things wanted " might be easily obtained were we in England but on this continent and at such a distance from the inhabited country it is not very practicable and we must make the best shifts we can: . . . "[194] The greater the population in the Lake Ontario area, and the greater their industry, the fewer items would have had to be sent in from outside. Small as the population of the 1750's was, if growing and gathering food had been their major concern, there could have been

---

193 Belestre reported 712 houses in 1757. His " Itinerary", NYCD, X, 676-679.

194 Amherst to Major Walters 2 August 1760, WO 34, vol. 23, 73-76.

considerable surplus production for military use. By-products of farming operations would have supplied some of the armies' needs in tools, harness and other gear. But the people of the region were only subsistence producers; by and large their extra labour went into commercial pursuits (the fur trade).

Making war in this wilderness was like a jigsaw puzzle. French and British forces had to bring all the pieces with them if they were going to construct the game. Transporting from the settled colonies everything that troops were going to use, shoot and eat, made war's overhead in the interior of North America considerably higher than for a standard campaign in the Old Country. For Eighteenth century armies in Europe, it was frequently a point of economic wisdom to make a territory fought over pay as much as possible of the costs of the war. For instance, foodstuffs might be foraged from enemy civilians, or expropriated cheaply if the local farmers were friendly. Since Europe was populated more or less throughout, hauling so common an item as pork for hundreds of miles, while waiting several months before putting it in the soldier's pan, could often be avoided. But in the Lake Ontario and Lake Champlain theatres, the absence of populations sufficient to rob from or deal with made it inescapable. Getting ready for warfare in these regions, therefore, very much resembled the outfitting of a ship for voyaging to the far corners of the earth, self-sufficiently carrying everything with her. Bougainville explored the South Pacific after

returning from Canada's upper country, and may not have felt any more isolated.

One of his wartime memoranda helped the French court understand why war in North America required greater inventory than a comparable operation in Europe.

> To comprehend the difficulty of transport, suppose that from the bottom of Brittany one might send into Westphalia all the paraphernalia that is necessary for an army of 4000 men. The army would find nothing on its route, and nothing in Westphalia. Professionals would find the execution of this movement very difficult; it would be much easier than sending from Quebec what is needed in merely the single region of the Ohio. [195a]

Knowledge itself was a type of interaction between men and the environment which affected the making of strategy.[195b] All of the Ontario theatre's geographical features -- topographical structure and routes, climate, peoples and local resources -- were better known to the French than to the British. This was chiefly because they had had good access to every part of the region for many years prior to the 1750's. Even while Anglo-Americans occupied

---

195a Bougainville, "Mémoire sur le Canada . . . ", RAPQ 1923-4, 25-29.

195b To Frederick the Great, "knowledge of the country" was "the base for all strategy." "Projets de campagne", quoted in Luvaas, 336-337.

Oswego(for 30 years up to 1756) French parties thought little of encamping for the night within a mile of the place; and Canadian priests and traders readily visited Iroquois villages in the country behind Oswego.[196] Meanwhile, without shipping or anywhere safe to sail, the British watched the lake but did not use it or explore its shores.

French familarity with western front geography grew naturally with experience, and was developed on purpose as well. In 1749 the Jesuit Father Joseph-Pierre de Bonnecamps, professor of hydrography at the Collège de Québec, accompanied an expedition into the Ohio valley to give its leaders precise locations.[197a] The same year J.-G. Chaussegros de Léry, en route to Detroit, made a stopover at Fort Frontenac. He sent a report to Governor

---

196 Stephen Coffen escaped from a French camp practically within shouting distance of Oswego." Deposition of Stephen Coffen," NYCD, VI,837. The Joncaires, father and sons, were preeminent among Canadians who were at home among the Five Nations. See the article on Louis-Thomas Chabert de Joncaire, Dictionary of Canadian Biography, II, 125-127, and my biography of his son Philippe-Thomas to be published in volume III. In 1742 a Canadian gunsmith was in residence at Onondaga, with his wife and family. Report of Andris Brat to the NY Indian Commissioners 14 September 1742, Peter Wraxall, An abridgement of the Indian affairs (Cambridge: Harvard University press, 1915), 228.

197a L'Abbé Auguste Gosselin, "La fondateur de la Présentation", Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada, XII (1894), Section 1,15.

La Galissonière and included his observed reading of the latitude there. The Governor replied,

> As you have paused there awhile I hope you have repeated the operation, and that you will take many other readings between here and [Detroit] which you will repeat when returning.
>
> I hope also that you will make a point in your journal to mark down the observed elevation of the sun independently of the declination and all corrections, as I asked you to do in the memorandum. 197b

Back at Quebec by the end of October, Léry submitted a table of the sun's altitude at noon: observations taken on his way into and out of the Lake Ontario theatre between 7 June (the day after leaving Lachine) and 16 September (at Oswego on the way back) [198] Five years later, the same soldier was reading latitude on Lake Erie in connection with the development of a portage into the Ohio country -- and doing it with remarkable accuracy too. He found Chatakoin (Westfield, New York) to be at latitude 42 degrees, 18 minutes north; Presqu'ile (Erie, Pennsylvania)

197b La Galissonnière to Léry 12 July 1749, RAPQ 1921-2, hors-texte p. 237.

198 Journal de la campagne que le Sieur de Léry . . . a faite au Detroit en l'année 1749, . . . ", RAPQ 1926-7, 334. He called Niagara's latitude 43 degrees, 53 minutes, 17 seconds north. Chief Engineer to Governor 5 July 1749, PAC, MG 18, H 25, vol. 2, no. 33, p. 35. Actually it is 43 degrees, 14 minutes. The Times Atlas of the World, V (London: Times, 1957), plate 106.

at 42, 9. With better instruments and surveillance from the skies, Twentieth century cartographers find little fault with his calculations.[199]

Such researches, added to the practical experience of many traders, missionaries, soldiers and agents, some of them born and bred in the west, produced among the Canadians of that era several hundred men whose knowledge of the Ontario theatre was of particular military value. As New York Governor De Lancey worried about some of his prisoners of war,

> I am very apprehensive some of these Canadians notwithstanding their paroles may make their escape as they are so well acquainted with the country and woods swamps and mountains are so familiar to them: . . .[200]

Another American statesman, while trying to explain certain basic facts about the lay of the North American landscape to the British Board of Trade, stressed, "All these advantages plainly appear from the French Maps; the English have none good."[201] "The French have been indefatigable in making discoveries, and carrying on their commerce with nations, of whom the English know nothing but what they see in the French maps and books."[202]

The deficiency was only partly repaired by the 1755 publication of Lewis Evans' monumental "A general MAP, of

---

199 Léry journal 19 July 1754, RAPQ 1927-8, 381. Chatakoin is at 42 degrees, 18 minutes; Presqu'ile at 42 degrees, 8 minutes. Times Atlas, V, plate 106.

200 De Lancey to Amherst 6 September 1759, WO 34, vol. 29, 186.

the MIDDLE BRITISH COLONIES, in AMERICA . . . the Country of the Confederate Indians . . . of the LAKES ERIE, ONTARIO and CHAMPLAIN, And of Part of NEW-FRANCE . . . "[203] It showed the American colonies and the south shore of Lake Ontario in very good detail, and set out precisely the connections among the streams and portages of the Ohio, including establishments recently made by the French. But Evans filled up most of the area north of the Great Lakes with legends and explanations, presumably to avoid the embarassment of blank spaces.

When it became necessary to conduct important military operations in the Lake Ontario area, the British undertook to fill gaps in their knowledge. A 1754 order to have naval vessels built on Lake Ontario included a direction that one of the

---

201 Colden to Halifax 3 August 1754, Pargellis, Affairs, 21.

202 Cadwallader Colden, "A memorial concerning the fur trade of the province of New-York" 10 December 1724, Hosack, 235. However, the French author of a 1761 memorandum complained that "even before the war, the English knew better than ourselves, the topographic layout of our possessions." MG 1, C 11 E, vol. 8, 195-201.

203 L. H. Gipson, Lewis Evans (Philadelphia: The historical society of Pennsylvania, 1939), final map insert. Vaudreuil sent a copy of this map to the French government in 1758, along with a translation of a "quite important" historical and geographical essay by Evans. MG 1, C 11 A, vol. 103, 212.

204 Admiralty to Keppel November-December 1754, Pargellis, Affairs, 51.

captains, while waiting for his ship to be completed, was "to make an Accurate Survey of the Lake and adjacent Country, and to continue on this Service till further Order."[204] No further order on the subject has been found in the archives. Has Lieutenant Spendelow worked his way round to Toronto yet? They called upon Indian allies for help, and carefully studied maps which the red men produced, showing French posts and communication routes.[205] But infallible signs revealed the British were never well satisfied they knew where they were going, what they would find around the next bend or at the bottom of the next cataract. In 1758 a staff officer, with access to all the information in British files, put the cross-country distance from the Oneida Portage to La Présentation at eighty to ninety miles. It was almost twice as far.[206] Whenever they could the

---

205 E.g., in September 1759 when British officers were contemplating an attack down the Saint Lawrence River, William Johnson asked the Indian Red Head to draw a map showing the country from Frontenac to an "island below La Galette", and passed it on to Brigadier Gage. Hamilton, "Johnson", 517; Johnson Diary in Doughty, Knox Historical Journal, III, 198.

206 Montresor's plan for 1759, dated 29 December 1758, NYCD, X, 907-912.

British depended upon Indian, or even captured Canadian, guides to show them the way. The best map the Commander-in-Chief himself could find to use in the final invasion of Canada from the west -- probably one drawn by Red Head, an Onondaga -- was not accurate. "The lake with a variety of Islands is so very different from what is laid down in the C[h]art, that it cannot in the least be a Guide."[207] It was not just a diplomatic move when the first thing Amherst's agent did, once he had Vaudreuil in gentlemanly custody after the Montreal capitulation, was to get the Governor to help draw a map of Canada.[208] The British naturally wanted to know what they were getting with their conquest, and the way to find out was to ask the man who had one.

A narrative history of the Canadian war, published soon after its close, argued that Amherst's 1760 descent of the upper Saint lawrence was justified because it opened a passage as yet unexplored. The author meant

---

207 Amherst journal 14 August 1760, Webster, chapter VII.

208 Max Savelle, The diplomatic history of the Canadian boundary (Toronto: Ryerson, 1940), p. 120, note 84. The map is in T.C. Pease, Anglo-French boundary disputes in the west (Springfield: Illinois State Historical Library, 1936), 568.

unexplored, unknown to the British, few English-speakers having ever travelled that way.[209] In striking contrast was the free way the French used and studied the counterpart to the Saint Lawrence -- the Mohawk-Oneida route up to Oswego. In November 1757 Belestre's party not only proceeded down to Fort Herkermer and laid waste the settlements in its vicinity, but he included in his report (itinerary) of the foray, detailed accounts of waterways and roads, the distances, the strength of fortifications, and even produced a count -- purporting to be accurate -- of the houses on both sides of the Mohawk between the Great Carrying Place and Albany.[210]

With guides, guesswork and missions for intelligence, the British managed to fill in enough of the voids in their knowledge to make successful war in the area of Lake Ontario. Initial French advantages in this respect are one reason why the war lasted as long as it did. On the British side, increasing geographical awareness followed delays, false starts and disappointments early in the conflict. Perseverance finally reduced the impediment one American

---

209 Thomas Mante, The history of the late war in North America (London: Strahan, 1772), 307-309.

210 Belestre's "Itinerary", NYCD, X, 674-679.

complained of: " I believe if the wisest General the world ever saw was to command an army in the deserts of America where he did not know or could not procure a geography of the country he would hardly succeed against an enemy who had this knowledge."[211]

4. Changing the world.

To the French and British commands the Lake Ontario theatre was a region, more or less well known, where certain geographical features exerted strong, and others compelling, influence over military plans. In addition to trying their best to overcome difficulties and develop techniques suited to the facts about the area -- and to put themselves in possession of those facts -- there were some attempts made to actually modify the geography, so as to widen the possibility of success.

They did not try to change the climate. In the Eighteenth century, unlike the Twentieth, it was perfectly true that everybody talked about the weather but nobody did anything at all. Some French policies were directly aimed at improving the population situation from the French point of view. In the early 1750's,

---

211Richard Corbin to his son 18 August 1758, Douglas Southall Freeman, George Washington, II (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1948), 361.

the Canadian government was sponsoring the hothouse growth of communities at St.-Régis and La Présentation on the upper Saint Lawrence River, trying to draw large numbers of friendly Iroquois to live there. St.-Régis failed; La Présentation caught on. The multifold advantages to French military plans from having a sizeable village on this site are discussed in chapter III. On the other side of the coin, the French also acted to depopulate the Mohawk valley, where farming operations if unmolested would ease the British burden of transporting provisions to the frontier. One large war party and countless Indian raids burned out several dozen homesteads, and frightened many families away. The tide of pioneer cultivation was not only stopped, but reversed, for the duration of the war.

The major way in which they sought to alter geography was by making physical improvements to the communication routes. As early as 1680 there was a scheme on paper for a canal at Lachine. Digging began in 1689, but was soon discontinued. A more energetic program in 1700-1701 aimed to make a canal 12 feet broad with a minimum one-foot depth at low water. However, it was never finished, and the

Sault St.-Louis (or Lachine rapids) still interrupted water carriage coming up from Quebec at the time of the War of the Conquest.[212] In 1749 a Marine officer fruitlessly proposed a canal at Coteau du Lac.[213]

If such projects had been carried out the number of time-consuming and therefore expensive land portages for goods bound towards Lake Ontario would have been reduced. But they were quite extensive engineering projects -- apparently beyond the capacity of the Canadian economy during the French regime.

The nature of the British route was such that significant speed-up improvements could be made more readily, even in the middle of a war. The Ontario area commander reported in October 1759 that an ambitious road-building program he had undertaken in the region was embarassed by lack of axes.[214] All

---

212 E.R. Adair, "The evolution of Montreal under the French regime", CHAR, 1942, 31-34. Bougainville, "Mémoire sur l'état de la Nouvelle-France" (1757), RAPQ 1923-4, 66-67.

213 Léry journal 10 June 1749, RAPQ 1926-7, 336-337. Father Picquet, more practical, advanced a plan for collecting tolls on river traffic to pay for improved portage roads. Gosselin, "La fondateur de la Présentation", 12-13.

214 Gage to Amherst 2 October 1759, WO 34, vol. 46A, 101-102.

that summer, the engineer at Fort Stanwix had a squad busy cutting trees, moving earth, making roads and ditches.[215] There were plans to keep labour battalions busy in 1760 as well, working on several projects in the vicinity of Oneida Lake.

> There must be a post at the three rivers, & a large scow kept there for the -- transportation, as well of men as of cattle. And the swamp betwixt that place & the -- Onondaga post must be bridged.[216]

When land carriage was unavoidable, new and improved roads would make it easier. An even likelier idea was to lengthen the sections of route where waters would serve, lessening the reliance on roads. Over many years, considerable attention was paid to trying to shorten the portage at the Great Carrying Place by rendering upper Wood Creek navigable for more of its length. The government of New York first surveyed such possibilities in 1700.[217] Military men of the 1750's did not neglect the idea. In June

---

215 "Report of the works carried on at Fort Stanwix from the 15th June to 29 October 1759", signed F. Pfister. WO 34, vol. 53, 14-15.

216 Gage to Haldimand 5 May 1760, MG 21, G 2, vol. 2-1, 63. In May 1760 there were 50 soldiers and 18 civilians at work on a portage road at the Little Falls. Canedy, 198.

217 Richard Coote, Governor of New York, to Colonel Romer, Chief Engineer in America, 1700, Wyld, Low Bridge!, 3.

1756, Commander-in-Chief Shirley had eighty men at work clearing western streams, particularly Wood Creek, of water-logged brush and bark, last year's leaves, and awkwardly-placed rocks that endangered the passage of boats when water was low.[218] Twenty-five men spent two days removing boulders from the stream-bed at Three Rivers (11 miles above Oswego Falls) in 1760.[219] Spring cleaning of the rivers became an annual event on the British route.

Of all British efforts to change the face of nature, the most cunning was improvement of the waterways not by deepening or removing obstructions, but by raising the water level through the use of dams. A comprehensive port-war report on interior North America said that on the Mohawk-Wood Creek portage "there are Sluices that save the Water to carry

---

218 Shirley to Abercromby 27 June 1756, WO 34, vol. 46B, 1-6.

219 Amherst to Haldimand 11 June 1760, MG 21, G 2, vol. 1, 87-88.

down Battoes in the Summer, & without this Precaution they could not pass in that Season."[220] This work was first done in 1755-1756; Shirley exaggerated that it reduced the carry from eight miles to one mile.[221] Its strategic effect was felt after 1758, when the British reoccupied the country and reactivated the communication. Bradstreet's chronicler described what had been done:

> The intermediate part of Wood Creek, between Fort Newport and Bull's Fort never having been explored, nor esteemed navigable; indeed in its natural state, it can only with propriety be call'd a brook or rivulet, as it has not sufficient depth of water to float even an empty batteau; but the grounds, from whence it is supplied, being low and marshy, abounding with springs, and surrounded with small eminences; a dam was thrown across by which a body of water is collected; the boats being put into the creek and loaded, are kept in readiness, and whenever a sufficient quantity of water is gather'd the sluice is open'd which conveys them to the next dam. Thus whenever the pond at the head has emptied itself, and that water is again discharged through the different dams below it, the boats are obliged to lay still, until they can be again floated by a new collection of water, at the head of the first dam. 222

---

220 Harry Gordon, "A memorial concerning the back Forts in North America", 17 December 1765, Pargellis, Affairs, 464-471.

221 Shirley to Abercromby 27 June 1756, WO 34, vol. 46B, 1-6.

222 An impartial account, 9-10.

It became an important part of duty for forces stationed at Fort Stanwix to keep the narrow sluices dredged out and the dams in good repair.[223a] Shipments coming out of the western country still had to be carried overland for four miles or even further. For westbound parties, however, the engineering works reduced the portage to about one mile.

For the most part, the antagonists of the 1750's were powerfully swayed by the geography of the territory they fought over. "Nature alone almost never provides terrain exactly the way you want it . . . improve upon nature", called Frederick the Great.[223b] But the commonplace triumph, of man the fabricator over inconvenient or hostile natural features, still lay in the future. Bradstreet's 1758 message from the Oneida portage heralded that development. "We have now every thing over into Wood Creek, our dams made up and shall soon put off."[224]

- - - - -

Geography favoured defence.

The Lake Ontario theatre's rhythmic climate, and its sparce population, tended to curb the proud and hinder an aggressor. Although the weather was the same for both attacker and defender, its

---

223a WO 34, vol. 53, 14-15, 185.
223b Luvaas, 289.
224 Bradstreet to Abercromby 15 August 1758, AB 542.

strategic impact was to help the less ambitious. Annually halting the exploitation of success, weather forced a victorious party to abandon advantages and dismantle essential preparations. Meanwhile, harassed losers were given a respite and a chance for recuperation. Very little population meant practically no production. Since there were no local resources that could be enlisted to aid the war effort, the overhead cost of all military operations was much increased. This increase bore hardest upon whichever army was pursuing an offensive strategy. In a vacuum of supplies, as the project for a forward movement grew lengthier, so was the discouraging tonnage of materiel that had to be hauled along multiplied.

Geography favoured the defence of Canada.

A comparison of the two main routes into and out of the Ontario zone shows that the physical configuration of this region was more friendly to French purposes than to British. The upper Saint Lawrence gave just as quick access to Lake Ontario as the Mohawk-Oneida route did, and provided -- by several days -- speedier exit. It seems plain the British suffered more damage to materiel and equipment on their route. Fewer French spills was due

partly to advantages inherent in the geography of the Saint Lawrence, and partly to skills and good management. Good management on the river of Canada was easier to provide anyway; trying to organize the British route for efficient operation was a more complicated business, chiefly on account of the Great Carrying Place between two watersheds. Despite relatively good communications westward kept up by the French on the Saint Lawrence, this route was considered particularly difficult for an enemy to use. Both sides agreed on that. Until 1760's surprising turn of events, when the river became an invasion pathway, Canada's defenders felt more secure on this side than on other sides, and the British were less attracted to attack. This fact was the most important of all strategical considerations about the western front, and it arose precisely from the topography of the upper river. The turbulent, treacherous rapides made navigation very risky for strangers, lent possibilities to the defence at every turn, twist and fall, and invited an invader into a cul-de-sac.

Once the war had settled into its characteristic phase of British pressure seeking the complete subjugation of Canada, and beleaguered French forces trying to

hold them out while hoping for a diplomatic rescue, the Lake Ontario theatre's geographical features unanimously favoured the French cause. Operating near Quebec in the summer of 1759, General Wolfe explained his slow progress by the "difficulties we labour under, arising from the uncommon natural strength of the country."[225] With more justice, the "uncommon natural strength of the country" could have been cited by successive British army leaders whose forces were chased away from, or made to approach with great labour and excessive caution, the Laurentian colony's opposite extremity.

---

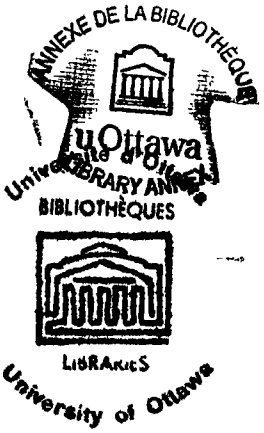
225 Wolfe to his mother 31 August 1759, quoted in R. C. Alberts, The most extraordinary adventures of Major Robert Stobo (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1965), 242.

1915/2

FRENCH AND BRITISH STRATEGY IN THE LAKE ONTARIO THEATRE OF OPERATIONS, 1754-1760

by Malcolm MacLeod

Thesis presented to the School of Graduate Studies of the University of Ottawa as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy



Grand Lake, Nova Scotia, 1973

© Malcolm MacLeod, Ottawa, Canada, 1974

CHAPTER III

FACTORS DETERMINING POWER AND STRATEGY: FORTIFIED POSITIONS

A most important factor which French and British military commanders took into account when planning strategy for the Lake Ontario theatre of operations was the territory's topography. A second basic consideration -- directly linked to topography -- was possession of fortified positions, or control of and access to positions that could effectively be fortified. La Pause even wrote that "attacking or defending the posts which close or open the communication from one frontier to the other" amounted to the "whole science of war in Canada".[1]

There were three groups of forts in the theatre. One consisted of the French posts on the upper Saint Lawrence river. Secondly, there were the forts established on the margin of Lake Ontario. Long before the lake area became a battleground it had been the seat of sustained rivalry between Canada and the British colony of New York. French and British forts around the lake were the clearest signs of this competition, and the most active agents carrying it on.

---

1 "Projet pour la défense du Canada pendant la campagne 1759", RAPQ 1932-3, 369.

Competion easily became conflict. Early in the war, French military success eliminated the single British post on the lake -- Oswego -- so that the Ontario zone became Canada's quietest. Finally, paralleling the upper Saint Lawrence line of posts one to two hundred miles to the south, was the series of British forts on the Mohawk-Oneida communication route that gave access to Lake Ontario from Albany.

In order to understand the aim of plans for this sector, and the significance of the events that occurred, it is necessary to see the situation as regards fortified positions. Where did French and British forces have permanent establishments in the area? What was the nature and strength of these fortifications? What new posts were built during the war? That basic information helps one understand what were the purposes for which forts were built and maintained, and to estimate how effective these particular posts were in furthering such aims.

1. The upper Saint Lawrence river.

Between Montreal -- the inner edge of the theatre -- and Lake Ontario, the French during most of 1754-1760 had five weakly fortified positions.

Montreal itself was a walled city whose defences remained in bad repair throughout the war. It was the commercial heart of Canada. If the enemy should reach that far, it was too late for fortifications anyway. La Pause described Montreal in 1760 as a place which a hostile force could "seize in 24 hours, as it is protected only by a wretched wall without ditches, and is overlooked from nearby territory."[2] The masonry surrounded only the core of the city, for by the 1750's important suburbs had already outgrown its confines. The enclosed area was a rectangle about a half mile long and one-quarter mile wide. British intelligence reported in 1757 that outside the west wall of the city there was a shallow, dry ditch, and that swampy ground helped protect the north wall. The principal redoubt protecting the position was at the eastern end of the city, where there were usually sixteen pieces of cannon mounted.[3] "Montreal's greatest strength consists in being upon an island in the river St. Lawrence."[4]

The two main themes of British plans that contemplated Montreal as an eventual target were its importance, and its weakness. The city had "about 5000

---

2 "Mémoire et réflexions . . . ", RAPQ 1933-4, 160.

3 LO 2559. Montreal's defences are described in detail in Franquet, Voyages et mémoires sur le Canada en 1752-1753 (Toronto: Canadiana house, 1968), 116-118. See also PAC, MG 1, C 11 A, vol. 101, 302; MG 4, A 1, vol. 3417, pièce 182, 1.

4 C.M., "State of Canada in October 1757 . . . ", PAC, MG 18, L 4, packet 57, 3-28

MAP OF MONTREAL

(attributed to James Pitcher, August 1756, in the Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery, LO 2559)

inhabitants", wrote one British officer, "and is the centre of all the Canada Indian trade and warlike operations . . . . Its reduction would be as fatal to the province as that of Quebec as either must be quickly followed by the surrender of the whole."[5] However, an enemy landing on this island could readily dominate the city by emplacing cannon on the heights to the north. Whether thus overlooked or not, Montreal's fortifications were no great protection anyway. The British believed the position was "not tenable against a Six Pounder"; "extremely weak of itself, and hardly deserves the name of a walled town."[6] Three Seneca Indians reported to Sir William Johnson on their return from Canada in 1759 that the "Walls of the town were in a bad Condition and they did not see any new works going forward . . . ."[7] A prisoner taken later that year said bluntly, "Montreal is not defensible. -- "[8] Sometimes, when peril seemed

---

5 Ibid.

6 Cumberland to Loudoun 2 December 1756, Pargellis, Affairs, 254-255. Montresor's plan dated 29 December 1758, NYCD, X, 907-912.

7 NYCD, VII, 383.

8 WO 34, vol. 46A, 111-112.

imminent, it was possible for the French to strengthen Montreal's defences. In August - September 1758, when Lieutenant-Colonel John Bradstreet was operating with a strong force in the Lake Ontario area, Vaudreuil reacted by concentrating at Montreal fifteen cannon and five mortars from Quebec, which was not under attack, and another six pieces from the temporarily quiet Lake Champlain sector.[9] Towards the end of the war the French lost this healthy flexibility, and guns that might have been shifted to bolster the redoubt of Montreal were captured by the British as they overran forward positions. Thus when the enemy occupied Montreal they found it as weak as they had expected: its walls "solely calculated to awe the tribes of Indians . . . . never designed but as a security against arrows or small arms"; the weapons "six or eight old wormeaten guns, some of which are not mounted."[10]

---

9 NYCD, X, 868-870.

10 Captain John Knox, Historical Journal, quoted in E. R. Adair, "The evolution of Montreal under the French regime", CHAR 1942,36.

On the west, the potential access to Montreal was down the two hundred mile length of the upper Saint Lawrence river from Lake Ontario. During the first half of the war the French had four minature posts along the route. Bougainville listed them in 1757, while describing the way to Fort Duquesne. After leaving "La Chine, the King's sheds and warehouses where government goods destined for the upper country are stored," one came to

> Sault Saint-Louis, stockade fort, against the Mohawks; the Cedars, stockade fort; Saint-Régis, stockade fort, a recently-established Jesuit mission to the Iroquois; [and] La Présentation or La Galette, stockade fort, new mission of the Sulpicians to gain over the Five-Nations; . . . 11

Of the four positions where Bougainville located "forts", only at La Présentation was there a permanent garrison. The people at Sault Saint-Louis (Caughnawaga), a dozen miles upstream from Montreal on the south shore of the river, were the French and Canadian personnel of a Jesuit mission, and 350 Caughnawaga Indians. These Indians -- transplanted Iroquois -- had a permanent and settled village at Sault Saint-Louis, and their warriors if at home were potentially the major part of the force that would have manned the fort, defended the nearby

---

11 "Mémoire sur l'Eat . . . ", RAPQ 1923-4, 53-54.

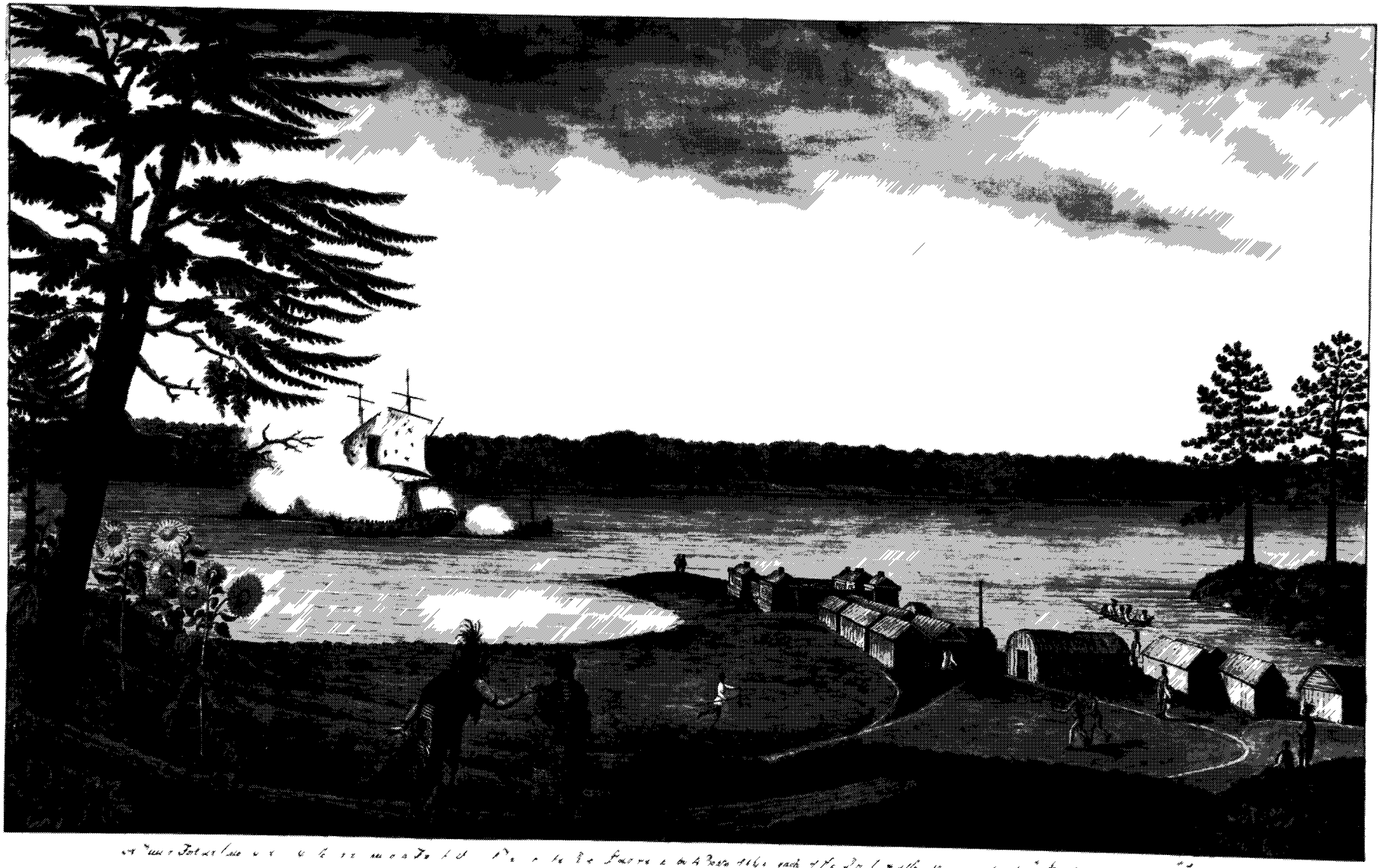
homes and watched the river road to Montreal in case of attack.[12] (Lac des deux Montagnes, at the mouth of the Ottawa river, was an establishment very similar to Sault Saint-Louis; the reception which Brigadier-General the Marquis de Montcalm received there on a morale-boosting tour in 1757 indicates the scale of arms provided to these missionforts, and the nature of the local command. "Upon our arrival," wrote his aide-de-camp, "We were saluted by a triple discharge of two swivels and of musketry from Indians lined up on the river bank, the missionaries at their head.")[13]

The post at The Cedars, thirty miles by water up from Montreal, was a more regular military establishment, as there was no community of priests and domiciled Indians in its vicinity. It was on the north shore. On the opposite side forty miles further on was Saint-Régis, a stockade built in 1755 to provide added protection on the route from the west, and to give the Jesuits a nucleus for the Iroquois village they hoped to start up there on the model of Sault Saint-Louis. The pre-war garrison at each of Sault Saint-Louis and The Cedars

---

12 Ibid., 50-53. Boucault, "Etat présent du Canada" (1754), RAPQ 1920-1, 44-47.

13 BJ 9 July 1757, p. 122. Details of the Sulpicians' fort at Lac des deux Montagnes -- twelve foot walls, loopholes, three bastions -- are in Franquet, 42-43.



numbered fifteen to twenty soldiers,[14] and the strength at Saint-Régis when it was first established was probably about the same. Later these garrisons were apparently removed to service elsewhere. In July 1756 Bougainville found the "little stockaded fort" at The Cedars "almost abandoned."[15] The following spring Vaudreuil received Indian warnings of

> an invasion by way of The Cedars. It has been proposed to him to re-establish the palisades of a sort of fort which is there and to put a colony ensign and twenty-five or thirty soldiers there with signals to communicate with Isle Perault and other neighbouring parishes, the militia of which would turn out promptly if any expedition should appear. 16

However, a list of tasks undertaken in 1757 by Canada's scarce military engineers shows that while some work was done at Sault Saint-Louis and Lac des deux Montagnes, nothing was undertaken at The Cedars.[17] In August that

---

14 BJ 24 July 1756, p. 15-16. The numbers of men are according to an American trader taken prisoner by the French in 1749. He called The Cedars "Fort St. Marie . . . a wooden Fort, no Guns", and Sault St.-Louis "Iroquois Fort Three Leagues further down the River, Wooden Fort, . . . no Guns." Pargellis, Affairs, 30-31. A 1754 French document complained about a garrison being stationed at Sault St.-Louis in peacetime. RAPQ 1927-8, 324.

15 BJ, 15. See note 36 below.

16 BJ 18 March 1757, p. 94.

17 Léry journal, RAPQ 1928-9, 236.

year the French were still reconnoitring The Cedars, and a plan came forward that, ignoring the weak post already on the spot, recommended starting over again and using a stone mill -- and perhaps the church -- as part of a system of fortifications that would "totally bar the river".[18] But nothing of the sort was done before the conquest of Canada.

A few miles above the head of the Saint Lawrence rapids, at a location traditionally called La Galette, stood Fort de la Présentation. Although this post was constructed only of wood and so could be hardly any stronger than Saint-Régis or Sault Saint-Louis, nevertheless through most of the war it was one of the three chief French posts in the Lake Ontario theatre of operations. La Présentation had only been established a few years earlier, in 1749. Before that time

> The King had forbidden any French post being built above the Long Sault. The Abbé [François] Piquet, able missionary, . . . obtained a 12-arpent concession above La Galette . . . [and] built a fort of squared posts, flanked by four strong bastions, palisaded without and with a water-filled ditch. Beside the fort is the village of a hundred fires, each that of an Iroquois chief, all warriors. . . . They have made a

---

18 La Pause, "Voyage des rapids . . . ", RAPQ 1932-3, 372-373. Lévis journal 15 August 1759, Casgrain, I, 195.

> clearing, have cows, horses, pigs, and hens. They plant Indian corn . . . .
>
> Abbé Piquet teaches them and drills them in the French military exercises.
>
> His assistant is Abbé Chevalier Terley, called Chevalier Terley because of his warlike disposition. There is in the fort a captain of colonial troops as commander, but all real control is ecclesiastical. 19

Another description of this fort was "four redoubts of wood, with curtains of squared logs."[20] It was armed routinely with five small two-pounder cannon, and manned by 20 to 30 troops. This post is plainly shown in a beautiful water-colour which a British artillery officer made on the spot in 1760, in which there is no ditch shown.[21]

Fort La Présentation filled several different strategic functions. The most important of these was what Captain Joseph-Gaspard Chaussegros de Léry called its "principal aim, to draw the Indians of the Five Nations

---

19 BJ 26 July 1756, pp. 16-17. See also NYCD, IX, 822.

20 Léry journal 20 July 1758, Roy, III, 10-11.

21 Ibid. Pargellis, Affairs, 30-31. NYCD, X, 203-204. WO 34, vol. 25, 415-418; vol. 39, 95-98. RAPQ 1923-4, 50-54. See the accompanying photo-copy of Captain Lieutenant Thomas Davies' painting, "A View of Fort La Galet . . . 1760".

to Christianity, . . . to attract there Five Nations Indians and through them be informed of what is going on in their home country and of what preparations the English might be making with a view to invading the French colony."[22] This project worked well. Once La Présentation was established Father Picquet made recruiting trips into Iroquois country, explaining the generous support which the Canadian government would extend to settlers. An untrustworthy source gives the Indian population there as six persons in 1749, and 87 in 1750.[23] Within another two years it had become "a town of about 40 wigwams & a French priest."[24] In 1756 this "village of a hundred fires" must have had a population in proportion to the number of residences, of four or five hundred.

Throughout the war French military headquarters received a constant flow of intelligence about the enemy through the agency of the La Présentation Indians. It was easy and natural for the immigrants, mostly Onondaga and Cayuga,[25] to visit their old villages, hunting in

---

22 Léry journal 14 June 1749, RAPQ 1926-7, 336-337.

23 W. Beauchamp, A history of the New York Iroquois (Albany, 1905), 292.

24 "Examination of James Johnson" 13 March 1753, WO 34, vol. 25, 415-418.

25 Beauchamp, 292.

that direction. Information they gathered was shared with their French Father. La Pause noted the intimacy which existed between the Iroquois who had left the homeland and those who stayed behind, recording that La Présentation orators

> never speak separately and for themselves alone, the reason being that since they have been domiciled in Canada such a little time, they regard themselves still as of the Iroquois nationality, . . . [26]

Moreover, they would fight. "The head warrior of La Présentation", Amherst wrote wryly, "is supposed to have killed about 300 men, women & children. I believe the number is overstated, tho' I dont doubt he has killed many of the first & all of the women & children that have fallen into his hands."[27] Campaign documents frequently testify to war

---

26 "Relation de L'ambassade des cinq nations", RAPQ 1932-3, 332. See Vaudreuil's response to an Iroquois message addressed through "mes Enfants de la présentation", MG 1, C 11 A, vol. 100, 102.

27 Amherst journal 17 July 1760, J. C. Webster, Journal of Jeffrey Amherst 1756-1763 (Toronto, 1931), 219-220.

parties from La Présentation acting with French forces.[28]

The British Indian Superintendent explained in 1757 how the propaganda he directed towards the Iroquois was frustrated by the existence and activity of La Présentation.[29] On the other hand, La Présentation's priestly overseer sometimes put forward the argument that his mission and fort had no particular diplomatic or strategic function. "Not a place concerned in the war", he called it, "but only a School to instruct the Indians & their Children living here." When invasion threatened, he begged Iroquois leaders not to let the English "break & destroy a place intended for nothing but Religion & Instruction of the ignorant."[30]

From Father Picquet, this was insincere special pleading. But there were some others on the French side who really thought the mission-post not worth supporting. The Chevalier de Raymond called it a "useless post".

---

28 For example: Méloizes journal 20 September 1756, RAPQ 1928-9, 20; BJ, p. 16 note 33.

29 Johnson to Lords of Trade 28 September 1757, NYCD, VII, 276-279.

30 22 April 1759. NYCD, VII, 393.

According to him, no troops at all should be stationed there in peacetime, and the population attracted to La Présentation was an unhandy "assembly of old men and women, dissolute Indian girls chased from their own villages, libertines and coureurs who follow them."[31]

Picquet's fortified mission played the role of an armed barrier protecting the river road towards Montreal and the centre of the colony. The whole three-quarter mile width of the river[32] at that point was within range of its guns. One of the reasons Governor La Jonquière stated for giving active support to the project, when it was first proposed, was to "intercept the English and Indians who would wish to penetrate into the colony."[33] A British officer thought that La Présentation, "advantageously situated", held "the command of the River Saint Lawrence, for all vessels going from Montreal to the lakes, . . ."[34] While the French were established at La Présentation the British could not approach Montreal from this direction without hindrance; but on the other hand, British seizure

---

31 "Mémoire sur les postes . . ." (1754), RAPQ 1927-8, 324, 339, 347-348.

32 Canadian Hydrographic Service, 1963: Saint Lawrence Seaway, chart 1416, "Iroquois Lock to Prescott".

33 NYCD, VI, 714-732; X, 203-204.

34 Montresor's plan dated 29 December 1758, NYCD, X, 907-912.

of the post would effectually cut Canada's links with Lake Ontario. It was for this double reason connected with the fort's position that British Prime Minister Pitt, after the fall of Niagara in 1759, began to refer to La Présentation as "a post of the utmost consequence."[35]

Besides being a successful centre for Indian intrigue, and blocking the way into the heart of the colony, Fort La Présentation secured several subsidiary advantages. By drawing the Iroquois to live there the French benefitted their own fur trade at the expense of the British. The post was an invaluable depot which broke the long haul between Montreal and Fort Frontenac.[36] It had good timber nearby for building ships and bateaux, and it controlled the lower reaches of a little river which, flowing from the direction of Schenectady, was a potential

---

35 Pitt to Amherst 11 December 1759, MG 18, L 4, packet 23, 34-37.

36 In contemporary journal accounts of military forces moving along the upper Saint Lawrence, La Présentation is always prominent as a stop-over, replenishing and rendezvous point. The lower posts of St.-Régis, The Cedars and Sault Saint-Louis are rarely even mentioned in passing. This points up La Présentation's greater importance, and probably proves the other forts were often empty of troops. BJ, July 1756, p. 14-18. RAPQ 1926-7, 373-377. Roy, III, 5-11, 39-44.

invasion route between American and Canadian settlements.[37]

However, the post was deficient in one respect, namely, the most vital one. It could easily be destroyed: flimsily built, and placed in the worst possible position with relationship to surrounding terrain.[38] Worse, the British knew these facts. They drew strategic beads upon it as a "small, weak fort, . . . cannot be of any strength."[39] In the western crisis of 1759-1760, the French abandoned Fort La Présentation as militarily untenable and built a replacement (Fort Lévis) on a nearby and more likely island site.[40]

2. French forts on Lake Ontario

Continuing upcountry from Montreal, the next fort one encountered was one of three Canadian outposts that were situated on the banks of Lake Ontario itself.

---

37 Léry journal 1749, RAPQ 1926-7, 337. Léry to the Minister 20 October 1749, Roy, II, 96. Father Picquet gave his views on the site's advantages in a letter to Governor La Galissonière, 4 August 1749, Gosselin, "Le fondateur de la Présentation", 14-16.

38 RAPQ 1924-5, 164. "Dominée departou": Malartic to the Minister of War 6 October 1755, MG 4, A 1, vol. 3405, pièce 118, 5.

39 Montresor's plan dated 29 December 1758, NYCD, X, 907-912.

40 But La Présentation was not destroyed, "on the request of the Indians who preferred to see it burnt by the English rather than the French." Mémoire du Canada", RAPQ 1924-5, 164.

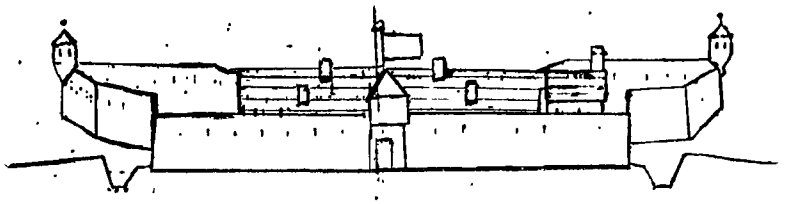
Fort Frontenac, sixty miles above La Présentation, was near the head of the Saint Lawrence river. It was a simple masonry wall in a more or less pentagonal shape, roughly 180 by 160 feet.[41] The walls were over twenty feet high, but "could never be intended to sustain a cannonading as their base was only three feet thick, and the upper part not above two."[42] There was no outer ditch, but with a view to defending the fort and its area against possible attackers, the defenders kept a clearing made around the fort, cutting down all the trees within one or two cannon carries. The post was strengthened during the 1755-56 period of tension when French and British forces raced to see who would be the first to launch an attack on the other's eastern Lake Ontario position -- the British against Frontenac or the French against Oswego. The addition was "a kind of entrenched camp" outside the walls, which was abandoned half-finished after the taking of Oswego.[43]

---

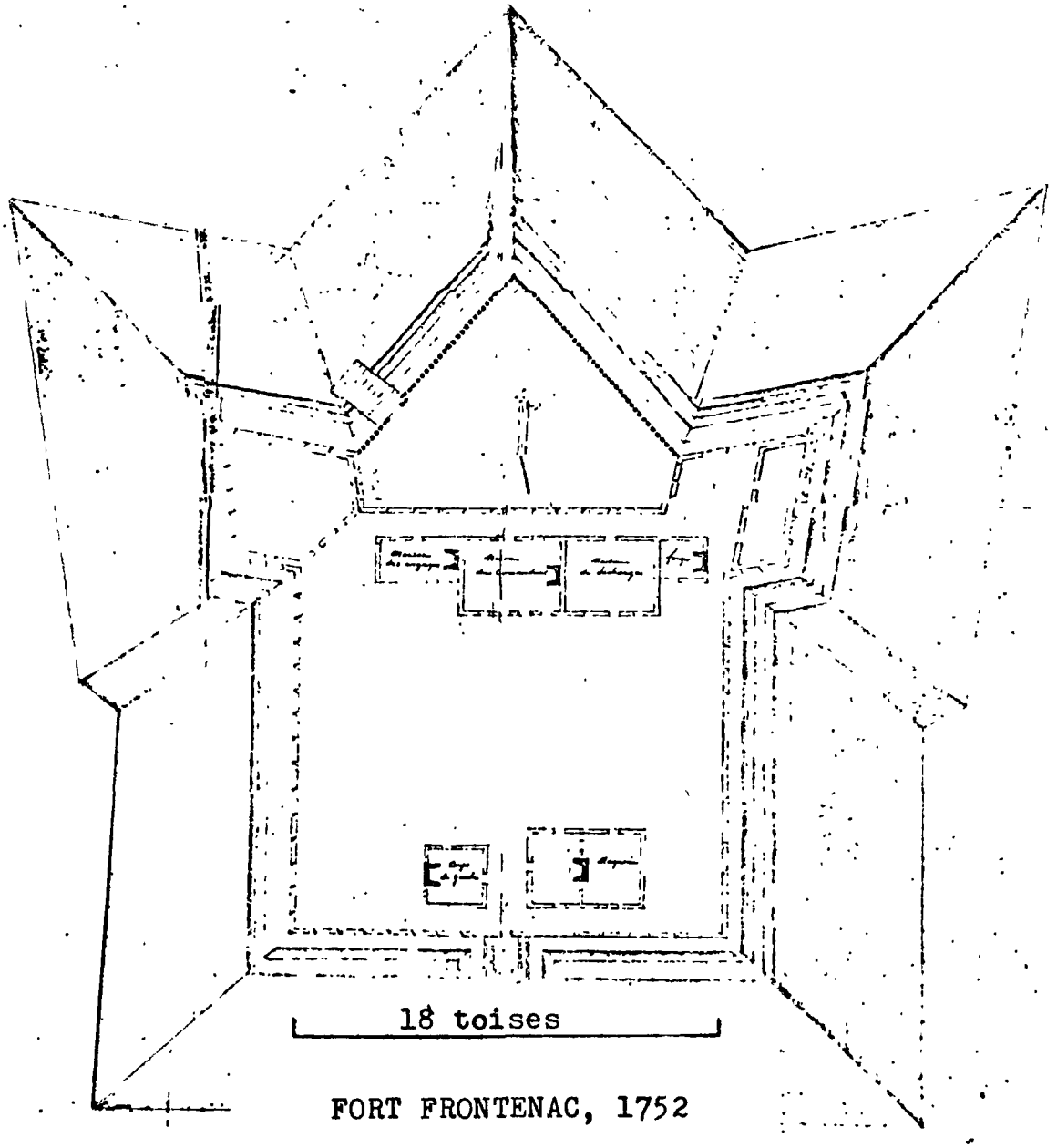
41 La Pause "Observations . . . sur le fort Frontenac", RAPQ 1933-4, 84-87. "Plan du fort . . .", PAC, MG 18, H 27.

42 An Impartial account of Lieut. Col. Bradstreet's expedition to Fort Frontenac (Toronto: Rous & Mann, 1940), 23.

43 Bougainville, "Mémoire sur l'Etat . . .", RAPQ 1923-4, 53-54. See also RAPQ 1933-4, 84-87.



Plan du Fort de la Présentation à Katarakouy 1752.



FORT FRONTENAC, 1752

(PAC, MG 18, H 27)

"As to the interior, there is a wooden scaffolding all around [the wall] . . . . There are two embrasures for cannon on some faces of the bastions and one on the flanks."[44] Altogether the fort could mount 26 pieces of cannon. Around the parade square inside, the main buildings were barracks for civilian workmen and for the regular garrison of 40 to 80 men, a blacksmith shop, the commander's residence and two separate storehouses -- one for the fort's stores and another for the cargoes that were regularly transshipped here from Montreal bateaux into the lakeships, destined for Niagara, Detroit and the rest of the French west.[45]

> On the outside of the fort, were about ten or a dozen houses, chiefly used as stores, but the principal warehouse was on the wharf, which was about two hundred feet in length, and about twenty five in breadth, in this was deposited, in the most regular and neat manner, the sails and rigging of the several vessels which lay near it;. . . [46]

The rather open and dangerous harbour of Cataraqui was the main port of the Lake Ontario navy, and Fort Frontenac's chief function in peace and war was to be the distributing centre for goods of all kinds to Canada's pays d'en haut.

---

44 RAPQ 1933-4, 84-87.

45 Sowers to the Board of Ordnance 1 October 1758, PAC, Record Group 8, II, vol. 36. WO 34, vol. 25, p. 415-418; vol. 39. 95-98. PAC, MG 18, H 27; MG 24, L 3, vol. 46, 29739-29741.

46 Impartial Account, 23.

Frontenac was well sited[47] for fulfilling this function, but very badly for a second one, which was to guard the entrance into the upper Saint Lawrence. Sailing ships and bateaux could enter the river and still keep ten miles away from the French fort; Frontenac could not even see some of the navigable channels. There was military utility in the fact that forces stationed at Frontenac could emerge to interfere with the communications of any enemy army that went down the river, or try to catch and crush it when the defences lower down held it up. Montcalm disdained the idea, and thought an entirely different site should be found, where a new post could

> become the head of that frontier, and the entrepot for every military expedition in that quarter, whilst Frontenac or the Bay of Niahouré [25 miles south-east of Frontenac, where the French had a temporary encampment in 1756] can never be regarded as such; the English can enter the River St. Lawrence, without those posts being aware of the fact, and besides, they cannot be sufficiently important to prevent their being left, without any danger, in the rear;. . . 48

---

47 Montresor thought not, pointing out how the rapids below La Présentation gave way to smooth water from there to Frontenac, so that La Présentation seemed to him the most efficient place for transshipment (plan of 29 December 1758 NYCD, X, 907-912). This overlooks the important fact that sailing vessels leaving Cataraqui had the broad lake to navigate in, while with a contrary wind it would often be impossible to make any headway in a sailing ship trying to stem the current in the upper Saint Lawrence. Malartic thought it "tres mauvaise par Sa Situation et Sa Construction", PAC, MG 4, A 1, vol. 3405, pièce 118, 6.

48 NYCD, X, 870-872.

The Chief Engineer of New France agreed that Frontenac's position was "bad in itself", and said a fort to secure the upper Saint Lawrence would be best located around La Galette where "it will be more useful, less exposed and less expensive for the King."[49]

By the start of the war, a third function which had devolved upon Fort Frontenac was to rival British Oswego for influence and control in the eastern Lake Ontario area. The purpose of the first Canadian outpost built on this site (in the 1670's) was to contain the hostile Iroquois.[50] But as those peoples were gradually wrestled and wooed by Canada into neutrality or even friendship, ambitious Yankee traders replaced them as the major menace to New France's hold on the west. From the 1720's when New York fortified Oswego-only 55 miles from Frontenac on the opposite side of the lake-the two posts settled into a cold war. In peacetime they tried to entice away each other's Indians

---

49 Doreil to ? 20 September 1758, RAPQ 1944-5, 162. See also Beauharnois dispatch 1 October 1728: "The enemy on their way to Montreal, pass [Frontenac] at a distance of four leagues, whilst they come within cannon shot of La Galette." (NYCD, IX, 1011-1013).

50 Boucault, "Etat présent du Canada" (1754), RAPQ 1920-1, 11-12. Collection de manuscrits contenant lettres, mémoires, et autres documents historiques relatifs à la nouvelle-France (Quebec: Cote, 1883-5), I, 594-595.

and engaged in espionage. During hostilities each threatened the other with attack. The period of war in the 1740's passed without any blows being struck. When conflict resumed, a move to gain full domination of Lake Ontario was a first priority plan in French headquarters, and also high up on the list of what the British intended to do against Canada.

Tension mounted during the summer of 1755. It was a race to see which side would first develop sufficient western strength to remove the opposition fortress from the military map. The French had better communications. Their predominating local influence enabled Canadian forces to raid and disrupt British supply lines. On the other hand, the British had greater bulk of resources available for the build-up.

The raids and troop movements, the Indian diplomacy, the work hurriedly undertaken to improve the two forts, and to augment the navies in both harbours, form an interesting study in chess-like feints and menaces. The 1755 result -- when the French were the weaker -- was that two 550-man regiments (Guienne and Béarn), stationed at Frontenac, "held in check a corps of about 2000 men entrenched under the fort at Oswego, . . . "[51]

---

51 Doreil to [unknown] 20 October 1755, RAPQ 1944-5, 46. At this juncture of the war, Montcalm thought Fort Frontenac "le point central de notre ligne de deffense", MG 4, A 1, vol. 3417, pièce 137, 2-3.

In 1756 the French were strong. The attack they launched from Frontenac succeeded in taking Oswego, which was then levelled. Canada relaxed its guard on Lake Ontario, thinking

> 'tis not probable that the English will be able to get up an attack on that side, so long as they will not be in possession of Choueguin [Oswego]." [52]

Despite its size, regularity and long tradition, Frontenac was another of Bougainville's "wretched" forts.[53] An American prisoner reported its walls "extremely decayed & weak";[54] the head of the Canadian artillery agreed the place was very bad;[55] and La Pause supplied the details -- masonry badly seated, such poor limestone that

> one could easily dilapidate it with hammers or picks. . . . The [interior] scaffolding is too high; battlements have been built on a level with it, but only eight inches in height, so they are of no use . . . In some places the scaffolding and even the wall would not be able to sustain for very long the vibration of the guns. [56]

"If Choueguen had not been destroyed," Bougainville wrote in 1757," It would have been necessary to make [Frontenac]

---

[52] Le Mercier memorandum 30 October 1757, NYCD, X, 656.

[53] RAPQ 1923-4, 53-54.

[54] In 1751. WO 34, vol. 25, 415-418.

[55] Le Mercier memorandum 30 October 1757, NYCD, X, 656.

[56] RAPQ 1933-4, 84-87.

a place of respectable strength."[57] Since Oswego was gone, the French post was permitted to go on crumbling. At the time of the surprise attack upon it in 1758, Fort Frontenac had several extraordinary advantages. There were 76 guns in the fort, plus the guns and men of the ships -- all of which happened to be in harbour, plus a bottomless store of ammunition which was in transit up-country, plus six months provisions for 20,000 men.[58] But the shaky walls, and the garrison's insufficient size, explain why when many pawns had been deployed and consumed on both sides in the Lake Ontario theatre -- and the endgame drew near -- the castle which was Canada's key to Lake Ontario was judged "incapable of making any resistance."[59]

The British troops that besieged Niagara, on the other hand, found it much stronger and much larger than they expected to.[60] It was also much more in accord with

---

57 RAPQ 1923-4, 49.

58 Sowers to the Board of Ordnance 1 October 1758, PAC, RG 8, II, 36. The value of goods destroyed at Fort Frontenac in 1758 is eminently untrustworthy, because both the British raiders and the French suppliers had reasons to exaggerate.

59 Vaudreuil to Massiac 2 September 1758, NYCD, X, 823-825.

60 Johnson to Haldimand 21 July 1759, MG 21, G 2, vol. 10, 2-3. Johnson to Stanwix 25 July 1759, WO 34, vol. 45, 183-186.

standard European ideas -- Vauban's -- of what a fort should look like. "The works are extensive," wrote Sir William Johnson, so that

> It will require at least 1000 men for a garrison in time of war whilst the French have any footing on the river Saint Lawrence by the enclosed plan you will see the strength of this place & how much we were mistaken in our opinions and intelligence concerning it. 61

"Certainly the best[fort] which we hold on the continent," said another of the conquerors, "both by its situation, and by the judicious distribution of the defensive works; . . ."[62] Bougainville --his European superciliousness usually scorned the smaller scale and amateurish nature of many things found in the new world-- admitted Fort Niagara was "the best, without contradiction, in all of Canada."[63]

Niagara had never been stronger during the French regime than it was when the British captured it. During the years preceding the start of the war it had been crumbling away just like Frontenac. Information acquired by the British in 1749-1754, from returned prisoners and French deserters, indicated that Niagara was "a very poor rotten old . . . Fort" with a skeleton garrison that sometimes

---

61 Johnson to Amherst 31 July 1759, WO 34, vol. 39, 201-204.

62 Haldimand to Amherst 31 July 1759, WO 34, vol. 9, 33-36.

63 RAPQ 1923-4, 10.

dropped as low as fifteen men.[64] It was:

> 9 Miles below the falls at the Place where the River empty's itself into the Lakes, built of stone, 2 Bastions, 40 Men, 4 Officers, Eight Guns -- 6 Pounders. Imagined it may be taken without Cannon; a few Shells would infallibly destroy it.[65]
> . . . about 6 rods [99 feet] square the walls about 10 feet high old & decayed has 6 cannon or embrasures for them the cannon not being mounted has two officers & 35 soldiers . . . .[66]

Governor Duquesne's 1755 turnover report to Vaudreuil on Canada's military state described the fort at Niagara as "undermined by the lake and crumbling in every direction."[67] It would have to be rebuilt on another location. Active war began, prohibiting that luxury; Vaudreuil ordered Niagara to be strengthened instead. Directed by Captain Pierre Pouchot of the Béarn regiment -- a regular infantry officer who apparently had a good knowledge of the principles of fortification-- the work got underway in the summer of 1755. During the next two years the crew employed never fell below 300 troops, summer or winter.[68] The repairs Pouchot carried out made

---

64 "Deposition of Stephen Coffen" 10 January 1754, NYCD, VI, 837. Colhoun to DeLancey 12 April 1754, NYCD, VI, 832-833.

65 Pargellis, Affairs, 30-31.

66 WO 34, vol. 25, 415-418.

67 NYCD, X, 300-301.

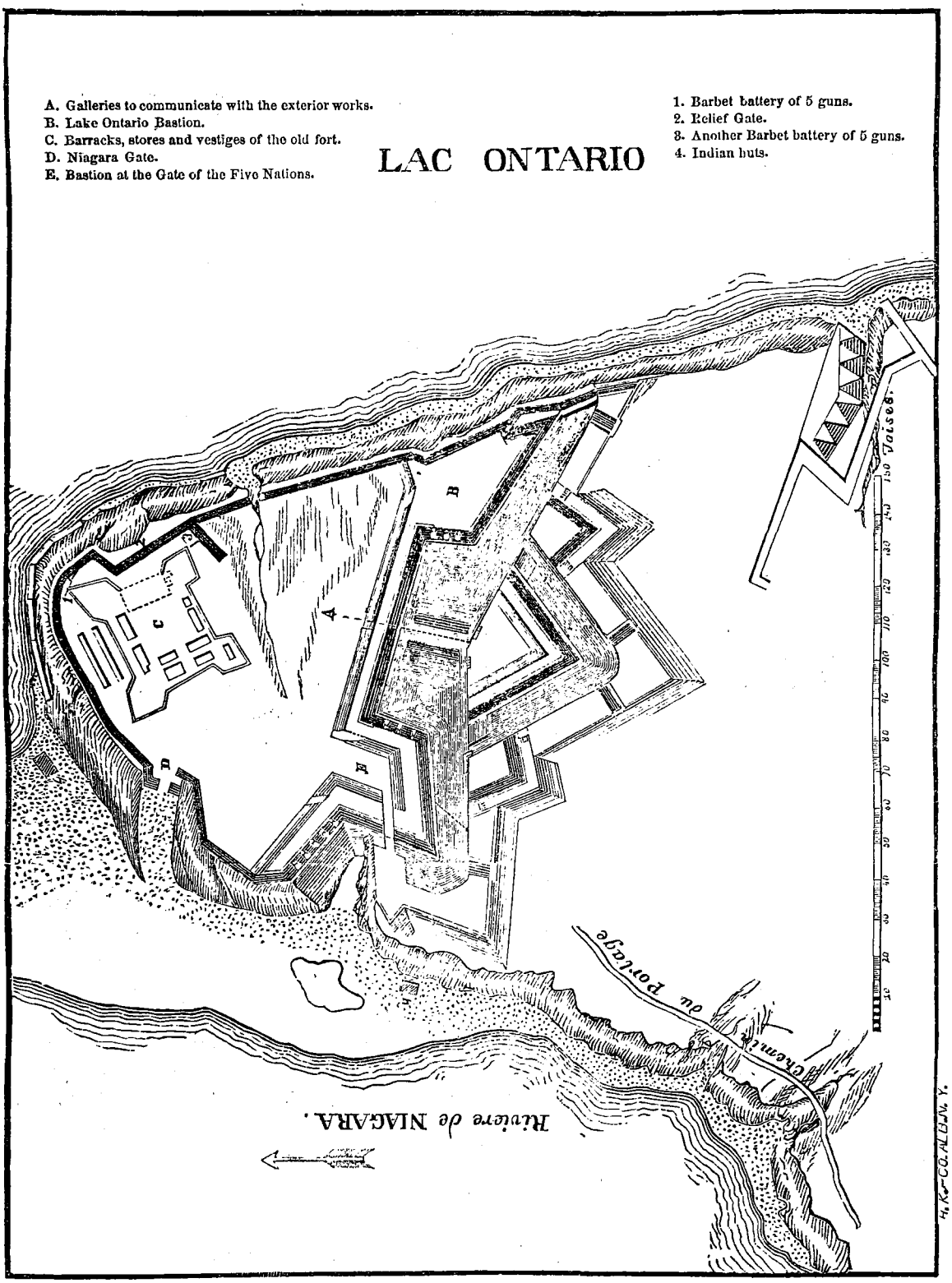
Niagara's defended area several times larger than it had been. In 1757 the fortress covered about one-sixteenth of a square mile, with a complicated construction of glacis, covered way, ditch, scarp and parapet that made all of an enemy's landward approaches slow and costly, while shielding defensive preparations inside the fort from harm and observation. A French deserter warned the British that the fort had been much improved: "It has deep Ditches full of Water round it, a great many cannon and some Mortars, but the Number of either knows not; . . . a great many Labourers are imployed constantly in the Fortifications; . . . [69] A Canadian headquarters report (October 1757) found Niagara's state good. The largest of its thirty guns were twelve 12-pounders.[70] That November, writing to a patron in France, Pouchot the builder boasted that he had directed the work at Niagara "with all the economy of a gentleman

---

68 Vaudreuil to Machault 25 September 1755, Stanley, New France, 106. M. _____ Pouchot [sic], Memoir upon the late war in North America (Roxbury, Massachusetts: Woodward, 1886), I, 53. Letters from Commanding Officer Niagara to Commanding Officer Frontenac 1 January, 16 April and 7 December 1756, PAC, MG 24, L 3, vol. 3, 1442-1443, 1461-1463, 1516-1517.

69 LO 4706.

70 Le Mercier memorandum 30 October 1757, NYCD, X, 656.



PLAN OF FORT NIAGARA — Built and defended by M. Pouchot.
[From Pouchot's Memoires sur la dernière guerre.]

(NYCD, X, 976)

cultivating his farm." It was almost completed. The fort now had two large barracks, a church, a powder magazine and storehouses for provisions and trade goods. Of the earthen walls

> there remain to be sodded only a small portion of the interior parapet; the epaulement from the gate to the covert-way along the river, and both the traverses of the place of arms, salient from the half moon.
>
> It will be essential, my Lord, to sod the scarps and counterscarps of the ditches, in consequence of the nature of the soil which, notwithstanding its hardness, wastes extremely the moment 'tis exposed to the air. 71

Around the western end of Lake Ontario there were two small forts that were satellites of the large one at Niagara, and helped to extend French control over the region. One of these was a fortified trading post built by Daniel Chabert de Joncaire in 1750 at the Lake Erie end of the Niagara portage route: "a small wooden [fort] 9 Miles above the head of the Falls" [72] and 25 miles from Fort Niagara. Twenty men were reported stationed there in 1756, without cannon. [73] The other satellite was Toronto

---

71 Pouchot to Paulmy 3 November 175757, NYCD, X, 667-668.

72 "Account of the French forts . . . ", Pargellis, Affairs, 30-31.

73 LO 4791. The Chevalier de Raymond thought this was the most important site in the area:" . . . It must be remarked that the Little-Rapid which is at the entrance from Lake Erie is the chief and the most important because you can defend this passage at a musket carry whereas at Fort Niagara you cannot prevent canoes from passing since the river there is almost three-quarters of a mile wide." RAPQ 1927-8, 330-332. See also Léry journal 10 July 1749, RAPQ 1926-7, 340-346.

35 miles across Lake Ontario. Léry had noted in 1749,

> at the mouth of the Credit river, . . . lodges of the Mississauga Indians. It would be advantageous to make an establishment here, since it is the route used by the Lake Huron Indians and other tribes on their way to trade at the English post at Choueguen -- thus we could deprive the English of these peltries. 74

Governor La Galissonnière proceeded to order Fort Rouillé erected there. It was built to the same model as La Présentation: "only a small fort the walls of thick plank there being no wood near fit for pickets they have their plank from Canada There is only one officer & ten men." 75 Bougainville called it "Toronto or Saint-Victor, a little picket fort on Lake Ontario, for the purpose of selling brandy to the Indians so as to counter-balance the trade done at Choueguen." 76 When Oswego fell he declared the post at Toronto useless. However, a small garrison was stationed there year-round until the British captured Niagara. Then the commanding officer put into effect Toronto's standing orders for such a crisis: self-destruct. He blew up the post and withdrew with his men

---

74 RAPQ 1926-7, 338-341.

75 "Examination of James Johnson", WO 34, vol. 25, 415-418.

76 RAPQ 1923-4, 53.

towards Montreal.[77]

Even after Niagara -- by 1758-- had been made about as strong as a sod earth fort could be, the French continued to invest labour in it. When Pouchot was sent back to be commandant again in the spring of 1759, he carried orders to do over the fortifications in stone.[78] The British attack did not allow time for this to be done, and in the fall of 1759 the new British commander complained that the earthen fort was tumbling down with the rain, observing

> Repairs must ever be wanting till [the fort is] revetted with stone and brick which our enemy certainly intended having collected some miles up the river a considerable quantity of the former and built a kiln where nothing is wanted but hands to furnish plenty of the latter.[79]

The fort had other small deficiencies besides lack of brickwork.[80] But on the whole Niagara in 1759, with its regular fortifications, "very advantageous" situation, and

---

77 Johnson to Amherst 31 July 1759, WO 34, vol. 39, 201-204.

78 RAPQ 1924-5, 148-149.

79 Farquhar to Amherst 24 September 1759, WO 34, vol. 21, 13-16.

80 "Parapet is very insufficient, no casements and the garrison mostly Canadians." Rutherford to Haldimand 14 July 1759, PAC, MG 21, G 2, vol. 68, 34-35. The fort's one-half mile circumference was too large to be easily defended. Eyre to Amherst 28 April 1760, WO 34, vol. 21, 73-76. It could be bombarded from the other side of the river. La Pause, RAPQ 1933-4, 94.

cannon -- many of which had been captured from the British at the time of the Braddock ambush -- was what Colonel Haldimand called it, the strongest place in America.[81]

All the attention and expense which the French devoted to Niagara reflected its key strategic functions. There were four of these.

1) The original purpose of a Canadian outpost on the carrying place between Lakes Ontario and Erie was to gain ascendancy over the Indians. The first Fort Niagara (built 1687) seemed, to one optimistic French observer,

> to insure the utter Destruction of the Iroquese; for they could not stir out of their Villages to Hunt, or to Fish, without running the risque of having their Throats cut by the Savages in Alliance with us, who . . .assur'd of a safe Retreat [82]

in the fort, and supplied and aided by the French, could keep up permanent warfare that would wear the Iroquois down. The plan miscarried in the 1680's, but over the long run, the Iroquois preferred peaceful accommodation to attrition. The threat which French Niagara posed helped keep them neutral through the early 1700's until 1759. From

---

81 Prideaux to Haldimand 13 July 1759, PAC, MG 21, G 2, vol. 68, 32-33. Munster to Haldimand 1 August 1759, Ibid., 45-48. Vaudreuil to Machault 25 September 1755, Guy Fregault, La guerre de la conquete, 176-177.

82 "Mémoire sur le Canada", Collection de manuscrits, I, 560-563. S. Leacock, editor, Lahontan's voyages (Ottawa: Graphic, 1932), 110-111.

Niagara the Canadian government was able not only to threaten harm to the Indian peoples, but also to hold out friendship and trade to them. This was the main secret of Canada's numerous and firm alliances in the pays d'en haut. The trade conveniently offered at Niagara kept many tribes in steady, mutually profitable relations with the French. "From all I have seen," Pouchot asserted in 1757, "this fort influences extremely all the bordering Nations."[83] Bougainville agreed, arguing that the Niagara trade ought to be freed from government monopoly. Lower prices would result, pleasing the Indians;

> and one ought never to lose sight of this fact, that the interest of commerce is less involved here than the conservation of the colony itself. We cannot sustain ourselves except with the support of the Indians. That is the counterweight which inclines the balance to our side, and the Indians will accept the hatchet from those with whom they can have an advantageous trade. 84

It was a key point in Canadian policy that all the native peoples in the vicinity of Niagara and west of there would have trading relations only with the French. Then diplomacy sought to insure that peacetime customers would become wartime warriors on the French side. This was

---

84 Pouchot to Paulmy 3 November 1757, NYCD, X, 667-668.

85 RAPQ 1923-4, 49.

usually successful.[85] Upon the British capture of Niagara, the British Indian Superintendent launched a diplomatic offensive among the Great Lakes tribes, hoping to arrange alliances "between us & them distant nations the French having whilst in possession of Niagara cut off all communication between us and them."[86]

2) Niagara's second function was to control movement into and out of the territory west of Lake Ontario. By far the most practical route led to the portage trail around Niagara Falls. The confluence of waterways made this portage a funnel; a 326-foot difference in level between Lakes Ontario and Erie -- one-half the height of the entire Great Lakes system[87] -- made it a laborious task; and Canadian government policy made it a gate, with bars. Fort Niagara at the bottom of the trail, and Joncaire's outpost at the top of it, gave the French effective control of who used the route. Toronto guarded another, inferior

---

85 See BJ 8 February 1757, p. 85; Denny to Loudoun 10 November 1757, LO 4793.

86 Johnson to Amherst 31 July 1759, WO 34, vol. 39, 201-204.

87 Lake Superior is 602 feet above sea level; the lower end of Lake Erie 572 feet; Lake Ontario 246 feet. The Times Atlas of the World, V (London: Times, 1957), plate 99.

gateway from Lake Ontario to the interior. Possessing and barring these highways (and the Ottawa River access), the French had a strangle-hold on what went on in the upper country. What they by no means permitted to go on was any kind of English business. The isolation of the Great Lakes tribes from Johnson's diplomacy has been noted. Peter Kalm, the Swedish scientist, visited North America in 1749-50 and wanted to see Niagara. He found that express permission of the King of France "was required before a foreigner could be allowed into the areas where the French had a monopoly in fur-trading with the Indians."[88] He had to wait all winter while this permission was being negotiated in Europe. Finally arriving at Niagara

> the French there seemed much perplexed at my first coming, imagining I was an English officer, who under pretext of seeing Niagara Falls, came with some other view, but as soon as I shew'd them my passports, they chang'd their behaviour. 89

Genuine British agents were not allowed in the area at all. Predominating French influence over most of the western Indians resulted from strong roadblocks.

---

88 Kalm to [Swedish]Academy of Sciences 2 November 1749, Marti Kerkkonen, Peter Kalm's North American journey (Helsinki: Turun . . . Osakeyhtio, 1959), 111-115.

89 Kalm to B. Franklin, Ibid., 115.

3) Niagara's commanding position made it vital to the whole French military and political stance in North America. The metaphor most commonly applied to the fortress was "key to the upper country".[90] When it became French policy to add the Ohio valley to Canada's empire, Niagara became the lynchpin of ambition. Prior to its wartime strengthening, the officer who was left out on a limb in charge of Fort Duquesne called urgently for the repair of neglected Niagara -- "the key of all our southern posts, of which the enemy today knows the feebleness and the importance."[91] The British Commander-in-Chief wrote that Niagara was the only connection between Canada and the rich, disputed south-west towards Louisiana.[92]

4) Finally, Niagara had a task to perform in the defence of the settled part of Canada. As a secure base for troops, and a naval port, it was potentially in command of Lake Ontario, on watch from behind against any British attempt to thrust forces from Oswego down the Saint Lawrence river to Montreal. In the spring

---

90 "Le clef des Pays d'en Haut" (Bougainville, Mémoire sur l'Etat . . .", RAPQ 1923-4, 49).

91 Dumas to commanding officer Frontenac 14 December 1755, PAC, MG 24, L 3, vol. 3, 1435.

92 Shirley to Robinson 20 June 1755, NYCD, VI, 955.

of 1759, Pouchot was given discretion, if he thought the developing situation warranted it, to concentrate at Niagara all available manpower in the upper country. The 3000 men produced by such a sweep could then be sent to forestall British moves by meeting the enemy in the vicinity of Oswego.[93] Or it might be too late for that: "If sieur Pouchot at Niagara should learn that the enemy is in motion to attack the colony by way of La Présentation, he should order his vessels to cruise so as to intercept their convoys and cut their communication."[94] Thus Niagara, although 150 miles removed from the direct Oswego to Montreal route, was counted on as a strong post in the rear of the British, threatening and restraining them.

3. Oswego.

At the beginning of the war the British had only one major fortified position in all of the Lake Ontario theatre. Oswego was situated on the south shore of Lake Ontario almost directly opposite Fort Frontenac. With permission from the Six Nations and despite Canadian

---

93 Lévis journal April 1759, Casgrain, I, 174.

94 Montcalm journal 27 March 1759, Casgrain, VII, 502.

bluffs and protests, the New York government built Fort Ontario at Oswego (Chouaguen) in the 1720's. Thereafter the French kept a wary eye on the place, polite rivalry mingling with serious spying. When Léry was ordered to Detroit in 1749, and arrived en route

> at the fort of Chouaguen, the commandant sent word to inform me that if I wished to land it would be necessary to strike the flag which flew at the rear of my canoe. I sent back word that despite the pleasure it would give me to have the honour of seeing him . . . he knew our French flags never yielded. He replied that I was right and I disembarked. . . . The fort at Chouaguen consists of a stone house with an overhead machicolation [overhanging balcony with loopholes in the floor] . . . There is a row of houses at the foot of this little fort where the merchants live.[95]

Léry thought the fort very badly placed, with higher ground nearby in two directions from which an attacker with cannon could fire down into the British position.[96] The anchorage was well sheltered from the lake and within musket shot from the fort. The Canadian officer noted all these details with his engineer's eye and later produced several drawn plans of the Oswego establishment, for his own journal and the military files at Quebec and Versailles.

Léry reconnoitred the position again in 1754. On 19 May his westbound party made camp eight miles east of Oswego.

> The 20th, Monday, we got underway at 4:35 a.m. . . . We had our arms loaded so as not to be caught napping if the

---

95 RAPQ 1926-7, 347-348.

96 Ibid.; see also Impartial Account, 15.

> English offered us any insults . . . At 7:05 we passed in front of the English fort of Chouaguen, drum beating flag flying. . . . I did not notice any change in the fort . . . except a rafter and plank roof which they had added, on a little wall built to replace the machicolation of wood which was there then and which doubtless rotted and decayed away as it was not covered from the weather. . . . I counted nine small embrasures in the new wall on the side facing the river.[97]

The stone house, with walls three feet thick, was surrounded at three yards distance by a second wall, loopholed, ten feet high and four thick, with watchtowers at two of the corners.[98a]

During the campaign summer of 1755 the British made important improvements at Oswego, especially in the construction of a new fort -- meant to be defensible against small cannon[98b] -- on the highest ground in the area just across the river from old Fort Ontario. This was new fort Ontario, or Fort Rascal. It was nothing which a professional military engineer would

---

97 RAPQ 1926-7, 351-353.

98a Narrative of 1756 campaign, MG 5, B 1, vol. 10, f. 262.

98b Shirley to Robinson 19 September 1755, Gipson, VI, 157.

find pleasing. Its outworks were badly laid out,

> the flanks of the half bastions do not defend the opposite faces, the wings are enfiladed from end to end, the terreplain [sic] seen almost throughout, the north wing towards the lake [is] quite open, . . . [99]

According to one exaggeration-prone source, there were no loopholes in this rascally fake fortress, and one routine was to open the gate and fire the guns through that.[100a] The post was ninety feet square, with stone walls eight feet high, regularly laid out with Vaubanesque ditch and glacis. Another new earthwork begun in 1755 (Fort Oswego), on the other high spot Léry had noticed, was never more than partially completed.[100b]

Meanwhile, by the mid-1750's the original fort at Oswego was in bad condition. The barracks let the snow in, chronically scanty provisions encouraged a natural propensity of troops to desert, and firing the guns tended to shake the walls down.[101]

---

99 Patrick MacKellar, Pargellis, Affairs, 190.

100a "Information of Captain John Vicars . . . ", Ibid., 288-290.

100b Narrative of 1756 campaign, MG 5, B 1, vol. 10, f. 262.

101 "Information of Captain John Vicars . . . ", Pargellis, Affairs, 288-290.

Strategically, the weakest feature of the works at Oswego was not the insufficiency of the new forts, nor the crumbling age of the old one, but the fact that the position was beyond the reach of dependable communication with securely-held American territory. A British strategist set forth in 1757 his explanation of how

> the waters of this country hold the imperium of it, that whoever are possessed of these waters must command the country; that the French . . . are in actual possession of that command and consequently command the service of the Indians. 102

Holding the waterways, the French found it easy to build up forces for a push at any of their outposts. Indian benevolence transmitted their influence far beyond the walls of forts. "It does now appear," he sadly concluded, "that the French have easier access to our outposts than we have ourselves and could consequently take them when they please. . . ."[103]

This much was true: the French with a minimum of effort could make it very expensive for the British to sustain the Oswego position. During 1755-1756 they conducted Canadian-style guerilla warfare on the lengthy communication route from Albany, sometimes putting a

---

102 Pownall to General Napier 4 September 1757, WO 34, vol. 25, 31-34.

103 Ibid.

complete halt to the movement of British men and supplies.[104] Proceeding towards Lake Ontario in August 1755, General Shirley wrote,

> There is the greatest reason to expect that [the French] will use their utmost efforts to harass and cut us off in our passage before our arrival at Oswego, as they did General Braddock on his march to Fort Duquesne. 105

The next spring Oswego seemed "in a tolerable enough situation. . . shall do well enough this summer if the French don't plague our provision batteaux too much."[106]

The two principal results of the general Canadian control of Oswego's area were that the garrison there was sometimes half-starved for interrupted provisions and munitions,[107] and morale plunged disastrously. Troops stationed at Oswego had good reason to feel themselves cut off, strangers to security, terrified at the thought of a hostile Indian behind every tree -- or what could

---

104 And money. In the spring of 1756 a Lieutenant Elleryington was going along the portage with the Oswego payroll but ". . . your Majesty's petitioner having had intelligence that the enemy had cut off the communication and posted parties to intercept him with the money he stopped said officer from proceeding further . . . ." Craven to Barrington 24 September 1765, PAC, MG 12, B, WO 1, vol, 6, 329-336.

105 Shirley to Johnson 4 August 1755, John A. Schutz, William Shirley, (Chapel hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1961), 210.

106 Ibid., 231.

107 E.g., Jack Shirley to Governor Morris 11 and 18 September 1755, Ibid., 214.

be worse, a Canadian in Indian regalia. They deserted in droves. "Fatigue of duty through frequent alarms" was blamed for shattered discipline.[108]

Through persistence and acceptance of the risks, the British were able in 1756 to supply Oswego with a good store of food and munitions. In weaponry it was then the most formidable fort in the theatre, with 55 cannon, 14 mortars, five howitzers and four dozen swivel-guns, plus tons of gunpowder, round shot and musket-balls, and other gear in similarly copious proportions. There was also a supermarket worth of food, and 1300 defenders.[109a] Still, an official report on its condition in early August said the post was in a bad state.[109b] It had a bad case of nerves. Shaky men surrendered the jerry-built fortress-complex after less than two days of softening-up by Montcalm's besieging force. The general French sway over the surrounding territory had made the isolated post of Oswego soft, long before direct action was taken to topple it.

The fall of Oswego was the most important event of the western war prior to 1759. The event dislocated

---

108 Shirley to Shirley to Abercromby 28 June 1756, Ibid., 236-237. Léry journal, RAPQ 1926-7, 410-404.

109b Abercromby to Loudoun 3 August 1756, Schutz, 236-237.

109a Basic provisions for 3000 men for 2 years. There were about 1620 prisoners taken, but this number included 300 non-combatants -- workers, servants, merchants, wives and children. PAC, MG 4, A 1, vol. 3405, pièce 108, 61; vol. 3417, pièce 239.

Anglo-American Indian diplomacy, and wrecked their aspirations of gaining access to the heart of the continent via the Great Lakes.[110]

It was to the tumbled ruins of deserted Oswego that the Chevalier de Longueuil led an embassy of seventy Canadians and forty-six domiciled Indians during August 1758. Their mission was to hold a conference with Iroquois leaders there, appeal for their continued neutrality, and sweeten the appeal with a generous distribution of wine, provisions, clothing, muskets and ammunition.[111a] However, although the French were able to use Oswego like a piece of secure territory in the three years following 1756, they could never spare the resources it would take to establish and garrison a fort there. Yet one of the commonplaces of North American strategy throughout the Eighteenth century was that a fortification at Oswego was prerequisite for a firm alliance with the redoubtable Six Nations.[111b]

Possessors of a secure position at Oswego also had the opportunity of forming friendships throughout the whole Great Lakes region. "Independent of the serious prejudice that this fort causes to the trade of Canada," said an official

---

110 Johnson to Lords of Trade 25 June 1757, NYCD, VII, 228.

111a Roy, Léry, III, 7-19.

111b Shirley to Robinson 12 August 1755, Stanley, New France, 105. Butler to LeMaistre 28 January 1778: "The Six Nations urgently request that Fort Ontario should be occupied, as it gives easy entrance to their country & a safe retreat to them in case of attack." PAC Report 1886, II, 67. See also RAPQ 1927-8, 332.

Canadian report of 1743, "it also places the English in a position to form connections with most of the Indian Nations, always fraught with danger."[112] Canada had the means, however, which permitted her to minimize Oswego's impact without taking direct military action. Oswego swayed the Six Nations; Niagara, even more advantageously placed, had the potential to sway six dozen. French policy at Niagara -- and also at Toronto and Frontenac -- was to nullify the influence of British Oswego by means of trade regulation. The French tried to keep Niagara's prices attractive enough to western Indians heading downcountry, that they would not bother to go on to the British post. According to one report, the French Crown did not mind if this policy cost 30,000 livres annually. And they were so successful at this that in the British Indian Superintendent's view, the proposed 1759 reestablishment of Oswego would be useless for purposes of Indian trade, unless French Niagara were to be destroyed at the same time.[113]

Indian relations were part of the crucial issue of

---

112 Beauharnois-Hocquart dispatch 10 October 1743, NYCD, IX,1100.

113 Johnson to Clinton 14 September 1750, NYCD,VI, 592; and to the Lords of Trade 17 May 1759, NYCD, VII, 375-378.

influence and control in North America's heartland. Up to the 1750's, Canada had the preponderating influence in the centre of the continent. The Americans eventually inherited it on a more permanent basis. Their first step in this direction was possession of a fortified base at Oswego. The next was development of naval strength from the port there. That would give the British, Bougainville wrote, "the key to the colony [Canada] through the ability to be masters of Lake Ontario by means of a navy superior to ours."[114] The campaign of 1756 was therefore crucial for the French. The British had begun to reach for the key with determination: strenuously strengthening Oswego's land defences, and simultaneously constructing the ships that would give them command of the water. Among the loot seized when Oswego surrendered was a fleet superior to the French lake navy and just finished -- a snow for eighteen 9-pounder guns, a fourteen-gun brig, a ten-gun schooner, a skiff with twelve swivels and two bateau gun-boats.[115]

If the British could ever get to the point of

---

114 BJ 24 September 1758, pp. 278-279.

115 Léry Journal, RAPQ 1926-7, 404.

turning a seapower key from a strong defended base on Lake Ontario, the road was then unlocked for them in two directions. They could attempt to seize Canada's Great Lakes hinterland, or else attack the heart of New France by striking Montreal. This two-fold potential was the significance of Oswego as one of the fortified positions in the Lake Ontario theatre of operations.

4. The Mohawk-Oneida route.

Besides the posts on the upper Saint Lawrence, and the forts that fringed Lake Ontario, one other group of fortified positions affected the strategic equilibrium of the theatre. These were the British posts on the communication route leading to Oswego from Albany. During most of the 1754-1760 period of hostilities, there were four such posts.

The furthest upcountry was Fort Herkimer, formerly a civilian establishment, hastily converted to military purposes after the French capture of Oswego.[116a] One hundred eighty miles east of Oswego, Herkimer marked the western edge of white settlement, which was creeping up the Mohawk River valley until halted by the

---

116a Leased under requisition by the British Army for an annual rent of 25 pounds, from John Jost Herkimer, who became sutler to the garrison. There were usually 100-150 men stationed there. Canedy, 190-191.

war.[116b] Situated on the Mohawk's south bank, it was a three storey stone house with port holes in each storey and in the basement. In 1757 it had a few small pieces of cannon upstairs. A ditch six feet deep and seven across surrounded the building, with a palisade of stakes set along its inner edge. Behind the palisades was a parapet of earth.

> The four angles of this parapet, which is at the back of the ditch, form, as it were, four little bastions that reciprocally flank each other. . . . There are two doors to the large building; the one at the North is a small swing door. It is used only in going to the river for water. . . . The large gate of the house is on the South side;. . . To go outside the palisades and ditch through this large door, you must leave the house to the left and turn to the Eastward. . . . The ditch has not been excavated at that point. The earth serves as a bridge and road. There are palisades to the right and left, on both sides of the way, the whole width of the ditch. Outside the ditch is a. . . gate. There is no other barrier nor chevaux-de-frise in front. 117

Twelve miles down stream, also on the south bank, there was a fort established at the site of the Mohawk village of Canajoharie. It was a "square of four bastions of upright pickets. . . fifteen feet high, about one foot square, with port-holes inserted from distance to distance,. . .[and] a stage all round to fire from."[118]

116b Belestre's "Itinerary from the mouth of the river Chouegen in Lake Ontario to Lake Oneida. . .", NYCD, X, 676-677.

117 Ibid., 675-676.

118 Ibid., 676-677.

Inside the 400-foot perimeter of the enclosure were sheds for stores and barracks. There were a few light cannon, but no ditch. During the emergency of November 1757 -- when a Canadian ransacking expedition led by the Marine Officer François-Marie Picoté de Belestre reached the area -- the commandant of Canajoharie reported some improvements in the post.

> Upon our first Arrival we turn'd a stream into the Fort & dug a large Cestern to contain the Water & as one of the Block Houses was entirely expos'd to a Hill We have, by Consent of the Indians pull'd down an Indian House & made a Blind before it, . . . 119

The next post was Fort Hunter, 35 miles on into thickly settled territory. Two documents of 1754-1755 which mention Fort Hunter do not mention any other fortified position between Schenectady and Oswego.[120] This site therefore seems to have been the most ancient and traditional strongpoint along the way, although its fortifications in 1757 were inferior to those of Fort Herkimer. It was a picket fort like Canajoharie, but twice as large.[121] There were 7- and 9-pounder cannon; also a

> church or temple in the middle of the fort; in the interior of the fort are also some thirty cabins of Moack Indians, which is [their] most considerable

---

119 French to Rollo 13 November 1757, LO 4820.

120 Delancey to Robinson 15 December 1754 (reinforcements for Oswego, Fort Hunter and Schenectady), NYCD, VI, 923-924. Pownall map showing proposed frontier, 1755, LO 740.

121 NYCD, X, 677.

> village . . . There are some houses outside under the protection of the fort, in which the country people seek shelter when they fear or learn that an Indian or French war party is in the field. [122]

With a garrison of about 200 Fort Hunter's commanding officer promised to defend the post against 800 attackers for a week at least, provided the attackers did not have cannon.[123]

Across the river and three miles down was the private castle of Sir William Johnson -- the Mohawks' mentor for whose scalp the Canadian government had, since the 1740's, been offering a special price.[124] "Fort Johnson" seems to have been stronger than any of the forts operated by the government along the Oswego to Albany route. It was a stone building, three storeys high like Herkimer, surrounded by a palisade wall[125]

> on which are some small guns. In the same yard, on both sides of the mansion, are two small houses; that on the right of the entrance is a store, and that on the left is designed for workmen, negroes and other domestics. The yard gate is a heavy swing gate well

---

122 Ibid.

123 Osborne to commanding officer Schenectady 13 November 1757, LO 4822.

124 Clinton to Newcastle 9 December 1746, NYCD, VI, 314.

125 W.M. Reid, The story of old Fort Johnson (New York: Putnam's, 1906), 12.



Old Fort Johnson in 1
(Drawn by C. I. Gr[illegible] Jr.

> ironed; . . . from this gate to the river is about 200 paces of level ground ... . One hundred and fifty paces from Colonel Johnson's mansion, at the north side, . . . is a rise of ground on which is a small house with port-holes, where, ordinarily, is kept a guard of honour of some twenty men, which serves, also, as an advanced post. 126

Government troops and Johnson's fur-trade employees formed the garrison. "Whenever an alarm is given by the advanced Sentry," were Johnson's orders to an army lieutenant stationed there,

> You will order three Patteroes [very small cannon] immediately to be fired, that being the signal I have given to the Mohawks, and on their approach near the Fort, when challenged, they are to answer 'George' as distinct as they can, then to be admitted if practicable.
>
> . . . In case of any attack the 2 Bastions to be properly manned and the 2 curtains also, there mixing some of my People with yours. The remainder of my People to man the dwelling house and fight from thence, making use of the Four Wall Pieces and Musquetoons and of the windows fitted for them. 127

Unlike the forts along the upper Saint Lawrence protecting Montreal against attack from the west -- several of which seem to have been only spasmodically occupied during the war -- these posts on the British communication were going concerns. Although none of them was ever

---

126 NYCD, X, 679.

127 Johnson to Turnbull 9 August 1756, Reid, 25.

attacked, there was cause for nervousness. They were garrisoned year-round. The plan for winter quarters, drawn up in 1757 before the Belestre crisis, would have stationed 210 troops at Herkimer, 105 at each of Canajoharie and Hunter, and 30 soldiers strengthening civilian retainers at Johnson's.[128]

At the east end of the Mohawk river road from Lake Ontario were the fortified towns of Schenectady (Corlar) and Albany (Orange). Schenectady -- twenty miles downstream from Johnson's on the right bank -- was in 1757 a collection of about 300 houses,

> surrounded by upright pickets, flanked from distance to distance. Entering this village, by the gate on the Fort Hunter side, there is a fort on the right which forms a species of citadel in the interior of the village itself. It is a square, flanked with four bastions or demi-bastions, and is constructed half of masonry and half of timbers, piled one over the other above the masonry. . . . The entrance is through a large . . . gate, which lifts up like a draw-bridge.[129]

This redoubt was manned by two to three hundred men. It had cannon, but no ditch. After the fall of Oswego the British drafted plans for giving Schenectady much more regular and formidable fortifications. G. C. Wedderstrom, an army engineer, drew up in September 1756 two "Technographical"

---

128 Plan for quartering troops on the Mohawk river 30 October 1757, LO 6786.

129 NYCD, X, 677.

(Huntington Miscellaneous 15459,15460)

plans of Schenectady. One showed the old defences; the other was a design to fortify the town by replacing the pickets with a dirt rampart 12 feet high, with an eight foot ditch outside, and outside that a field work or ravelin for defence in depth. The plan would have required the moving of 67,238 cubic fathoms of earth, at an estimated cost of 10,085 pounds New York currency.[130] The British saved work and expense by tucking Wedderstrom's dreams in the file, and Schenectady faced the foe throughout the war in its old garb of frontier-style defences.

Albany was on the Hudson river twenty miles further east. Like Montreal it was a military headquarters from which the North American war was directed. Securely positioned well behind the front lines, it was not thought to need much fortification. On the forest side Albany was defended by a wall of pickets with no ditch. The area it enclosed was somewhat smaller than Montreal. There was a citadel for 300 men, armed with cannon, inside the city.

---

130 Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery, San Marino, California, USA, plans in the "Huntington Miscellaneous" collection, HM 15459, 15460.

> The fort lies higher than any other building on a high steep hill on the west side of the town. It is a great building of stone surrounded with high and thick walls. Its location is very bad, as it can serve only to keep off plundering parties without being able to sustain a siege. There are numerous high hills to the west of the fort, which command it. 131

"Nasty dirty Town," wrote one visitor, " streets of Albany the Dirtiest I ever Saw, & worse than Edinburgh in Scotland for little houses."[132]

The big flaw in this system was the long, unguarded gap between Herkimer and Oswego. During 1755-1756 the British tried to correct this. By early 1756 they had erected a small fort at each end of the four-mile Great (Oneida) Carrying Place. The westernmost, Fort Bull, was the smaller of the two. It was a picket fort of large upright stakes 15 to 18 feet high, with loopholes for musketry. At the Schenectady end of the portage Fort Williams was of similar construction but covered more ground; it had four cannon and a winter garrison of 150 men. Authorities in Quebec knew these depots were full of gear en route to Oswego and sent out a winter expedition to destroy them. Captain Gaspard-

---

131 Peter Kalm, quoted in Milton W. Hamilton, "Sir William Johnson" (unpublished typescript), 13.

132 Warren Johnson journal 1761, Ibid., 12.

Joseph Chaussegros de Léry's party attacked Fort Bull in March 1756. Fifty-five defenders were killed, and the Canadians destroyed mountains of foodstuffs they found stored under canvas. The post was entirely destroyed, in a series of blasts heard several miles away, when gunpowder in a warehouse caught on fire during the raid.[133]

Within four months Fort Bull had been rebuilt better than before --

> another pallisadoe fort . . . . its form, a regular square, with four bastions; each exteriour side, about sixty yards in length; it was surrounded by a wide ditch, communicating with the creek; a cross which, a very strong dam was made, by which means, the ditch, surrounding the fort, was kept full of water: for a work of its kind, 'tis the best constructed of any in our possession. 134

Fort Williams had been strengthened by means of an exterior ditch, and named after Major Charles Craven, who was directing the 500 troops labouring on the portage. A third post had also been begun midway along the portage trail near the height of land between the Hudson River and Lake Ontario watersheds.[135]

---

133 "Mémoire du Canada", RAPQ 1924-5, 120-121. Charly journal, Roy, III, 39-49. Léry journal, RAPQ 1926-7, 372-394.

134 Impartial account, 10.

135 Ibid., 7. Craven to Barrington 24 September 1765, PAC, MG 12, B, WO 1, vol. 6, 329-336. NYCD, X, 675, 827.

Then came the fall of Oswego. A British force under Brigadier-General Daniel Webb was dispatched from Albany to probe the fate of the fortress and the enemy's intentions. It was warned out of the country by the Iroquois, who reported the French were coming on irresistibly, thick as leaves. The Iroquois hinted that they were now turning quite friendly towards the conquerors of Oswego, the gateway into their territory.[136] These menaces from erstwhile allies, and the deteriorated situation, made the British decide to pull back and abandon the Oneida Carrying Place. In order to deny all possible military advantages to an invasion force the Commander-in-Chief ordered Webb to demolish the advanced bases at the portage and fall back to make a stand if necessary at Herkimer, edge of the white-inhabited lands. Thus after two years of war and worry -- and labour and expense -- the British in 1757 still had no fortifications upon the western two-thirds of the Albany-Oswego route.

During the same period the British attempted, with similar ill-success, to erect other forts in the Lake

---

136 La Pause, "Relation de l'Ambassade des Cinq Nations", RAPQ 1932-3, 331-333. BJ November 1756, pp. 67-68.

Ontario theatre which were not sited precisely on the waterway. For some time there had been blockhouses in the Mohawk villages close to Schenectady.[137] In 1754 a New York offical proposed extending the British military presence by building a fort in the Onondaga country, at the

> place where the Genl Councils of the 6 Nations are held -- a proper officer posted here and made a Sachem by the Govr of New York (who exercises this right) -- might have a considerable influence --" 138

General Shirley took up the idea, and

> assured the Six Nations he would do everything he could to protect them and their Allies from any danger they may apprehend from the French, . . . agreeable to my promise to [the Oneidas] I have ordered Justice Petri to engage a sufficient number of men to build them a Fort of such size and in such place in their country as is most convenient to them 139

All the tribes -- Oneidas, Tuscaroras, Onondagas -- occupying territory along the road to Oswego came under British pressure. They bowed to it, accepting the proposal for the English to "build and garrison forts near their several castels for the better protection of their old men,

---

137 E.g., at Schoherie (Abercromby to Loudoun 29 December 1757, LO 5144).

138 Jas DeLancey to comes [sic] for Trade 15 December 1754, PAC, MG 18, H 25, vol. 2, no. 33, p. 50.

139 Instructions to Johnson 10 December 1755, NYCD, VI, 1026.

wives and children in time of war."[140]

In strongly approving the project, Shirley was not thinking only of the Indians' welfare:

> As the building of defensible forts in these several quarters of the country of the Six Nations and garrisoning them with English, seems to be the most effectual means of securing them & their country to His Majesty against the attempts of the French I have ordered the work to be prosecuted with the utmost expedition. [141]

Originally, the plan was to arm these posts with eight small cannon, and make them capable of being defended by 40 men. Although their scale was cut down because of shortage of workers and material, construction was going ahead everywhere by June 1756. One of the forts built under this programme, at a large Oneida village south of Lake Oneida, was a picket fort 400 paces in perimeter.[142]

When the tide of western war turned in Canada's favour and Oswego fell, at least some of the new posts in the Iroquois villages -- like the depots on the Great Carrying Place -- tumbled with it. Speaking with the authority of victory and strength, Quebec requested the Six Nations to put their trust in an agreed neutrality

---

140 Shirley to Abercromby 27 June 1756, WO 34, vol. 46B, 1-6.

141 Ibid. See "List of Application for Stores . . .", May 1756, Pargellis, Affairs, 168.

142 NYCD, X, 675 footnote.

rather than English-built forts, and the Indians saw the wisdom of compliance.[143] Work on the posts in the villages stopped, and British garrisons withdrew.

Thus the situation by the middle of the war was that the British had no posts at all in the Lake Ontario theatre except those relatively close to Albany, within the settled confines of the lower Mohawk river valley. The attempts to fortify the Oneida Carrying Place had been so short-lived that Major Craven, who advanced some of his own money to get the work done in a hurry, was still trying -- nine years later ! -- to recover the costs from the London Government. Nobody believed the posts had ever really been erected.[144]

5. New projects.

Besides the fortifications possessed by both sides at the start of the war in 1755-6 there were new posts built during the course of the conflict. In some other cases strategical overseers picked out locations that were capable

---

143 Ibid.

144 He argued, " . . . There are now in Town several who were on the Spot & saw them," Craven to Loudoun 6 July 1763, LO 6339. See also LO 6139, 6335, 6345, and Craven to Barrington 24 September 1765, PAC, MG 12, B, WO 1, vol. 6, 329-336.

of conferring definite advantages if fortified, but for one reason or another the work was never undertaken.

One important new post built was Fort Stanwix at the eastern end of the Oneida portage. "It must strike every one who looks into a Mapp," wrote Brigadier-General John Forbes, "that a good large Fort is absolutely necessary there, for the Protection of all the [Mohawk] River."[145a] Two years after abandoning the carrying place, the British took a first step towards reestablishing themselves in the area by following this recommendation. The principal part of the work was done in July-November 1758. Desertion, scarcity of tools,[145b] the fact no start was made until mid-summer,[145c] and disagreements over the design, all[145d] complicated the project. When work was halted in November 1758 the fort -- named after Stanwix, its builder -- was "so far completed as to receive & put under cover <u>à l'abri d'insulte</u> of small arms (which is all we can accomplish this season) the troops that are intended to garrison it this ensuing winter."[146] The following year Fort Stanwix

---

145a Forbes to Abercromby 3[August] 1758, AB 501.

145b Stanwix correspondence July-September 1758, AB 443, 458, 547; WO 34, vol. 45, 24.

145c Montresor to Abercromby 21 August 1758, AB 554; Stanwix to Abercromby 5 September 1758, WO 34, vol. 45, 21.

145d AB 442, 458, 492.

146 "Secure against infantry attack", [Abercromby to Amherst] 30 October 1758, WO 34, vol. 46B, 32.

received its outfit of twenty-four guns (ranging from mortars to 12-pounders), and the London government decided it should be improved to the point where it could shelter 500 defenders and withstand a prolonged siege.[147]

Fort Ontario at Oswego was re-built the following year. An Anglo-American army that passed through to strike Niagara left behind 1000 men to secure the base that was vital to uplake communications. Before they had time to entrench, these troops were attacked by a 1700-man French force under the Chevalier de La Corne. They successfully resisted La Corne's assault,fighting with frontier unorthodoxy from within a circular barricade of provision barrels. When Brigadier-General Thomas Gage arrived in mid-August, his first concern was to approve the plans for a regular five-bastioned fort of log and earth construction. When the troops returned from Niagara there were 2100 labourers to work on the project, along with all necessary support services for them.[148]

By the end of September the ramparts were almost complete

---

147 WO 34, vol. 45, 65-68; vol. 46A, 25-28; vol. 53, 3 ff. Pitt to Amherst 9 December 1758, MG 18, L 4, packet 10, 5-7.

148 Amherst to Haldimand 29 July 1759, MG 21, G 2, vol. 1, 28-30. Gage to Amherst 21 August 1759, WO 34, vol. 46A, 87-90. Johnson diary 17 August and 15 September 1759, Doughty, Knox journal, III, 197, 217. Gipson, VII, 345, 357.

("The fort is in great forwardness", wrote Johnson).[149] October's work was carpentry inside the enclosure. They won their race against the declining season, and had liveable barrack-accommodation ready for the several hundred troops who garrisoned resurrected Oswego its first winter.[150] By mid-1760 the British were also guarding the section of waterway between Fort Stanwix and Oswego from smaller posts at each end of Oneida Lake and at Oswego Falls.[151] At this stage, of course, the end was near and the British were not so much concerned with their own territory's security as with building up prospects for the all-out invasion and occupation of Canada's settled portion.

There were a few sites along the south and east shores of Lake Ontario which drew planners into considerations of benefits that remained untested during the war.

---

149 Johnson diary 30 September 1759, Doughty, Knox journal, III, 224.

150 Johnson diary 6 October 1759, Ibid., 228.

151 Johnson diary 5 October 1759, Ibid., 227, WO 34, vol. 46A, 105.

One of these was Cayuga Bay (Sodus Bay) about thirty miles west of Oswego. The initial establishment of the American post on the lake first turned Canadian eyes in this direction. In October 1728 Governor Beaucharnois recommended to the French Government the erection of a fort there. He had visited Cayuga Bay in 1726,

> and found on sounding, that large ships could anchor and be quite safe there; that the harbour is like that of Louisbourg, with this difference only, that Louisbourg is oval, while the bay of the Cayugas is almost circular 152

The first purpose of such a post would be to forestall any plans the English might have for a similar establishment. Eventually, during a future war, it could be used as an advanced base from which Oswego could be captured. Versailles, however, was trying to restrain the cold war. The reply was, that the

> King will not have any establishment at Cayuga; that at Niagara has called forth that built by the English at Choueguen. If one were made at Cayugas Bay, the English would make one elsewhere. 153

Oswego's existence continued to suggest to Canadian military men the possibility of limiting its sphere of influence by building a French post nearby. In 1749 G.-J. de Léry wrote to the Governor from Niagara.

---

152 Beauharnois - Daigremont dispatch 1 October 1728, NYCD, IX, 1011-1013.

153 Ibid.

> It would be possible to find on the south side of Lake Ontario some advantageous location which [if we occupied it] would diminish the territory which the English have on the Lake, and also prevent them from making any new fortifications which they might be planning themselves.154

Returning towards Montreal that fall, Léry coasted the south shore and noted two likely spots for a French fort. Cayuga Bay was one of them; the other was at the foot of the "rivière Cascouchiagon" about 40 miles east of Niagara (halfway along to today's Rochester, New York). He thought the French

> could make an establishment here. There is a great waterfall in the river, but the Indians of the Five Nations have made a road by which they portage alongside the fall. 155

The British apparently intercepted some of Léry's recommendations. In October 1749 the Governor of New York wrote to England

> What I think of the greatest consequens [is] that the French engineer proposes building a Fort on the south side of Ontario lake to intercept the trade of Oswego, where the King has a garrison on that lake for supporting the trade of this province. No Fort can be built anywhere on the south side of Ontario lake but on the lands belonging to the five Nations who by the Try of Utrecht are declared subjects of Gt Bn, . . . [but] as things now stand should the French attempt to erect any Forts ----on the south side of that Lake

---

154 PAC, MG 18, H 25, vol. 2, no. 33, p. 35.

155 Léry journal 13 and 14 September 1749, RAPQ 1926-7, 346-347.

> it may not be in my powers to prevent it.[156]

When trouble began in the Ohio valley, New York authorities strongly advocated the occupation and fortification of a second Lake Ontario site.

> The Colony of New York has long . . . projected the building forts, both at Niagara and Tierondequat [Rochester] which last place, extremely well situated for a port and proper for commanding the navigation of the Lake, was purchased long since by that Province with this view.[157]

The British Board of Trade concurred in this recommendation.[158] In some British planning for 1755, this potential post was seen as an advanced base for attacking Niagara.[159]

However, the British had more than they could handle trying to strengthen Oswego for war. As for the French, they did not even hold Oswego when they captured it. After a British force passed through there in 1758 on

---

156 Lieutenant-Governor Clinton to [Commissioners] for Trade 17 October 1749, MG 18, H 25, vol. 2, no. 33, p. 34.

157 Dunk Halifax, "Representation to the King . . . ", NYCD, VI, 918-920.

158 Ibid.

159 Pargellis, Affairs, 38-39. For French fears that the British might be erecting something at Cayuga Bay in the spring of 1755, see Governor Duquesne's report of 25 June 1755, MG 1, C 11 A, vol. 100, 20.

the raid that destroyed Fort Frontenac and placed both Montreal and Niagara in jeopardy, French attention again turned to Ontario's southern coast and they bewailed their lack of foresight.

> We would not be in these critical circumstances, if, after taking Oswego, . . . we had built on the location of Fort Ontario or at Cayuga Bay, or at least at Niaouré Bay a post capable of holding five hundred men, as was several times proposed; . . . [160]

The other area where fort-building improvisations and plans proliferated was the upper Saint Lawrence River. British successes in 1758 and 1759 made an attack on Montreal from the west a more practical proposition than it had previously been. First Frontenac and then Niagara were taken from the French, leaving them with no secure footing anywhere on Lake Ontario. Their lake fleet was destroyed. These events caused New France to look to the arrangements on the upper river.

By the early summer of 1759 three fortified positions, clustered around the head of the rapids, feebly guarded Canada's west gate. There was Fort La Présentation dominated by nearby heights. At Pointe-au-Baril

---

160 BJ 1 September 1758, pp. 266-267.

(Maitland, Ontario), eight miles upstream from La Présentation, a shipyard -- established in the autumn of 1758 to substitute for the facilities lost in the destruction of Frontenac -- had evolved into a starshaped post covering six acres. It was only a palisade of sharpened stakes ten feet high, with barracks and stores-sheds inside and ship-building carried on up against the east wall outside.[161] The French also made entrenchments on Ile-aux-Galops -- six miles below La Présentation -- in the spring of 1759, and installed a battery of six cannon there.[162]

This multiplication of positions was the result of hasty improvisation imposed upon the French by the deteriorating course of the war. In June, a concentration was ordered. Pointe-au-Baril and La Présentation were evacuated; only Ile-aux-Galops was held -- in some strength, as it inherited the men and equipment of the other posts[163] -- to guard against the still unlikely chance of a British thrust

---

161 Montcalm journal 28 April 1759, PAC, MG 18, K 8, vol. 1, 517. Pouchot, I, 141. E. Green, "Corvettes of New France", Ontario Historical Society Papers, XXV, 29-38. Ruth McKenzie, Leeds and Grenville: their first two hundred years (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1967), 4-5.

162 Montcalm journal 28 April 1759, PAC, MG 18, K 8, vol. 1, 517.

163 Montcalm journal 28 April and 18 June 1759, Ibid., 517, 535-536. Pouchot, I, 227-229.

downriver. Such a movement, however, became less unlikely when Niagara was taken. The news caused a "considerable sensation"[164] when it reached Quebec on 9 August. "There was now the fear that the enemy might penetrate by the rapids all the way to Montreal; this proposition seemed so crucial that the Chevalier de Lévis left in haste the same night"[165] to make an inspection tour of the defences towards Lake Ontario.

Lévis arrived above the rapids on 19 August, and spent two weeks setting affairs in order. After a rapid reconnaissance as far as Frontenac, he chose a tiny island in the middle of the river four miles below La Présentation as the best site for a more ambitious fortification than had yet been attempted in the area. This was Fort Lévis on Ile Royale (now Chimney island); less vulnerable to beach assault than Ile-aux-Galops, by virtue of its very small area. In a solemn ceremony, Lévis had Father Picquet bless the first stone of the new fort, then held a council with the Indians of the vicinity. "We are aware," the Indian priestess informed him in her official oration, "that you have come to defend us and to die with us".[166]

---

164 Lévis journal, PAC, MG 18, K 8, vol. 12, 147ff.

165 Anonymous, "Campaign of 1759", Ibid., vol. 13, 170.

166 H.-R. Casgrain, Montcalm et Lévis (Quebec: Demers, 1891), II, 185-186.

This may not be thought the most hopeful note on which to inaugurate a new fortress on a failing front, but the builders were not discouraged. In mid-September Fort Lévis' commandant wrote that the guns had been safely transplanted from Ile-aux-Galops; he felt confident that if the British came they would find the new island a "tough bone to gnaw on".[167]

When completed in July 1760, Fort Lévis was an irregular hexagon with a perimeter of 650 feet, occupying about half of the island's total area. Inside the earthen enclosure were several wooden barracks and magazines. The fort's rampart, eighteen feet high, was surrounded by a wet ditch thirty feet wide and twelve deep. An additional wall was built all around the island's edge, described by its designer as

> an epaulment, four feet in thickness of earth, taken mostly from the bed of the river, the island itself being only about two feet above the water around the border. An abattis of branches was placed upon the outside of this epaulment, and extended out as far as possible into the water, to prevent boats from landing. At the point of the island this epaulment was terminated by a redoubt of timbers, laid piece upon piece and pierced for five cannon. 168

---

167 Chevalier de Beauclair (Captain, La Sarre) to Lévis 15 September 1759, PAC, MG 18, K 8, vol. 9, pièce 101.

168 Pouchot, I, 238-239.

This fort -- the whole river within range of its guns -- was certainly much more capable of controlling traffic coming down from Lake Ontario than any previous French fortification on the route. The British when they invaded from the west in 1760 did not dare leave Fort Lévis intact in their rear; it cost them a week's time to lay siege and batter it into submission.[169]

One final upper Saint Lawrence site which the French considered fortifying was Coteau du Lac. La Pause in 1759 noted how very advantageous a fortification at this position -- fifty miles above Montreal on the north shore -- could be, especially since it could be strong and effective and still occupy only a little space, because of the configuration of the area.[170] Fighting against time with shrinking means, it was then vital for the French to find places which they could fortify quickly and cheaply. Léry ten years earlier had also detailed the advantages of this site.[171] No fortifications were actually built at Coteau du Lac, though, because of

---

169 Malcolm MacLeod, "Fight at the West gate, 1760", Ontario History, LVIII, 184-190.

170 RAPQ 1932-3, 370.

171 Léry journal 17 June 1749, RAPQ 1926-7, 338.

insufficient resources.

- - - - -

The forts in the Lake Ontario theatre served a variety of purposes. Some of these were common to all of them. The typical French or British post was intended to: 1) prevent or delay an enemy invasion of the settlements; 2) facilitate communications; 3) exert general control of its area; and 4) encourage Indian alliance through trade. In addition to performing these functions, the forts established right on Lake Ontario -- the most important in the region -- were 5) naval stations and 6) on occasion forward bases for attacking the enemy. Naval strength was designed to deny over-lake communications to the enemy. Frontenac was the build-up base from which Montcalm laid siege to Oswego in 1756. In 1759 Niagara was supposed to sponsor a French recapture of the Ohio valley. Instead, it was taken by British troops who staged and massed at Oswego. According to Montcalm, it was this feature -- that well-appointed fortresses facilitated passing onto the offensive -- that was the main importance of the fortified positions in the theatre.[172]

---

172 NYCD, X, 870-872. But see Pargellis who disagrees, calling these forts outposts, and specifically not bases. Military affairs in North America 1748-1765, introduction p. xiv.

Although these forts were vital to the opposing sides' strategic purposes, most of them were incorrectly sited and all, except Niagara, were very weak. This was generally true of fortified positions in all the theatres of conflict, and helps explain why the French command preferred to fight in front of their forts if possible, as at Duquesne, Carillon and Quebec.[173] Whenever an Ontario-area fort was attacked it succumbed, except for the Chevalier de la Corne's failure to dislodge the British from a makeshift camp at Oswego during 1759. They fell because the offensive side, convinced of the importance of fortresses, would not move to a siege until fairly well persuaded that it had the requisite strength to do it successfully. Montcalm undervalued these fortified positions when he wrote in 1758,

> A man cannot be conversant with the science of war, who pretends that the best fort of this country is capable of protecting a frontier, or who proposes to sustain such a fort by an army; . . . [174]

The high rank which fortified positions held in the minds of military planners on both sides, the events of the war, and Montcalm's own campaigns, show that while no fort permanently insured a frontier could not be breached, the system of

---

173 They prepared to do the same thing at Fort Frontenac in 1755-6.

174 NYCD, X, 871-872.

fortification permitted territory to be controlled with fewer men than would otherwise have been needed, and increased the apprehension and costly preparations of the other side.

Thus the forts in this region exerted an influence that reached far beyond their walls. The existence and reported strength of a post on Lake Ontario governed dispositions of men and materiel decided at Albany, Montreal, London and Versailles. Naval vessels were sailed from ports in England so that their guns and rigging could be removed at New York and hauled inland to increase Oswego's reach in trying to strangle Canada's western empire. Frontier Virginia, four hundred miles distant, was terrorized by guerilla parties that sallied from the secure entrepot of Niagara. As a result, politicians of that province wanted to concentrate their revenues on home defence, and did not contribute much towards the British grand strategy of carrying the war into the settled heart of New France.[175] In 1760 Montreal capitulated to an army based on Oswego 250 miles away.

---

175 AB 975. MG 18, N 4.

CHAPTER IV

FACTORS DETERMINING POWER AND STRATEGY: NAVAL STRENGTH ON LAKE ONTARIO

Seapower has two parts: the ability to pass men and supplies over the water, and the ability to deny sea-communications to the enemy. In the Lake Ontario theatre during the War of the Conquest, French and British military planners were very eager to grasp this two-edged tool. The first function of seapower, mobility afloat, was indispensable to them both. Everywhere in the Montreal-Niagara-Albany triangle the only feasible method of transport, except for small raiding or scouting parties, was by water. Both French and British had their own river-access routes into the Lake Ontario region, and throughout the war projects for movement, supply, feint and attack assumed a basic competence in the availability and handling of bateaux and whaleboats on the upper Saint Lawrence and Mohawk-Oneida lines.

On Lake Ontario itself such a competence could not be as blithely assumed. In large part, it had to be gained. Armed sailing ships, as well as smaller oared craft, were necessary. Strategists on both sides urged the acquisition of sufficient naval strength effectively to control movement on the lake. Whoever secured both the offensive and the preventive aspects of seapower, they reasoned, would inescapably possess the whole

of the Great Lakes basin. The importance they ascribed to this type of power can be seen in the ship-building programmes they undertook, and the frequent adoption, in military plans, of aims to destroy or diminish the enemy's lake navy.

Both French and British planners preached the same theory of lakepower's great importance, and followed the same methods of acquiring and employing it. Turning from theory to practice, however, it is evident that in the campaigns of 1756-1760, the naval strength that was developed had almost no influence upon the actual military situation. The planners' plans -- their unanswered claims that fresh water seapower meant western empire, as well as added security for the colony that controlled Lake Ontario -- proved to be dreamers' dreams. It is true that the nature of Lake Ontario made the application of seapower there a little different than on the broader salt oceans. On Lake Ontario there were no fleets of great warships and bulging transports; instead, a few miniature men-of-war, and innumerable small boats. Also, it was occasionally significant that in such a small sea, water-borne units could never be very far from land. (Like ancient Greek mariners, Eighteenth century lakemen often landed for lunch.) But these trivial differences did not in themselves invalidate the theory of seapower as applied to a land-locked sea.

After noting in detail the divergence throughout the war

between theory and expectation on the one hand, and hard, practical fact on the other, the question why there was this divergence can be put.

1. The theoretical importance of Lake Ontario seapower.

Canada first developed naval power on Lake Ontario in the last quarter of the 17th century. During the 1670's Sieur de La Salle constructed sailing vessels at Fort Frontenac to aid his aim of drawing the bulk of the northwest fur trade out of the Ottawa river system, and the hands of Ottawa middlemen, and onto the Great Lakes-Saint Lawrence route where he was trying to gain a monopoly.[1] The ships made it less costly to haul cargoes of trade goods towards the interior, and to take the furs out. In the 1680's Governor Denonville got advice from the Jesuits: "These good fathers had no doubt . . . that forts and ships should be made on all the lakes, to avoid the route by the Grand [Ottawa] River, so full of risk, and so hard."[2] In 1688 there were three ships on Lake Ontario. When the Iroquois became hostile again, the vessels could be counted on to sail securely and get supplies through to the French

---

1 W. J. Eccles, Canada under Louis XIV (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1964), 104.

2 Gustave Lanctot, editor, The Oakes Collection (Ottawa: King's printer, 1940), 28-29.

interior posts at times when convoys of smaller craft were being ambushed and intercepted by war parties.[3] The same ships which the French used "to awe the Iroquese in time of War, . . . [were employed] to convey Commodities to 'em in time of Peace."[4] In 1689 the French abandoned the lake, blowing up their forts and setting the three barques on fire. The advantages of having sailing craft on the lake had been well proven, however, and when peace returned soon after 1700 the tradition was continued of operating a few vessels from Fort Frontenac, chiefly for purposes of transport.[5]

When a shooting war with the British broke out in the mid-1750's, large claims about the efficacy of lakepower were made among the French. They said that empire depended upon it. Niagara's commanding officer in February 1756 called for supply ships to be sailed from Frontenac as soon as possible in the spring, for the sake of the French posts south of Lake Erie. Only timely reprovisioning would prevent the abandonment of all those forts, and thus the loss of the Ohio

---

3 Collection des manuscrits . . . (Quebec: Cote, 1883-1885), I, 563.

4 Stephen Leacock, editor, Lahontan's voyages (Ottawa: Graphic, 1932), 111.

5 See Lahontan's 1692 arguments in favour of fighting ships on Lake Ontario in Ibid., 135-136. In 1736 there were two French sloops on the lake, "navigated alternately by the same crew". Beauharnois and Hocquart to the Minister 12 October 1736, NYCD, IX, 1050.

by default.[6] He considered that Canadian expansion to the south-west rested squarely on control of inland waters. La Pause thought that the forts on Lake Ontario should be safe behind the seapower screen. "These ships alone, ought to have insured our security against the enterprises of the enemy, . . ."[7] At a later stage of the war British ship-building activity (on Lake Champlain) led Bougainville to the same general point -- the importance of lakepower in guarding the western empire.

> The English give us knowledge and examples which we do not know of or do not wish to profit from. The lakes and rivers are the only outlets, the only open roads in this country; . . . Should England commence to have a real navy on Lake Ontario, this navy, if we let them have a few more months, would chase us out of the Far West. How would it be possible for us to prevent the capture of Niagara, which is the key of it? 8

He appreciated the economy of seapower. Wielded properly, it could resist the enemy's first appearance in New France's frontier theatres, and thus prevent a dangerous build-up. Forward French seapower could stop the British from establishing on Lake Champlain or Lake Ontario the harbours they would

---

6 Duplessis Fabert to [commanding officer Fort Frontenac], PAC, MG 24, L 3, vol. 3, 1450.

7 "Mémoire et reflexions", RAPQ 1933-4, 151-153.

8 BJ 24 July 1758, pp. 246-247.

need to take aggressive action. "For this we have enough strength, but not to conquer."[9]

"If the lakes had been guarded by a considerable navy and some half-galleys," wrote La Pause,

> We could have prevented the enemy from chasing us out of them, and in case he did chase us from the lakes, with very few people we could have stopped him from penetrating in force: we would very carefully have managed our provisions and all the other necessaries so as to be able to sustain the war for a long time. 10

La Pause drew these lessons not only for the inland waters, but for all the approaches to Canada. Looking back afterwards, he thought that seapower properly developed and applied -- on the upcountry lakes and in the lower river between Montreal and the Gulf of Saint Lawrence -- would by itself have prevented the conquest. Not additional resources, but proper use of them in this way, would have made the colony safe, and "not one additional man would have been needed to defend the country."[11]

This is a second French theme in the estimation of lakepower. Fresh water navies not only held the hinterland empire, but protected the heart of the colony. It was after the British sacking of Fort Frontenac in August 1758 that

---

9 Ibid.

10 "Mémoire et réflexions", RAPQ 1933-4, 162.

11 Ibid.

French planners began to link up the Lake Ontario situation with the security of the settlements. In 1759 La Pause thought the British success at Frontenac could quite possibly be fatal for Canada, but not on account of the fortress itself. It was the burning of the entire French Lake Ontario navy he mainly mourned. The Frontenac fleet, though employing very few scarce personnel, had closed the western gateway into Canada.[12] Its destruction was "one of Canada's earliest misfortunes; it contributed a great deal to accelerate the colony's loss; . . . "[13] The strategical rethinking that was done in French army headquarters after that western catastrophe produced a strong stress on lakepower. One item of assistance for which Bougainville asked at Versailles, during the 1758/59 winter, was four armed merchant vessels to be sent in the spring. They would become floating batteries guarding Quebec, and could be cannibalized to bolster the lake navies also. It might be Canada's salvation.[14] Montcalm, whose emissary Bougainville was, had shown the same heightened estimation of lakepower in a September 1758 plan for the Lake Ontario theatre. Main jobs were the erection of a new

---

12 "Projet pour . . . 1759", RAPQ 1932-3, 369-370. Bougainville agreed the ships were the chief loss at Frontenac, BJ, 276-279.

13 RAPQ 1933-4, 151-153.

14 RAPQ 1923-4, 13-14.

fort at the head of the Saint Lawrence River, and the re-creation of the navy. He saw the new post as a forward base against the British, while the ships -- which were "works of urgency and pressing necessity" -- were to block the upper river and prevent possible invasion by British water-borne forces.[15]

For twenty-five years after the establishment of Oswego in 1727, the British built no ships there. They had no posts further to the interior needing means of communication. In 1755, while there was still no call for a lake supply service, ship-construction was begun. British planners had adopted an imperial view of seapower, and held that naval strength on Lake Ontario was indispensable to the overthrow of French influence in the Ontario area and the upper country beyond.

A few ships were a cheap price to pay for empire. "I am convinced," wrote a pre-war Governor of New York,

> that one large armed Vessel with two or three smaller on that lake would more effectually and with less expence defeat the designs of the French on the inland parts of the Continent, and their ingrossing the Trade with the Indian Nations than any other method, which can be thought of: . . . [16]

---

15 NYCD, X, 871-872.

16 Colden to Earl of Halifax 3 August 1754, Pargellis, Affairs, 19-21.

Under New York's prodding, the British Board of Trade in 1754 decided to urge the establishment of a second Lake Ontario port -- Tierondequat -- where "armed vessels, superior in strength and number to those the French may have upon the Lake [should] be forthwith built, to command the navigation . . . . "[17] Thomas Pownall described three preparatory measures which the British ought to take before getting engaged in active hostilities with the French in America. The first need was a solid Iroquois alliance; the second, fortified posts on Lake Ontario. His third item was lakepower -- "the securing the Dominion of LAKE ONTARIO for the present & laying a Foundation for the like Dominion on Lakes ERIE HURON & MICHIGAN."[18] These three features of British strategy for the Lake Ontario theatre were intertwined in every possible combination. Neither chicken, egg nor albumen seemed to come first. Iroquois friendship -- or at least their agreement -- was necessary for planting British bases (prospective naval stations) on Iroquois territory. Established trading posts helped cement alliances. If the British got naval superiority on Lake Ontario "the Enemy's Communication with their Southern Posts is cut off, Their Connection with the Indians of the Five Nations interrupted

---

17 Halifax to the King, NYCD, VI, 918-920.

18 Pownall, "Considerations . . . " (1755), Pargellis, Affairs, 165-166.

and we may in the Course of Chances possibly take Niagara."[19] A sufficient Ontario navy, plus the capture of Niagara, would confirm Iroquois alliance.[20]

Throughout the war, British strategists stressed lakepower as essential. Boasting the navy of seven armed ships he had created at Oswego, William Shirley in 1756 reminded the Lords of the Admiralty of the force's raison d'être:

> for securing His Majesty's just rights and dominions upon [Lake Ontario] and the southern country round it against the encroachments of the French;. . .
> Of what importance the maintaining the dominion of this and the other great lakes contiguous to it and of the whole southern country depending upon them is to the preservation of all His Majesty's colonies in North America; and how essential a proper naval force upon the lake Ontario is to the asserting of that dominion I need not observe to your Lordships who are perfect judges of this point.[21]

In fact, the British thought warships more important than properly fortified positions on land. London gossip said one of the reasons Lord Loudoun was dismissed as Commander-in-Chief in North America was his failure to build a navy on Lake Champlain. The first important British success on either of Canada's territorial fronts -- the destruction of Fort

---

19 Pownall, "Idea of the service in America for the year 1759", WO 34, vol. 25, 325-330.

20 Robert Napier, 6 September 1755, Pargellis, Affairs, 133-136.

21 Shirley to Admiralty 23 June 1756, PAC, MG 12, A, Admiralty 1, vol. 3818, bundle 6.

Frontenac in 1758 -- emerged from a plan whose first aim was to burn the French fleet that sheltered in the harbour of that Lake Ontario fortress.[22] Pownall, consistent advocate of lakepower, greeted the event. "By the destruction of Fort Frontenac, and the Naval armaments and Stores at Cadaraqui, the dominion of the Lakes, which sooner or later will be the Dominion of America is restored to the British Empire: . . ."[23] When Niagara was taken its first British commandant echoed earlier French worries: "without we have a superiority of ships on the lake it will be impossible for us to keep the post. . . ."[24]

No one adopted the idea -- that mastery of the lakes would bring in its train dominion of the continent -- more resolutely than General Jeffrey Amherst did. The most successful of British soldiers, Canada's final conqueror, he made lakepower the measure and pendulum of his campaigns. In 1759 on Lake Champlain Amherst was constrained "from a principle of prudence & conduct to wait until his vessels were

---

22 Warships more important than forts: see the employment of the men at Oswego, May-June 1756 -- all hands working on the vessels, none on the fortifications. Pargellis, Affairs, 188-197. London gossip in Calcraft to Loudoun 29 December 1757, LO 5140A. Bradstreet memorandum 4 January 1758, LO 6895.

23 Pownall to Under-secretary Wood 30 September 1758, NYCD, VII, 349.

24 Sir William Johnson to Amherst 31 July 1759, WO 34, vol. 39, 201-204.

finished" before pushing the attack.[25] Pondering a two-pronged invasion of Canada, in January 1760 he told Colonel Haldimand, "My design is to begin by having the superiority of the lakes, . . ."[26] When spring came, the commander at Oswego was to be extremely careful how he sailed his vessels, for if one of them happened to

> fall into the hands of the enemy, that would be one of the greatest inconveniences which could happen to us, as at one stroke it would give the enemy the superiority of the lake -- a mischief which we could not put right for a long time, and which would postpone us prodigiously [furieusement] in the operations of the campaign. . . .[27]

To some extent, then, Amherst and his planners shared the second French emphasis upon Lake Ontario naval power -- namely, that it contributed to (or could undermine) the security of Canada. But chiefly, the British saw lakepower as a link in the chain of empire reaching inland from centres of population and government. Armed sailing ships on Lake Ontario were a weapon and a carrier best suited to the nature of the area. In a 1759 document, Pownall weighed the military utility of Lake Ontario vessels against Canada's hinterland on the one hand, and against the Montreal-Quebec settlement axis

---

25 Mair narrative, PAC, MG 18, L 4, packet 64, 13-41.

26 PAC, MG 21, G 2, vol. 1, 38-40.

27 Amherst to Haldimand, written in French, 21 May 1760, Ibid., 56-57.

on the other. He reiterated the theme that lake navies were imperial in nature and use, determining who held the hinterland:

> As we now have so good an entrepot towards Lake Ontario as the fort at the Oneida carrying place; it is now in our power to attempt acting on that lake . . . . tho I do verily believe we shall never succeed to make an Effectual Irruption [that is, invasion of the Canadian settlements] by that Way, Yet . . . whatever shall be done on the Lake towards such an Attempt, vidt. taking Post at some Port on the Lake and Building Vessels, . . . will prove a most Essential point of Service, namely the gaining the Dominion of the Navigation of the Lake, . . . will not be thrown away but remain a chief Corner Stone in the Foundation of the British Dominion in America.[28]

2. Acquisition of lakepower.

How did the planners expect to acquire the preponderance of naval strength on Lake Ontario, upon which they set such high hopes? There were two methods: by building up one's own navy, and by attacking and diminishing the opponents'.

The chief way of building up a lake navy was through actual construction of vessels. Carpentry preceded seamanship. A factor in the choice of sites for defended establishments was the availability of timber fit for ship-building in the vicinity.[29a] When there was ship-building going on at Oswego or Frontenac, tradesmen and labourers were signed on in Canada

---

28 "Idea of the service in America for the year 1759", WO 34, vol. 25, 329.

29a This was one of the reasons Léry supported the establishment of La Présentation. Léry to the Minister 20 October 1749, Roy, Léry, II, 96-97. The chief naval

or the American colonies for a tour of duty on the inland sea. Properly manned, Lake Ontario shipyards could turn out a ship within four months if enemy action did not interfere with the schedule -- but it usually did! British work at Oswego in 1755-1756 was significantly slowed by the necessity of having almost as many armed guards as there were axmen and teamsters in parties that went into the forest for the raw material.[29b] At Pointe-au-Baril in 1758/59, the French built two ships to replace those burned in the fall of Frontenac. But they no sooner erected a frame for the keel and ribs than all other work took second priority to the construction of a defensive stockade, for fear of a British raid.

---

constructor of Canada during the 1740's and 1750's was Le Vasseur. Among his duties were the survey and protection of standing timber best suited for ship building. MG 1, C 11 E, vol. 11, 109, 141; C 11 A, vol. 102, 194.

29b For example, Montcalm's report in June 1756 that recent warparties had killed fifteen carpenters at Oswego and brought away three as prisoners. MG 4, A 1, vol. 3417, pièce 137, 8-9.

While construction of a hull was going on, heavy transport work was undertaken in aid of the projected vessel. Cumbersome gear which could not be produced on the shores of Lake Ontario had to be paddled and portaged up from Montreal or Albany -- especially canvas, iron for fittings, rope and cannon. The enemy could try to interrupt the flow of these materials, and did interrupt. But every item was needed if a fighting ship were to be turned out. In actual Lake Ontario experience, the warships of the 1750's first put to sea from six to eight months after their building began. That is, they entered service in the campaign season following the one in which they were laid down.

Once ships were in existence, personnel had to be found to sail them. Neither combatant had a well-organized system for having well-trained people in the right place at the right time. Ship's companies were a mixture of Atlantic coast fishermen, sailors lured or seconded from ocean-going merchant vessels, and volunteers with sea-faring background called out of regular army or militia units. "This amphibious kind of Service," said Pownall, "seems adapted to the provincials especially those of New York and Rhode Island accustomed to privateering and Batteauing."[30a]

30a Pownall, "Idea of the service in America for the year 1759", WO 34, vol. 25, 329-330.

A British publicist who eventually became Governor of North Carolina drafted, in the 1740's, an unusual sort of scheme for producing a lake navy. The marine aspect of Arthur Dobbs' "Proposals for the improvement of the British Colonies in America" -- which was never implemented -- concentrated on friendship and influence with the Indians. That, he said, was the secret of French success. Britain should copy it, befriending and christianizing the Indians, educating and intermarrying, and laying out cash to advantage the Iroquois. Then all the tribes would observe the benefits of a British connection. As alliances multiplied and were cemented, seapower could be a cheap by-product of diplomacy. Friendly Indians would become

> a powerful Barrier, betwixt us and the french in Canada; and would soon cut off entirely their communications with the lakes, and their trade and Navigation there [would] become precarious; to which end, they ought to be Immediately Instructed in the way of Raising Hemp, for Cordage and Sail Cloth, in the method of making Pitch and tar, and in ship building &c. in order to gain the Navigation of the Lakes; and they would Effectually protect any Colony we would fix in the Neighbourhood of the lakes;. . .[30b]

Another method of creating a lake navy was to do everything possible towards transferring Atlantic seapower upcountry. On neither the Saint Lawrence nor the Hudson-Mohawk system could ocean-going warships sail up to Lake

---

30b "An essay on colonies . . .", PAC, MG 18, D 4, vol. 6, 40.

Ontario. But some of the tools and skills of the oceanic marine were capable of being transferred inland. On hearing the news of the French fleet's destruction at Fort Frontenac, Bougainville sat right down and drafted a scheme.

> I have written a letter to Montreal to be shown to the Marquis de Vaudreuil in which I say that in his place . . . I would detain all the fishermen of the River and Gulf of Saint Lawrence whom I would make into sailors on Lakes Ontario and Champlain; I would even take upon myself, to fulfill the same objective, the holding for the winter of a few of the merchant ships now at Quebec; their crews, rigging and masts would serve for the navy on the lakes; I would at once order [built] at St. Jean and at La Présentation, xebecks, half-galleys and brigs; I would have assembled quantities of bateaux, birch canoes, and I would buy up all those privately owned; . . . 31

A plan that followed these guidelines became an important part of preparations for the next campaign. Bougainville was sent to France to ask for certain indispensable help if the colony were to be maintained in the face of increasing Anglo-American assault. Canada's minimum requirements were simple enough: provisions and munitions, a mere thousand reinforcements for the troops, and four large armed merchant vessels

---

31 BJ 4 September 1758, pp. 271-272. A xebeck is a Mediterranean type of craft: a small ship, three-masted, with overhanging bow and stern. A half-galley was single-decked, propelled by either oars or sails. A brig is two-masted, with square rig.

> to remain in Canada in order to fulfil the following two objects. 1) The ships . . . are necessary to defend the approaches to Quebec . . . .
>
> NAVY ON THE LAKES
>
> 2) A part of the crews could serve in the naval forces on the lakes. As we find ourselves now without strong positions, we cannot sustain ourselves except by superior guerilla warfare in the forests and by defending the lakes with a marine composed of stronger units than barges. Indeed, we are constructing on lakes Ontario and Champlain xebecks, half-galleys, barques, and bateaux gunboats, but to command and manoeuvre these craft there are neither officers nor seamen; thus it is essential that the four vessels requested above should be flûtes because this type of ship is built of sturdy wood and commanded by officers who -- although merchants -- are able, and are even experienced in the craft of privateering. This item, I repeat, can save the colony. 32

There were two sides to the question of gaining superior naval power. One way was to build up a fleet; but since the matter was one of relative strengths, the same end could be served by cutting down the enemy's force. As noted already, much could be done, around the shipyard and on the transport lines, to retard the development of hostile naval power. Although there is no recorded suggestion of using a forest fire for this purpose, it would have been a good idea. If the forests had been levelled within a six mile radius of Oswego or Frontenac, it would have seriously interfered with naval plans. Doubtless this tactic did

---

32 Bougainville memorandum, "Ce que la France ne peut se dispenser de faire pour le Canada", RAPQ 1923-4, 13-14. A flûte was a large, narrow-sterned cargo-boat of Dutch origin.

occur to some of the Europeans involved, although Indian allies dependent upon hunting and trapping forest creatures would have been dubious about it.

They tried ruses and traps. In July 1760, at Oswego, Amherst recorded that two French vessels were "both in sight in the morning and standing in to see what they can of our encampment." He was hourly expecting from Niagara two British warships more heavily armed than the Frenchmen, so he "sent out some batteaux and men close to the shore, to tempt the enemy ships to try to intercept them, . . . they declined the bait and sailed off towards Cataraqui."[33] Considering the Lake Champlain situation in 1758, Pownall declared the futility of entering into a ship-building race. Since the French had started out ahead of the British and owned a full naval arsenal at St.-Jean, they would be able to keep up their superiority indefinitely. Therefore he proposed as solution to the strategical conundrum, not the creation of a British fleet, but the elimination of the enemy's. "If a vessel was built & furnished out as a fire ship the French in their vessel of force would immediately attempt to sieze this which if the intended trap succeeded would effectually destroy their armed force."[34]

---

33 Cited in Louis de Cognets, jr., Amherst and Canada (Princeton, New Jersey, 1962), 286-287.

34 Pownall to Abercromby 24 April 1758, WO 34, vol. 25, 219-222.

A more straightforward method was to hurt the other side's naval strength by attacking its base. Strikes against fortified positions fringing Lake Ontario were secondarily attacks upon seapower based in those harbours. The timing of Montcalm's siege of Oswego was influenced by reports of the English getting near the end of their naval preparations.[35] His success averted immediate threat to French possessions, but a Canadian officer in the fall of 1756 regretted that the program of demolition had not included the filling in of Oswego harbour. "I fear new sprouts in that quarter."[36] The operation that resulted in Fort Frontenac's fall originated in proposals merely for a quick raid to seize back the vessels which the French had taken at Oswego.[37]

3. Employment of lakepower.

Both French and British strategists thus thought alike: 1) that possession of superior naval strength on Lake Ontario was indispensable for control of large areas of the continental interior, and 2) on the means of acquiring that strength. What were the functions they had in mind for

---

35 Léry journal, RAPQ 1926-7, 395.

36 Lotbinière to the Minister 2 November 1756, NYCD, X, 495.

37 Pargellis, Affairs, 314-316. Loudoun to Bradstreet 31 January 1758, LO 5503 and 5502.

freshwater fleets, that were supposed to produce such important results?

Firstly, a Lake Ontario fleet would be useful for the dull but essential job of carrying supplies and personnel.[38a] Niagara, in both French and British hands, was considered to be dependent upon its communications lifeline leading back to settled parts of Canada or New York. Upon secure possession of Niagara depended hopes of empire in the region of the western Great Lakes. It was thus a key matter to discover the most efficient way of doing the necessary logistics work to support this post.

In a 1754 paper, the Chevalier de Raymond worked out the advantages, on the Niagara supply line, of sizeable sailing vessels over smaller rowing craft.[38b] Schooners or barques were more expeditious and -- importantly -- more economical. In a typical year, Raymond envisaged about three hundred tons of supplies being dispatched from Montreal to the west. It seems reasonable using his figures and assumptions to think the annual cost of a bateau service carrying three hundred tons annually on Lake Ontario would have been between 15,000 and 20,000 livres. The cost of operating sufficient sailing vessels was only 7,836 livres. This was a worthy margin of saving. The support of a western empire was a much more

---

38a The four ships which the French had in commission in 1756 (see page 275 below) could together carry 260 troops at a time. Malartic journal 14 June 1756, MG 4, A 1, vol. 3405, pièce 108, 42.

38b RAPQ 1927-8, 351.

practical proposition if the most advantageous form of Lake Ontario transport were regularly used.

A second, more warlike employment for the ships was the logistics operation viewed from the other angle. A successful navy could stop the other side's communications. Fortresses could be starved, or an expeditionary force severed from its base. During the first part of the war these were British ambitions, while the French held ostensible command of the lake. La Pause calculated in 1755 that the fleet the British were building would be used against Fort Niagara's communications. The moves he was concerned to provide against were dependent directly upon seapower, and did not involve the British in hostilities against strongly defended positions or even, necessarily, with the French navy. If successful, they posed crucial dangers: "The upper posts will be in danger of collapsing all by themselves; and one should not doubt that the vessels which the English are having built are designed with some such view in mind."[39] Towards the end of the war the roles were

---

39 La Pause, "Projet sy les ennemis menaçoient le Languedoc", RAPQ 1932-3, 316-319. An interesting debate occurred in 1758 as to the best means of passing goods in small bateaux across a Lake Ontario on which only the enemy had sailing warships. Vaudreuil, planning the resupply of Niagara after Bradstreet's force had seized two French ships at Frontenac and destroyed the rest, thought the best way was to push convoys of 200 bateaux at a time along the north shore. Each convoy to carry 6-8 guns. Should British warships approach, the guns could be landed and quickly formed into an improvised battery to guard the huddling boats and drive the enemy off. NYCD, X, 869. Montcalm disagreed, opting to substitute a scheme that would accept a certain percentage of loss for the sake of

reversed; Lake Ontario became a British preserve, and it was the French who were plotting how the lake-lanes might be blocked.

Thirdly, it was thought that naval units could spot and prevent hostile expeditions. The ships of the Frontenac fleet should be kept armed, La Pause thought, and should be constantly kept at sea "in order to sustain our posts and to prevent the enemy attempting anything in this area."[40] Similarly, when their 1755-1756 building program gave them potential mastery of the lake waters, the British counted on the new navy to guard against a French approach to Oswego.

What occurs to the lay observer to be the most obvious employment of warships -- fighting each other -- was rarely contemplated by strategists who considered the role of the

---

the rest. Large convoys were too slow and if one were taken it meant ruin. Instead, "I shall form small convoys, but such as will follow each other without delay." Ibid., 871-872.

40 "Mémoire et reflexions", RAPQ 1933-4, 152.

Lake Ontario navies, and almost never done. There was one (accidental) meeting of the rival fleets in 1756 before the British had built up to their planned strength, producing an engagement in which one small British schooner was taken by the French squadron under Captain René-Hippolyte La Force.[41] Despite Amherst's keenness for a naval fight in 1760 after he was persuaded his ships had superior firepower, the only quasi-naval battle to occur was between several British rowing galleys and one of the French brigs.[42] Except for these two incidents, in all the campaign months in 1755-1756 and again in 1759-1760, when there were rival navies in existence on Lake Ontario, the two fleets never met but kept carefully away from each other. They sheltered in defended ports or ventured out for a quadrille while keeping the home harbour downwind for a quick retreat if needed. Since neither navy was ever so superior or well placed as to be able to concentrate strongly against its opponent, they agreed to shun each other. Both showed equal tenderness for the maxim that Bougainville attributed to English naval tradition: "Avoid combat when only on equal or slightly superior terms on the same principle that one gives one's

---

41 Broadley to Admiralty 26 September 1756, PAC, MG 12, A, Admiralty 1, vol. 1487.

42 Malcolm MacLeod, "Fight at the West Gate, 1760", Ontario History, LVIII, 184.

purse to any thief who demands it, even in a public place and within reach of help."[43] This timidity itself testifies to the importance with which lake navies were regarded: too vital to risk.

4. The futility of Lake Ontario seapower in practice.

In no respect were the planners of the western war more mistaken than in their steady faith that lake-power could be important. In fact, although both French and British tried to make naval strength on Lake Ontario a potent factor in the war effort, its practical effect was infinitesimal.

At the start of the war in 1755, Canada was the established seapower on Lake Ontario. The warships were based on Cataraqui, and wintered there except on the occasions when bad weather or bad luck late in the fall left them stranded at Toronto or Niagara.[44] In 1755 there were two French vessels, each of about sixty tons. These ships were

---

43 BJ, pp. 4-5.

44 E.G., the captured ONTARIO wintered at Toronto in 1756/1757. Pouchot to Lavaltrie 7 December 1756, PAC, MG 24, L 3, vol. 3, 1516-1517.

LA VICTOIRE (four 3-pounders) and LA LOUISE (six 4-pounders),[45] Two larger vessels to carry more powerful weapons were laid down in 1755 and finished early in 1756: LA HURAULT (ten 4-pounders) and LA MARQUISE DE VAUDREUIL (sixteen 10's).[46] That April, the Governor's orders to Fort Frontenac's commandant showed some of the tactical doctrine prescribed for the four-vessel fleet.

> You have attached the instructions for Sieur La Force, to whom I confide the commandment in chief of the [ships] . . . . Since I shall give directions to place a detachment of troops on these ships the commanding officers in this detachment have only this authority, to give orders to their men when to open fire with their muskets. The route, the manoeuvres, and the artillery of the ship, concern the captain only, and it is up to him alone to decide either to fight or to flee, . . .[47]

Meanwhile, the British were convinced that their challenge to French control of the Lake Ontario region could not be effective unless supported, perhaps spearheaded, by naval weapons. In conjunction with the dispatch of

---

45 Malartic journal 14 June 1756, MG 4, A 1, vol. 3405, pièce 108, 42. NYCD, VI, 729. Pargellis, Affairs, 20. Shirley to Admiralty 27 December 1755, MG 12, A, Admiralty 1, vol. 3818, bundles 5 and 6. Labrocquerie, "Carte Du Lac ontario", Department of National Defence photo CN-3403.

46 Malartic journal 14 June 1756, MG 4, A 1, vol. 3405, pièce 108, 42. Labrocquerie, "Carte Du Lac ontario". Loring to Cleveland 26 July 1756, MG 12, A, Admiralty 1, vol. 2045-2052. Du Plessis journal, 1756, RAPQ 1928-9, 220-221.

47 Vaudreuil to Lavaltrie 22 April 1756, MG 24, L 3, vol. 3, 1466-1468.

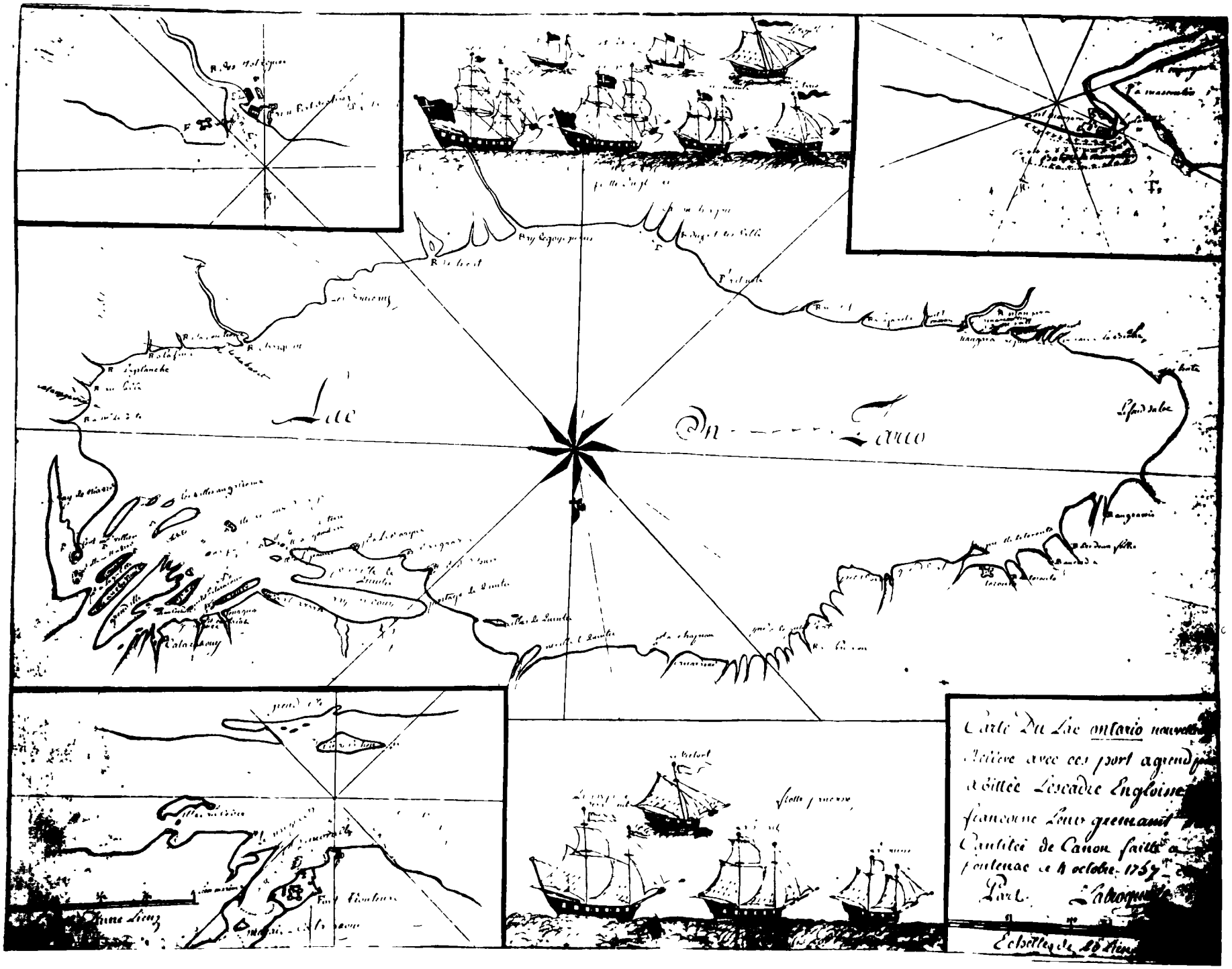
regular troops to aid Virginia, London ordered Commodore Augustus Keppel to be ready to provide -- from his Royal Navy squadron in North America -- the armament and personnel for two or three small warships on the lake.[48] A council of war at New York in April 1755 decided to build two 60-ton schooners, "each carrying four 4 pound Cannon."[49] These ships were the OSWEGO and the ONTARIO. They were finished by the end of August, along with two 25-ton sailing tenders (each armed with ten swivel-guns).[50] By that time, however, the British had received intelligence that new construction was underway at Fort Frontenac. The race escalated. In December General Shirley's war council decided to build three more ships for the Oswego navy, and to continue to more than match the French according to information received. They were determined to get naval mastery of the lake. The ships built under this programme were a 45-foot long sloop MOHAWK (twelve cannon and twelve swivels), a 60-foot long brig HALIFAX (sixteen cannon, twenty swivels), and an 80-foot,

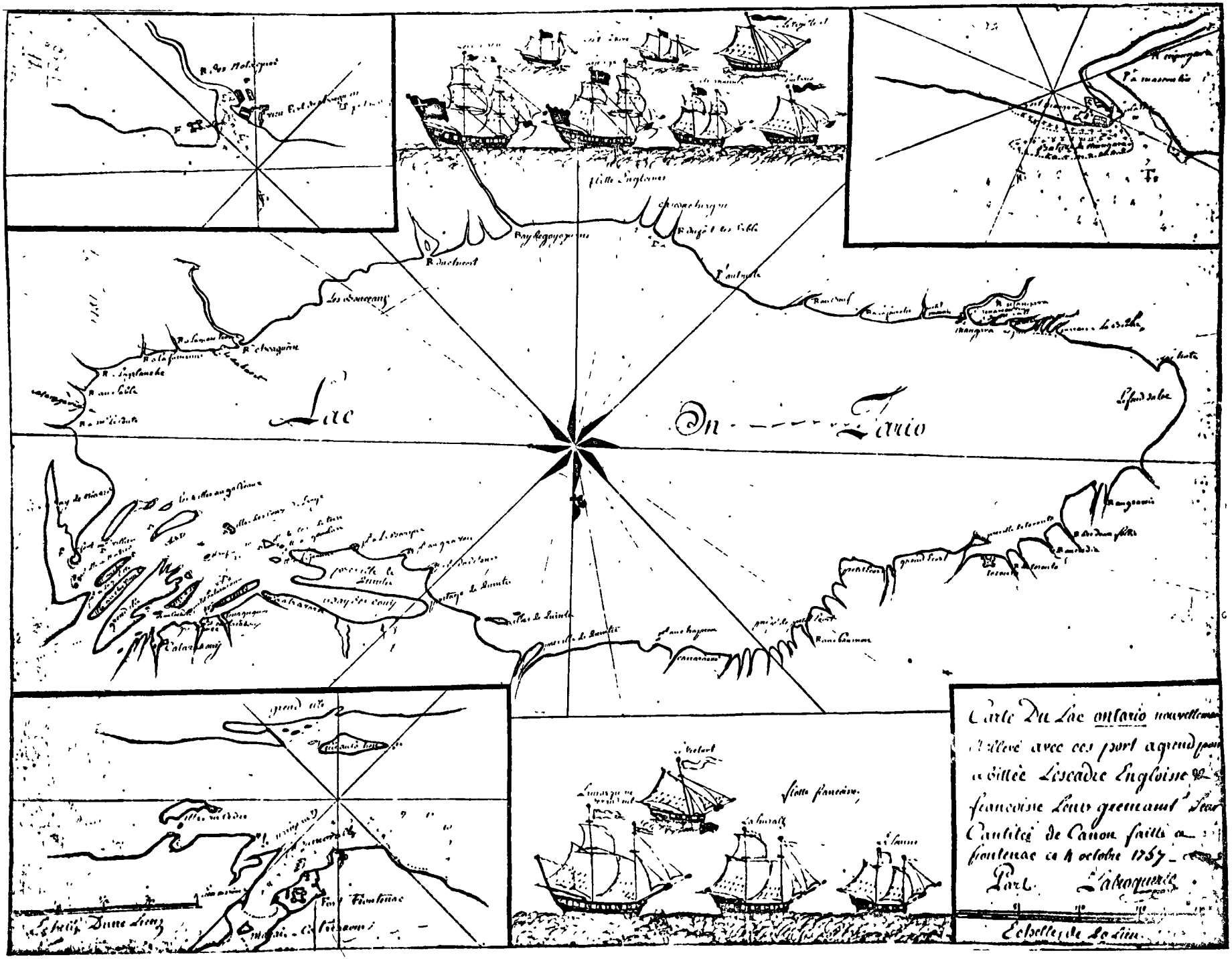
---

48 Pargellis, Affairs, 51-52.

49 Shirley to Admiralty 27 December 1755, PAC, MG 12, A, Admiralty 1, vol. 3818, bundles 5 and 6.

50 Broadley to Admiralty 14 January 1756, Ibid., vol. 1487. Shirley to Admiralty 23 June 1756, Ibid., vol. 3818, bundle 6. See also L. H. Gipson, Lewis Evans (Philadelphia: The historical society of Pennsylvania, 1939), 197.


Lac
Ontario
Carte Du Lac ontario nouvelle
Levée avec ces port agrendi
Escadre Angloise
Canons faite
Echelle de 18 Lieu


Lac
On------Tario
Carte Du Lac ontario nouvellement
levé avec ces port agrandi pour
y voir Lescadre Angloise &
françoise Leur grandeur Leur
Quantité de Canon faite a
frontenac ce 8 octobre 1757
Echelle de 20 Lieu

172-ton snow LOUDOUN (eighteen 6-pounders, twenty swivels).[51] When Oswego fell in August 1756, orders were on the way from the Commander-in-Chief to press ahead with construction of two more ships, one of them "as large a brigantine as the port would allow".[52]

The difficulties which the British encountered in carrying out their plans were typical of the hardships involved in trying to develop lakepower. Manning the ships was one big problem. Shirley explained to the Admiralty in December 1755 how very difficult it had been to get crews for the Lake Ontario vessels that year. Sailors would not come for Royal Navy pay, and hardly even for the higher rates of the merchant service. Since over a hundred new hands would be required to sail and fight the enlarged fleet of 1756, the problem was urgent.

> Therefore I would submit it to your Lordships Consideration, whether it will not be Necessary that 200 Good Seamen or more with proper Officers be sent from his Majesty's Navy, to be at New York

---

51 Shirley to Admiralty 27 December 1755, and 7 September 1756, PAC, MG 12, A, Admiralty 1, vol. 3818, bundles 5 and 6. Broadley to Admiralty 14 January 1756; to Cleveland 19 June 1756, Ibid., vol. 1487. After being captured these ships were re-named by the French: LOUDOUN became LE MONTCALM; HALIFAX became LE JEORGE; and MOHAWK was LE VIGILLANT. See Labrocquerie map attached as an illustration.

52 Decision of Abercromby's council of war, 20 July 1756. Loudoun to Webb 4 August 1756, LO 1414, cited in Stanley McCrory Pargellis, Lord Loudoun in North America (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1933), 164. At Oswego in the summer and fall, only 7 to 8 feet of water covered

> very early in the Spring; unless that be done, it seems impracticable to keep up the Vessels proposed on Lake Ontario. 53

The general did not get the regular ratings he wanted, but Captain Joshua Loring, British Navy, asked for and apparently received permission to recruit for the lake service from the transport vessels which he shepherded across to America in the spring of 1756. In June he was writing from New York, "There is about 100 Seamen sent up to the lake by the government here so that I hope with what men I shall be able to pick up here to get the LOUDOUN [last of the British vessels] to sea very soon."[54]

Stores and equipment were also hard to come by. It was not that British exchequer-authorities were not generous. When Shirley requisitioned thirty 6-pounder cannon and sixty swivel-guns for the 1756 building programme, the Admiralty approved it all, only altering the 6-pounders to 4's.[55] But despite administrative willingness, the normal and natural difficulties of moving heavy gear 3000 miles from British

---

a sand bar in the entrance. Broadley to Admiralty 14 January 1756, PAC, MG 12, A, Admiralty 1, vol. 1487. The French had better ports -- Labrocquerie's chart shows soundings of 18 feet in most of Cataraqui harbour, and a minimum of 42 feet at Niagara.

53 PAC, MG 12, A, Admiralty 1, vol. 3818, bundles 5 and 6. Broadley to Admiralty 14 January 1756 shows 98 officers and men needed for the three new vessels. Later one of them was re-designed a little larger, necessitating more crew. Ibid., vol. 1487.

54 Loring to Cleveland 25 March and 21 June 1756,

arsenals, over the ocean and the Applachian height of land to the undeveloped interior of North America -- with neither part of the route secure from enemy attack -- were considerable. In May 1756 Captain Housman Broadley, temporary admiral of the Oswego navy, was writing a thinly disguised grievance to the secretary of the British Admiralty. He had received a letter "with an order to be particularly careful about the goodness & the price of slops supplied to the sloop under my command which I shall take particular care whenever we are supplied with any to obey."[56] In August gear for the ships that were supposed to sail in June was still strewn all over the route: sails, cordage, pitch, tar, tallow, and "ocum" at the German flats, more of the same at Schenectady, and more at New York with some of the guns, carriages and ordnance stores.[57]

French depredations on the Mohawk supply line were partially responsible for the delay. They were also active nearer Oswego slowing down British preparations. The master

---

Ibid., vols. 2045-2052.

55 Shirley's 27 December 1755 and Admiralty minute on it, Ibid., vol. 3818, bundle 6.

56 Broadley to Cleveland 20 May 1756, Ibid., vol. 1487.

57 Loring to Cleveland 12 September 1757, Ibid., vols. 2045-2052.

builder at that post reported that he was

> very much hindered and put back in building these vessels on account of several of his carpenters and men killed and others drove into ye fort from their cutting the timber in the woods which seems to be the greatest difficulty they have at the present to encounter. but that there is another regiment just arrived at Oswego which will be able to support them in getting their timber and in every other shape in such a manner that he does not doubt that he shall be able to launch them by the middle of July. 58

However, this schedule could not be kept. Two of the new ships were launched on 3 July. It took almost another four weeks to rig and outfit them. At the end of the month -- with the campaign season half gone and everything in short supply -- Captain Broadley had to rearrange just about all of his tiny command in order to get to sea.

> As there were no officers come up for the new vessels I thought it was for the good of His Majesty's service that we should appear out on the lake as strong as we could with what we had got; for which purpose I went on board the brig with the OSWEGO's people and took on board her fourteen 6 & 4 pounders giving the ONTARIO six 4-pounders and the new sloop four 4-pounders and the two 3-pounders of which I ordered my lieutenant Mr. Deane to take the command. 59

A couple of civilian sea-goers from New York were given on-the-spot naval commissions. Two weeks later, the last and largest of the new British vessels had still not sailed,

---

58 Loring to Cleveland 21 June 1756, Ibid.

59 Broadley to Admiralty 26 September 1756, Ibid., vol. 1487.

and was only partly rigged, when Oswego was attacked on 13 August.[60]

Employment of their naval weapon was even more frustrating to the British than its creation was. On one of its first reconnaissance cruises in late June, Broadley's flotilla had the misfortune to be worsted in a brief engagement with the French out of Cataraqui. One small British schooner was taken. "A petty victory", wrote Bougainville, "like all those achieved in this country, but interesting because of the impression of superiority that it gives our Indians."[61] On 2 July the British were chased into port again by two Frenchmen reported as 14-gunners, "and two others that was at such a distance that [Broadley] could not tell what force they were of but . . . when we come to get ye new vessels afloat we [should] be able to give a good account of them."[62] On 2 August Broadley had five ships at sea but had to terminate the voyage early and return to Oswego because green wood in the new vessels was leaking badly, soaking the powder magazines. The seams were restuffed. On 6 August

> on running to Oswego was taken with a violent thundersquall close to the harbour which after my getting through the narrows not being able

---

60 Ibid. See also Shirley to Admiralty 7 September 1756, Ibid., vol. 3818, bundle 6.

61 BJ 2 July 1756, pp. 4-5. The vessel is described in Vaudreuil to the Minister 5 July 1756, MG 1, C 11 A, vol. 101, 41.

62 Loring to Cleveland 26 July 1756, PAC, MG 12, A, Admiralty 1, vols. 2045-2052.

> to carry sail drove me ashore on the east side of the harbour which obliged me to get my guns and part of my ballast out to get her off again which we did the next morning but as there was a swell rose soon after she went ashore which occasioned her striking upon the rocks. 63

It was not until the evening of 12 August that this valuable ship was repaired fit to sail again.

Meanwhile, the vessels that were still serviceable tried to guard against the French move which seemed imminent -- a crossing of the lake by a large army to besiege Oswego. Considering the theatre and the condition of the enemy, the Admiralty calculated that Broadley had quite impressive naval strength at his disposal. It should have been sufficient to meet and report, to beset and perhaps break, any such French attempt. But during the first two weeks of August, enemy forces did exactly what was apprehended of them. How could they have? Captain Broadley's superiors pointedly asked him to explain.

The British seaman carefully sketched some of the limits on the efficacy of seapower on Lake Ontario, of which the strategists on both sides had apparently not taken good account.[64] His main point was, the Oswego navy had done all it reasonably could be expected to -- which was not much!

---

63 Broadley to Admiralty 26 Sept. 1756, Ibid., vol. 1487.

64 See Broadley's letters in PAC, MG 12, A: Admiralty 1, vol. 1487; and Box 63, Admiralty supplementary No. 11.

From the end of July the British fleet, or major units of it, indeed made frequent lookout sweeps of eastern Lake Ontario. On 5 August Lieutenant-Colonel James Mercer, the commanding officer of Fort Ontario, communicated a report that 30 French bateaux had been seen landing twenty miles to the eastward, and asked the navy to check. Broadley wrote that he did check as well as he could without running his ships on shore. When he saw nothing and the unseasoned ships kept taking in too much water, he returned to harbour. He explained, to Colonel Mercer's satisfaction,

> that it would be impossible for the vessels to cruise in the bottom of the bay to intercept any batteaux that might pass along the bottom of it; they coasting close along the shore; . . .
> Their Lordships will see . . . that the Marquis of Montcalm was on his way (from the intelligence Col. Mercer received) before the vessels went into the harbour though had we been out we could not have prevented their coming; the enemy having taken precaution not to cross the lake; but to coast with their batteaus close to the shore round the bottom of it; where we could not have come near them; and landed in the night in a place where it's impossible to have kept vessels cruising upon and close in shore, . . . 65

On 11 August, investigating reports of French shipping and an encampment only four miles from Oswego, two British warships were driven off by French cannon fire from the land.[66] Since

---

65 PAC, MG 12, A, Box 63, Admiralty supplimentary No. 11.

66 Ibid., vol. 1487. Léry journal 11 August 1756, RAPQ 1926-7, 398.

the French artillerymen had a steady platform for their weapons, they were bound to have the best of any such exchange with rocking vessels.

Thus the shallowness of the lake in some parts, the long reach of sand bars, and the inability of seamen without charts to gauge these dangers rationally, made the British caution-cruises fruitless.[67] As an ocean, Lake Ontario was a very tiny one, hence the water-weapons were not independent of the land. Cramped seamanship meant that no matter which way the wind blew, a lee shore was never far off, and land-based hostile batteries might be just as close. In these conditions, the task of actually exerting marine control of the lake was much more easily contemplated than performed.

The main event of the western war's early years -- the fall of Oswego -- shows the futility of seapower very clearly. The fleet having failed to interfere with the French army's approach, the British command faced up to the worst. They knew, on 12 August, that the French were entrenching just east of new Fort Ontario, and would soon open up with

---

67 Concerning charts, Labroquerie's map shows that the French had good, detailed knowledge of the lake. The British had much less information. Lieutenant Spendelow, ordered to Oswego in 1755, was told "to make an Accurate Survey of the Lake and adjacent Country, and to continue on this Service till further order". Pargellis, Affairs, 51-52. Concerning navigational difficulties in general, one French convoy of 1756, which needed only 30 hours sailing time to make the passage from Niagara to Frontenac, nevertheless consumed 8½ days doing so. The ships anchored at Toronto, were stormbound there, then blown back to Niagara for four wasted days. Malartic journal 23-31 July 1756, MG 4, A 1, vol. 3405, pièce 108, 53-54.

artillery. It was important that the French not double their seapower by successfully seizing the British vessels intact. "I this day," wrote Broadley, "as the new snow was only partly rigged got all the pitch tar & turnpentine on board her and the OSWEGO in order to have them ready to be burnt before the place was given up."[68] At a council of war August 13th, the question was considered whether the ships should sail. It was too late for them to cause any damage or discomfort to the French. In that case, should they still get clear of a possible disaster by leaving harbour?

> and keep the Lake until the fate of the Garrison shou'd be decided, and in case of its being taken, go to the Westward and sink the Vessels, and the Men to make the best of their Way to the back of our Colonies? or whether they shou'd remain in the Harbour, . . . [69]

The decision was to keep the ships in port so they could add their cannon to Oswego's defence. They helped cover the withdrawal of the garrison from new Fort Ontario later that

---

68 Broadley to Admiralty 26 September 1756, PAC, MG 12, A, Admiralty 1, vol. 1487.

69 Mackellar's journal 13 August 1756, Pargellis, Affairs, 209-211. La Pause thought the British "had enough ships and provisions to have embarked all their personnel. They ought to have defended themselves as well as they could, then armed their ships and launched onto the lake, where they could have waited until the army of Mr. Albercrombry, which ought to have marched to their assistance, was at hand to support their disembarking again. They could have tried to seize our ships to which they were superior. Before winter they could have found the means, as a last resort, to regain their base territory via Cayugas Bay, where the communication is easy." La Pause,"Mémoire et réflexions", RAPQ 1933-4, 164.

day, but were unable to hinder a crucial river-crossing by the fearsome Canadian-Indian contingent between 7 and 8 o'clock next morning.[70] The sailors made ready to defend or destroy their ships, but were stopped by a point of honour. After Colonel Mercer was killed, Broadley said, "About 8 [a.m.] the succeeding officer beating a parley without previously acquainting me with it prevented my setting fire to all the vessels which I certainly should have done had he informed me of his intentions time enough."[71] The victorious French came into possession of six British ships entirely undamaged.

The history of the 1756 Oswego navy was a chapter of mishaps, mismanagement and helplessness. But the naval strength of the French was no outstanding help to them, either. All the campaign's key moves were in no measure dependent upon lakepower. Broadley told the truth in his own defence when he emphasized this fact to the Admiralty. There was a rumour, he wrote, that General Montcalm had

> declared that he took that opportunity [of the British fleet's returning to Oswego on 5 August] of transporting & landing his troops and artillery

---

70 Broadley to Admiralty 26 September 1756, PAC, MG 12, A, Admiralty 1, vol. 1487. Frégault resolved a controversy about this movement by irregular forces, by proving the terrific psychological impact it had upon the defenders. La guerre de la conquête (Montreal: Fides, 1955), 194-201.

71 Broadley to Admiralty 26 September 1756, PAC, MG 12, A, Admiralty 1, vol. 1487.

> which otherwise he should not have done; . . .
> I dont understand French myself but I never heard from Captain LaForey who does and conversed with the Marquis of Montcalm and Marquis of Vaudreuil often . . . that he did so; so far from it so little did they apprehend from our vessels that they did not think theirs which they knew to be superior to ours necessary to cover their landing, nor did they come until after the place was taken; . . . [72]

Despite the fact that seapower did not influence the 1756 campaign's outcome one way or the other, strategical theory continued to assign a high priority to naval strength. The paymaster of the French army in Canada, Doreil, reported the French success as a daring triumph, over hostile seapower which might have done unlimited harm.

> The enemy was on the point of gaining naval superiority on Lake Ontario which would soon have facilitated their conquest of Frontenac, of Niagara, and have caused Fort Duquesne -- and generally all our establishments in the upper country -- to fall without being attacked.[73]

From the vessels they had built themselves, and those they captured, the French kept seven ships in commission at Cataraqui.[74] In 1757 and 1758 this navy was the only one on the lake. It operated as a transport service, and was also heavily relied upon to provide security. Bougainville's idea

---

72 Broadley to Admiralty 22 January 1757, MG 12, A, Box 63, Admiralty supplementary No. 11. John LaForey was commanding officer of HMS ONTARIO before the fall of Oswego.

73 Doreil to [the Minister] 1 September 1756, RAPQ 1944-5, 86.

74 Montcalm to Belle-Isle 9 September 1758, NYCD, X, 831.

to prevent enemy initiatives was to keep up a watch-blockade on Oswego, with several armed ships steadily cruising the lake's south-east corner.[75a]

Vaudreuil, who was responsible for military and naval dispositions, valued his Lake Ontario navy even more highly yet. The fleet in being, he calculated, was sufficient to deter the enemy -- regardless of its deployment, or whether it were employed at all! Mere possession of the naval weapon was a "motive of tranquility". It persuaded him the Ontario region was safe enough; scarce resources, badly needed elsewhere, could be spared from there.

However, the British also had this naval force in their thoughts. An army of 3000 men was sent to Lake Ontario in 1758, to attack Fort Frontenac, destroy the shipping there, and in general pose obstacles along the French waterborne communications to the Ohio and the west.[75b] After this quick raid succeeded in the complete destruction of the French fleet, Vaudreuil lamely explained he had thought the

---

75a Ibid. BJ 1 September 1758, p. 267.
La Pause, "Mémoire et réflexions", RAPQ 1933-4, 151-153.

75b Abercromby to Bradstreet 13 July 1758, Royal Fort Frontenac, 257.

British "would not dare to enter the lake on which we had vessels, . . ."[76]

This French experience in 1758 seems to reinforce the lesson from Oswego, 1756. Once again naval power had borne no relation to developments that significantly altered the western balance of power and influence. But strategists did not read the lesson, nor abandon the aim of marine control of the lake. On the French side, it was widely observed that the fall of Frontenac was due to Vaudreuil's carelessness in not properly exploiting Canada's naval monopoly. "You will find it difficult to understand . . . why our sloops were not kept armed and cruising."[77]

> Negligence which permitted a number of large ships to be in this anchorage without being armed, was the cause of the loss of the fort, of all its vessels, of many pieces of cannon and other equipment. [78]

This line of thought, stressing how valuable the navy could -- ought to -- have been in protecting French positions, lent urgency to the 1758/1759 wintertime building programme that aimed to replace part of the lost lakepower. On the British side, Colonel Bradstreet at Frontenac destroyed everything that could not be carried away, but saved two ships out of

---

76 Vaudreuil to Massiac 2 September 1758, NYCD,X, 822.

77 Montcalm to Belle-Isle 9 September 1758, NYCD, X, 831.

78 La Pause, "Mémoire et observations", RAPQ 1931-2, 86-87. See also his "Mémoire et réflexions", RAPQ 1933-4, 152-3.

the conflagration to help transport the loot across the lake. When the Commander-in-Chief heard the news that his British forces now included the only existing navy on Lake Ontario, he wrote to tell Bradstreet

> that if the two vessels he brought to Oswego be still a float I desire they may not be burnt or destroyed on the contrary I would have them well manned & keep the lake as long as possible constantly cruising and keeping the enemy in continual alarm which may be productive of drawing off some of their force from this quarter [Lake Champlain] and facilitate any enterprise we may resolve on here. 79

However, Bradstreet had already demolished the vessels and was withdrawing his detachment from Oswego as fast as he could, fearful of French reprisals.

The following spring, then -- 1759 -- saw the French once more in command of the only naval force on Lake Ontario. The two ships they had built over the winter, L'IROQUOISE and L'OUTAOUAISE (each ten 12-pounder cannon), were highlighted in the plan of campaign. If the English tried to launch attacks in any direction from Oswego, the navy was to be employed against their lake communications, intercepting their supply convoys, harassing and disquieting.[80] (Montcalm

---

79 Abercromby to Stanwix 12 September 1758, WO 34, vol. 45, 351-354.

80 Montcalm journal 27 March 1759, PAC, MG 18, K 8, vol. 1, 507-508. See also H.-R. Casgrain, editor, Collection des manuscrits du maréchal de Lévis (Quebec: Demers, 1880-1895), V, 305-307.

would have preferred a policy of blockade to this idea of general cruising: "The only reasonable thing that [Vaudreuil] ought to have prescribed . . . would have been to always keep one barque in station at the entrance of the Oswego river, supported by some small bateaux gun-boats.")[81] All plans failed. Like Oswego in 1756, Niagara was captured by an army which safely traversed the lake -- on which the enemy had warships -- without benefit of naval escort. Nevertheless, the British hastily prepared shipping to support their new acquisition. And the French continued to expect key service from their own vessels. "The constant cruising of our barques cannot but make the enemy extremely uneasy [porter ombrage] and perhaps even impose upon them in such a way as to make their communication with Niagara difficult. . . ."[82]

The familiar pattern was repeated in the 1760 campaign. The British naval development plan was aided by a neat supply of ready-to-use naval stores which they inherited with Niagara. It was hurt in December when the first two vessels commissioned were shipwrecked.[83] A third one was

---

81 Ibid.

82 Vaudreuil to Lévis 9 September 1759, PAC, MG 18, K 8, vol. 5, pièce 66.

83 Hartwick to Amherst December 1759, WO 34, vol. 53, 21-22. Eyre to Amherst 26 January 1760, WO 34, vol. 21, 33-40. Gage to Amherst 20 April 1760, WO 34, vol. 46A, 221-224.

damaged the next April. As Brigadier-General Gage said, "Lake Ontario is not to be trifled with."[84]

Still, by mid-July 1760 the ONONDAGA (four 9-pounders, fourteen 6's) and the MOHAWK (sixteen 6-pounders) were ready to oppose the French ships and spearhead the British invasion of Canada as far as the head of the Saint Lawrence rapids. As a spearhead, this flotilla performed very bluntly indeed! They saw the French vessels but could not catch them. When sent ahead from Oswego to locate the best route in the upper river's fragmented maze, they got into a dead end among the Thousand Islands' thousand channels. While the unwieldy ships were being warped upstream against the current to get clear, Amherst's army by-passed them in its bateaux and whaleboats. The war effort of the French ships was little better. Their spring cruises did gather valuable intelligence. When actual engagement became imminent, however, the flagship IROQUOISE ran on a sandbar and was so badly damaged she was withdrawn from service. In the narrow river near La Présentation, the survivor OUTAOUAISE might have had a good chance to decimate the British army in its flimsy boats -- but she was overwhelmed in the hottest naval action of the whole western war, by an improvised force of five rowing

---

84 Gage to Haldimand 5 May 1760, PAC, MG 21, G 2, vol. 2-1, pp. 62-64.

gunboats. The glum record of sea-going inadequacy was climaxed when Amherst planned a combined operations (army and navy) assault against Fort Lévis at the head of the rapids. The naval portion of the plan was so badly handled the attack had to be called off, one of the vessels was wrecked by French gunfire, and her crew mutinied.[85] After much was hoped and expected from warships -- in 1760 as in previous campaigns -- the naval forces provided only a small part of the advantages which were the strategic rationale of their being built.

- - - - -

The outstanding fact about seapower as a factor in the war in the Lake Ontario theatre is the great gap between theoretical promise and actual performance. Possession of the wilderness upper country, and sometimes the security of the Canadian settlements too, were seen as being directly dependent upon Lake Ontario naval strength. It was thought that warships, pursuing their natural employments, would put an indispensable muscle behind the war effort. That is why both French and British expended money and energy to acquire a navy, and designed plots and manoeuvres to cripple the enemy's. When,

---

85 Malcolm MacLeod, "Fight at the West gate, 1760", Ontario History, LVIII, pp. 178, 181-182, 184-189.

in studying what happened during these campaigns, one notices that far from being indispensable, lake navies were often perfectly irrelevant to the swing of military fortune, the question naturally arises: were the strategists, who advocated marine forces and brought them into being, completely out of touch with reality?

No, not completely. As long as Lake Ontario was the only practicable avenue of transportation for large-scale military efforts, the possibility persisted of enormously affecting or controlling the affairs of the entire region through naval "command of the lake". The tools and strategies of ocean seapower were applicable to the inland water. Ontario had harbours to shelter warships, usable forests nearby, and despite Captain Broadley's 1756 worries about running aground while patrolling the east-end "bottom" of the lake, it was in general navigable by the very largest ships built anywhere in the 18th century.[86] That salt-water theories would work on fresh water was demonstrated in a classic way in the war of 1812-1815. Then the vast claims made on behalf of lakepower in the 1750's were redeemed. Decisive developments in the

---

86 "Lakes Ontario, Erie, Huron and Illinois [Michigan] . . . are navigable for ships of fifty guns . . ." -- Lahontan in the 1690's, Lanctot, The Oakes Collection, 21-23. In 1814 the largest of the Lake Ontario warships were as big and powerful as any on the world's oceans. R. A. Preston, "The fate of Kingston's warships" in M. Zaslow, editor, The Defended Border (Toronto: Macmillan, 1964), 285.

military situation on land -- conquests, occupations and retreats -- resulted directly from the outcome of the struggle for naval mastery.[87] As long as the war lasted Thomas Pownall's prophesy, that "the dominion of the Lakes . . . sooner or later will be the Dominion of America", was beginning to come true.[88]

In theory, Lake Ontario seapower during the War of the Conquest could have had the same effects, as contemporary strategists claimed. Why then did it not? The answer seems to be that the men who directed the 1750's war were much more hampered by their overall situation than were the generals and admirals of the War of 1812. They were limited by the fact that Lake Ontario was several hundred miles from productive centres of population; concerning some vital naval stores that had to come from Europe it was several thousand miles; and it was at the end of inefficient supply-lines which the enemy sometimes raided. These circumstances adversely affected both French and British. Their shipyards, too, were in the active war zone. Had there been settled and

---

87 Captain A. T. Mahan, Seapower in its relations to the war of 1812, 2 vols. (London: Sampson Low, Marston, 1905). E. A. Cruikshank, "The contest for the command of Lake Erie in 1812-1813" in Zaslow, Defended Border, 103. C. P. Stacey, "Another look at the battle of Lake Erie" in Ibid., 105-113.

88 Pownall to Wood 30 September 1758, NYCD, VII, 349.

secure communities on or near the lake, these could have produced naval power on a sufficient scale for it to have had its natural effect. But when all the elements of seapower had to be laboriously imported onto the scene -- the men who built and sailed ships, and all the materials they worked with except for standing timber -- the inefficiency was so great that the product was minuscule.

Lake Ontario vessels of 1754-1760 were so small and so few in number that only half of seapower's dual function was ever within their grasp. They could advance and oil the operation of friendly forces, but they rarely could interfere with the enemy. Seapower's negative aspect -- the preventive function -- was beyond the economic competence of both sides. They both sought this capability. The leaders consistently revealed themselves as ambitious for (and apprehensive of) great changes in the western situation which naval strength might produce. Since they reached so hard, and failed so blatantly, it is fair to conclude that something basic in the overall environment was frustrating them. It was the unpeopled, undeveloped nature of the battle-area. Full-fledged seapower, with both offensive and preventive capacities, was apparently impossible in the Lake Ontario region until industrial development greater than that of the 1750's had taken place.

It was the planners' duty not to accept this impossibility meekly, but continually to test and combat it. That was prudent and wise striving. Had just one strategist recorded the opinion that preventive seapower was out of reach, we should now give him extra credit for insight. However, none did.

Because of the apparently settled conviction that lakepower could decide the war in the Ontario theatre, resources and personnel were devoted to it and plans were shaped around it. It was thus an important factor of strategy. Because the limitations on the effectiveness of lake navies were not well appreciated, hopes based on them were excessively heightened, and invariably disappointed. Naval strength on Lake Ontario was therefore not an important factor of power. This divorce between power and strategy was unusual. Of all the isolable factors, only in relation to Lake Ontario seapower was there serious contradiction between the real (or likely) military situation and the plans that were laid.

CHAPTER V

FACTORS DETERMINING POWER AND STRATEGY: MILITARY ALLIANCE WITH INDIAN NATIONS

It was a relatively simple matter for French and British leaders to try and develop power through the acquisition of forts and naval units in the Lake Ontario area. Under these two heads, the means of gaining preponderance were straightforward and obvious. Topography, too, posed a simple problem. There it lay, the unyielding landscape; since it could not be molded to any great extent, its demands -- although difficult -- were unmistakably clear. By contrast, attempts to bring Indian nations into the war as allies were the most complicated and muddled of the planners' projects. The great difficulty arose because this problem involved so many and so varied -- and variable -- human aspects. Forts are made of stone and sweat; ships of work and wood. There are blueprints for both, or they can be taken from the enemy through standard procedures. For these items, the materials were manageable. It was otherwise with Indian alliances. The ingredients of which alliances were made were practically innumerable, and many of them were intangible, such as jealousies, judgment, ambition and trust -- or deceit. These materials are slippery; they are psychological products, not concrete. Intricately and ever, they change in response to developing situations,

as alliance-makers react and reappraise. Power that rests on continued renewal of people's judgment has a very precarious footing

North-eastern North America in the 1750's was a kaleidoscope of nations with a bewildering array of links and enmities. Although all native peoples within several hundred miles of Montreal and Albany were in contact with the Europeans, they were not yet dominated by them. In the western hinterland of Canada and the British colonies were over two dozen separate native governments. Each controlled a share of the country's disposable wealth and power. French and British authorities sought to tap these resources for their own purposes. Their common aim was to have the Indians as customers and friends in peacetime, and to recruit their fighting men as auxiliary soldiers in war. In wooing the Indians, both sides deployed a five-fold diplomacy that was an amalgam of stress upon common interests,[1a] bribery,[1b] propaganda,[1c] personal contacts[1d] and military threat.[1e]

Its position on the Saint Lawrence gateway gave Canada an advantage in dealings with peoples in the interior, which Canadian soldiers and ambassadors skilfully improved. The early years of the War of the Conquest confirmed French superiority in the minds of the Indians. Many nations mustered to help protect

---

1a Especially through the fur trade, by means of which the Indians acquired manufactured items increasingly necessary to their standard of living.

1b E.g., annual gifts to tribal groups.

1c Christianizing efforts, visits to Europe, ceremonial display, news management.

1d Particularly through trader-diplomats like the Canadian Joncaires or Sir William Johnson of New York, who had family connections and great influence among the Indians.

French interests. The British bid for Indian assistance was much less successful until after 1757. The employment of Indian troops from allied tribes formed a definite pattern in the war's operations, but the Europeans were never sure how to calculate its military value. It was the human element, again, which made the product of Indian skills with Indian inefficiencies somewhat of a puzzle.

Both the diplomacy which lined up Indians as allies, and the military services these alliances produced, were perplexing. The French and British were uncertain of getting Indian help, and uncertain of what it was worth when they did get it. Despite difficulties and uncertainty, however, both sides carefully considered the Indian question when plotting strategy. A quick survey of Indian manpower will make clear why.

1. Census.

One group of Indian peoples were those domiciled within the settled portion of Canada. In the 1750's the Abenaki villages of St.-François and Bécancour numbered about 700 and 300 respectively.[2a] There were 300 Hurons at Lorette near Quebec.[2b] At Sault St.-Louis were 350 praying Iroquois; at Lac des Deux Montagnes 1500 Iroquois, Nipissings and Algonkins; fast-growing La Présentation in 1756 had

---

1e E.g., destruction of the Miami village of Pickawillany in 1752.

2a F. W. Hodge, Handbook of American Indians north of Mexico (New York: Pageant books, 1959), I, 139; II, 410.

2b Ibid., I, 585-591.

about 500 people.[3] The combined strength in warriors from these domiciled tribes was about 1000. To the French war effort in Canada, increasingly starved for manpower as time went on -- European help was skimpy, and the colony's militia strength was only 16,000 men -- it was very important to bring this potential resource into the line of battle.[4]

The American colonies, though occupying a greater extent of space, contained no greater number of domiciled Indians. The Mahicans -- a people who once had been spread generously around the upper Hudson river valley -- by the 1750's had scattered west and assimilated into other tribes, except for about 500 gathered into the mission village of Stockbridge, Massachusetts.[5] The Mohegans of Connecticut had declined to a similar number.[6] The only other sizeable nation in the northern colonies that could be considered as domiciled was the Mohawks west of Albany. By the 1750's, they were contiguous to populous white settlements, and to some

---

3 Ibid., II, 112-113. BJ 26 July 1756, pp. 16-17. Bougainville, "Mémoire sur l'état de la Nouvelle-France" (1757), RAPQ 1923-4, 50-53. Chevalier de Raymond, "Mémoire sur les postes du Canada" (1754), RAPQ 1927-8, 347-348.

4 Still-nomadic tribes in Canada's northern hinterland should be counted here: the Nipissings and Têtes de Boule: small populations, few warriors. The unnumbered Abenakis of Maine inclined towards the French as well. Another native factor in the war were Micmac troops, refugees from the collapse of the Acadian policy. There were sixty with Montcalm's main army in 1757. Hodge, I, 3-5, 858-859; II, 73-74, 735-736. BJ, 150-151. The Canadian militia figure is based on Amherst's report to Prime Minister Pitt in the fall of 1760, showing a

extent intermixed with them. They numbered about 700 all told.[7] Further south, the Catawba people of South Carolina were in a similar juxtaposition, dwelling close to European colonists. They numbered about 2000 folk.[8] The potential fighting manpower among the British domiciled tribes was thus about a thousand -- a mere pittance among the 200,000 male colonists of military age.

There was much more significant military strength among the tribes that dwelt beyond the bounds of direct American and Canadian jurisdiction. Three major nations lived between the southern American colonies and Louisiana: the Cherokees, Chickasaws and Choctaws. There were nine or ten thousand warriors among these peoples.[9] The Illinois folk south-west of Lake Michigan contained about 400 men.[10] In the Ohio river valley in the 1750's the native population was in a state of demographic and diplomatic flux. Settlements were shifting, while French, British and Iroquois imperialisms

---

population of 76,172 (16,412 militia) in Canada. Louis de Cognets, jr., Amherst and Canada (Princeton, New Jersey, 1962), 290.

5 Hodge, I, 786-788; II, 637-638.

6 Ibid., I, 926.

7 Ibid., I, 921-924.

8 Ibid., 213-215.

9 Ibid., 245-249, 260-261, 288-289.

10 Ibid., 597-599.

tussled for control and influence. Immigrant villages from the Six Nations had been established, and in 1750 they mustered about 300 warriors.[11] The Shawnee were in the region in similar strength.[12] There were 165 Delaware warriors.[13] Detached villages of the Mahican, Missisauga and Huron (or Wyandot) peoples contained another 165 or so.[14] Thus about 1000 fighting men, involved in a complicated net of blood relationships and political allegiances with others outside the area, were on the spot in the valley of the Beautiful River.

The richest reservoir of manpower was in the tribes that lived in the borderlands of the Great Lakes. Around the south shore of Lake Erie and in the Detroit region were the Miamis, Hurons and Ottawas. These tribes contained about 400, 300 and 600 warriors respectively.[15] The western shore of Lake Michigan was the home of the Potawatomi, Winnebago and Menominees, whose combined population of fighting men was probably near 1500.[16] Beyond them to the west were the Fox,

---

11 They are counted up in L. H. Gipson, The British empire before the American Revolution, IV, 185, citing Conrad Weiser. The name 'Mingo' was sometimes applied to these detached Iroquois -- see Hodge, I, 867-868.

12 Gipson, IV, 185. Memorial of Major John Smith of Virginia, November 1757, LO 4790,4791.

13 Gipson, IV, 185.

14 Ibid.

15 Hodge, I, 585-591, 853-854; II, 169-171. LO 4790, 4791.

Sauk and Iowa Sioux: another 800 warriors.[17] The waxing Chippewa (Saulteux) people lived on both sides of Lake Superior, and were 25,000 strong in the 1750's -- at least 6000 warriors.[18] The Missisaugas, on Georgian Bay and in the Ontario peninsula, had about 1300 men.[19]

The Five Nations of the Iroquois -- their homeland stretching south of Lake Ontario from the vicinity of Niagara to the Mohawk valley -- completed the roster of Great Lakes nations. According to one French observer in 1754, they were the "most numerous of all Indian nations."[20] This was a measurement of the great impact their position permitted them to have on the Europeans' diplomatic and military affairs, rather than an accurate count. In the 1750's the total population of the Seneca, Cayuga, Onondaga, Tuscarora and Oneida peoples was between nine and ten thousand -- say, 2300 warriors. Their political constitution linked them to the British-dominated Mohawks, with whom they made up "Six Nations" -- but

---

16 Hodge, I, 842-843; II, 288-291, 959-961.

17 Ibid., I, 472-474, 612-614; II, 471-480.

18 Ibid., I, 278-280.

19 Ibid., I, 909-910. For a thorough list of all Indian nations in the Canadian network, located by their vicinity to three dozen different trading posts, and including frequent estimates of population, see Bougainville's "Mémoire sur l'état", RAPQ 1923-4, 43-54. Skilfully guarded observations about Indian population estimates are in Gipson,V, 39-41.

20 Nicholas-Gaspard Boucault, "Etat présent du Canada", RAPQ 1920-1, 47-49.

more important than constitution was the western Iroquois' relative isolation, which allowed them to form independent opinions about their own interests.[21]

Altogether then, there were between twelve and thirteen thousand warriors living in the Great Lakes basin. The eastern portion of this region became the scene of active French-British hostilities, and geography and commerce decreed that the Indians could not be indifferent to the clash. It was the Great Lakes nations, and those from Canada, that exerted the greatest Indian influence upon the development of strategy and the course of the war in the Lake Ontario theatre.

2. Services.

In peacetime, colonial appeals for Indian connections -- appeals founded on self-interest, greed, mating of minds, friendship and fear -- were for the sake of trade profits and general influence. In wartime alliances were even more avidly sought and jealously guarded, because then, with good management and good luck, it was possible for Indian diplomacy to produce additional military

---

21 Hodge, I, 617; 921-924; II, 123, 131-133, 223, 505, 852. On Iroquois numbers see Peter Wraxall, An abridgement of the Indian affairs 1678-1751 (Cambridge: Harvard University press, 1915), 207; and L. H. Morgan, League of the Iroquois (New York: Corinth, 1962), 25. The Tuscaroras joined the Confederacy in 1723, but the old tern "Five Nations" continued in use through habit. On the use of "Five nations" during the 1750's specifically to exclude the Mohawks, see Gipson, IV, p. 212 note 58.

force for use against the enemy. Both French and British wanted to employ Indian warriors against the other, whole nations of them if possible, or failing that groups of purchased or ideologically persuaded individuals. They wanted Indian troops for three distinct purposes. First, Indians were the best men for sending on detached duty. Second, they could perform valuable service operating in close co-operation with the main body of the army (and sometimes they not only could but did.) Third, in certain situations the side with preponderance of Indian troops enjoyed a decisive psychological advantage.

During the war of the conquest detachments were sent away from the principal army for two main reasons. One was to gather information about the enemy, and the other was to deflect the enemy's forces and undermine his morale by terror directed towards civilians.

It was essential to both sides to know the dispositions of the enemy, to be able to calculate what strength was committed in different areas, and to infer hostile intentions. The quickest source of such information was news brought directly from the region where enemy forces were concentrated. The most eligible men to make these journeys were Indians. They knew the least-used paths best; and compared to whites, they had the key advantage of the good guerilla soldier of being on friendly

terms with the native inhabitants of territory between opposing lines.

The French regularly dispatched parties from La Présentation, Fort Frontenac or Niagara to visit the Mohawk River region: to look around, talk with the Iroquois they met, observe any military affairs in evidence, and return to report. When possible the British employed similar methods. In 1757 Sir William Johnson informed the Lords of Trade about the military utility of the Mohawks:

> tho' their intemperate thirst after rum is a great impediment to their going upon service, when they can by any means get it, yet almost all their young men are now out, and going out, to 'distress the French settlements in Canada, beat up their quarters, and obtain intelligence of their numbers & motions. [22]

On another occasion Johnson cautioned an Iroquois assembly to help guard British posts near Oswego during the course of the coming winter. The Indians' spokesman answered, "It would be hard to blame them should any little damage be done at any of the places mentioned, as the French, as well as we, are always persuading parties to fetch prisoners for intelligence." [23]

---

22 25 June 1757, NYCD, VII, 228.

23 Johnson diary 12 October 1759, Knox' Historical Journal, III, 231.

Indian parties returning from intelligence-gathering expeditions could tell what they had learned to those who sent them, but both French and British much preferred they should bring back prisoners as well.[24] A "live letter" (the Indian simile) could report how many troops were stationed where he had been, what they were doing, and what were the most popular rumours as to their next employment. (It was customary for Eighteenth-century prisoners of war to tell much more than their name and rank; in most cases, they gave honest and sincere answers to any questions put to them.) Moreover, when the Indians brought back prisoners from enemy lines it was a proof they had actually been that far; without prisoners it was hard to tell how much of Indian intelligence was guesswork on their part, or pure fabrication. The second best indication of faithful performance of duty, was to bring back enemy scalps. Grusomely, prisoners and scalps were interchangeable. In April 1758 Lieutenant-Colonel James Burd reported to the Governor of Pennsylvania that three British Indians had just arrived back from Fort Duquesne with news of new French fortifications there. The three spies brought one scalp among them. They had seized a prisoner, but then the French rushed out of the fort so swiftly they had to kill him and come home with a second-best trophy. Burd gave them each a new blanket and a shirt for their report and exploit.[25]

---

24 26 April 1758, AB 150.

25 E.g., Vaudreuil to the Minister 1 August 1756 and 7 August 1760, MG 1, C 11 A, vol. 101, 72; vol. 105, 145.

Indian intelligence did not tell all about the enemy. It arrived in bits and pieces and some of it was purposely misleading. It needed cunning and constructive interpretation. The nature of Indian intelligence -- and its strengths and weaknesses -- can be illustrated by the opening months of the 1760 campaign. Captain Pouchot at Fort Lévis was charged with determining whether the British would invade Canada from Lake Ontario. Oswego was the place to have watched, as any British thrust would be based and launched from there. Between mid-April and mid-July Indians brought in to Pouchot thirteen separate reports that enabled him to form a judgment on the question.[26]

First a La Présentation brave named Charles returned from reconnoitring the British post and told Pouchot that he had heard from enemy soldiers

> they were going to kindle a great fire [a council or assembly of Indians] at Oswego and that when a great army had assembled, they would propose to descend to Montreal . . . . He did not observe at Oswego any increase of troops, nor any building of vessels. . . .[27]

Next two Indians from Saint-Régis told of troops arriving at Oswego. Then a Missisauga reported he had heard a large army would assemble there, destined for Montreal. On 16 May a party

---

26 These reports are chronologically arranged in Pouchot, I, 246 ff. and II, 1-20.

27 Pouchot, I, 246-247.

of five Missisaugas came in with three prisoners, Americans from the 60th Regiment. These careless off-duty soldiers had been seized while fishing near the fort. They said there were 6000 troops at Oswego, and there would be 20,000 by the end of the month.

The next half dozen stories -- including one brought by an Indian who was so curious about the French fort that Pouchot thought him an enemy spy, and some ideas collected by a friendly native from a party of British Indians encountered in the woods -- were conflicting. By the end of June it seemed a serious threat would develop from Oswego, but the indications were not so convincing that the French would want on the strength of this Indian information alone to move scarce resources from the Lake Champlain region to meet the threat. No wonder Vaudreuil complained to France about the shortage of "live letters". Except for the squad that captured the three unlucky fishermen,

> previous and subsequent parties could not have the same success; the former gave up in consequence of the great quantity of brandy they fell in with on the route; the others were unable to get any prisoners as the English did not send men abroad, except rarely and with great precaution.

Whereas the prisoners had predicted a huge army in Oswego by early June, Indians who had been there did not tell evidence of it.

> You see, my Lord, how greatly the Indians and prisoners contradict each other in their reports. I conclude, from this, that the movements of the English on Lake Ontario have been, up to the present

> time, as undecided as those on Lake Champlain. Nevertheless, they cannot fail to come to light 28

They came to light directly. Some Delawares brought in two prisoners who said Amherst would indeed lead 11,000 men from Oswego, and that artillery for this force was on the Mohawk communication, "every day passing towards Oswego." [29] A La Présentation scout reported more convincing and colorful details on June 30th.

> He said that eight days before, he had left the Onondaga's village, that he had crossed the river near Oneida lake, that they had heard the strokes of oars along the river for twenty days, and that he had passed eight bands, and eight chiefs. They were wagoning provisions constantly and had a great many cannon, mortars and howitzers. [30]

Several other Indians corroborated this story. "They described the uniforms of each regiment, and M. Pouchot knew, from having seen them, that they told the truth." [31] Two weeks later another informant reported the full panoply at Oswego: some Iroquois chiefs, 4000 troops in camp and 11,000 more coming, 100 pieces of artillery and five rowing gunboats.

The degree of Pouchot's dependence upon Indian intelligence-gatherers is shown by the fact it was not until mid-July

---

28 Vaudreuil to Berryer 24 June 1760, NYCD,X, 1090-1091.

29 Pouchot, II, 3-4.

30 Pouchot, II, 5.

31 Pouchot, II, 7-8.

he received a message via a non-Indian medium. Reports then sent down by the captain of the French ship IROQUOISE on Lake Ontario confirmed the clear pattern which was emerging from diverse Indian tales -- a massive British concentration was underway. Finally, two days before the British forces actually pushed off from Oswego, a brave named Kauategeté arrived from his second reconnaissance of the campaign with information -- retailed Indian style -- which enabled the French command to reproduce the enemy's order of battle when known facts about the British army were added to his observation:

> Kauategeté arrived in three days from Oswego, with an Oneida and a Mohawk, as deputies sent by the Five Nations to engage our Indians to remain neutral. Kauategeté informed M. Pouchot that General Amherst had been fifteen days at Oswego, and that he had seen and spoken with him several times; that their army was about ten or fifteen thousand strong, consisting of eight regiments, a red with blue trimmings or red and yellow, a Scotch, a red with little black trimmings, Gage's regiment, light infantry, blue and red and a great many with caps, and that he had counted sixty cannon. [32]

Besides collecting intelligence, the other main employment for Indian troops on detachment was to spread devastating and distracting terror behind the enemy's lines. This was for the most part war on the civilian population. American histories remember the hostilities that culminated in the conquest of Canada as the "French and Indian war" -- in that title, the

---

32 Pouchot, II, 16-17.

word "Indian" commemorates the campaign of terror against the American frontier, urged and organized by the French command and waged chiefly by allied Indians.

The French victory near Fort Duquesne signalled the start of an onslaught all along the western edge of American settlement, and set the tone of gore and panic which were the hallmarks of the hateful campaign. A year later Bougainville exulted in his journal over the surrender of Fort Granville, Pennsylvania to a mixed Canadian-Indian force, and over a hundred other exploits of broadcast violence.

> The Indians continue to carry consternation into Virginia, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Carolina. Although they today have more than 100 leagues to go to find any scalps to lift, this distance does not stop them. The Delawares have burned one of the prisoners taken at Fort Granville to punish him for having several years before assassinated one of his comrades in order to marry his widow. 33

The spring of 1758 saw the fullest French development of this cruellest warfare:

> We can unleash nearly three thousand Indians on the English colonies. What a scourge! Humanity shudders at being obliged to make use of such monsters. But without them the match would be too much against us . . . . According to the news received by M. Pouchot, the civilian Governor of Pennsylvania offers to let the Indians pass freely into Virginia, provided that they spare his province. What can one do against invisible enemies who strike and flee with the rapidity of light? It is the destroying angel. 34

---

33 BJ 22 September 1756, p. 42-44.

34 BJ October 1757, p. 190-191.

There were relatively few of these terror raids in the Lake Ontario theatre of operations itself. In May 1758 Philippe-Thomas Chabert de Joncaire reported that as a result of his diplomatic ministrations the whole Six Nations were on the warpath against the British, but Bougainville added,

> An intelligent man who is with him claims that these various parties have been striking toward La Belle Riviere and that their policy is to spare the Schenectady region, in order to cover themselves in case of an eventual reconciliation with the English. 35

However, there was one Mohawk valley community that was unprotected by diplomatic niceties. When the people of German Flats asked to be considered neutral in the war, Vaudreuil replied that the whole village was welcome to move to Canada; but if they stayed where they were and co-operated with the British enemy, they would be liable to molestation. 36 That is what happened. Frontier vulnerability made German Flats an easy target of guerilla war. French-Indian parties came repeatedly on raids. 37 The hardest terror struck at

---

35 BJ 29 May 1758, p. 208.

36 La Pause, "Relation de l'Ambassade des cinq nations", RAPQ 1932-3, 329-330.

37 NYCD, VII, 261, 276-279.

dawn on November 12, 1757. A force of one hundred Canadians and Marines and two hundred domiciled Indians, dispatched from Montreal for the purpose, wiped the German village of three hundred souls right off the map. Several farmers were killed in the assault, and 102 prisoners were led back to Canada. The raiders reduced the homesteads to smoking ruins, and destroyed what crops and livestock they could not manage to take away with them. There was no serious British pursuit.[38]

Most French raiding parties were from four to forty men strong, mostly Indians. They were usually commanded by a junior (Canadian) officer from the Troupes de la Marine.[39] Highly motivated nations who considered they were at war with the British on their own account and not just because of French alliance

---

38 Belestre, "Itinerary from the mouth of the River Chouegen . . . ", NYCD, X, 674-680. Malartic journal 18 November 1757, Ibid., 836. Lévis journal, Casgrain, I, 106-109.

39 Or, occasionally, by a missionary priest. See La Présentation's Father Picquet accompanying war parties: Malartic journal 12-26 September 1755, MG 4, A 1, vol. 3495, pièce 118, 8; 25 July 1758, NYCD, X, 849; La Pause, "Mémoire et observations", RAPQ 1931-2, 61.

sometimes dispatched parties unaccompanied by any white man.[40] The parties assembled and armed at one of the interior posts, and returned there after an expedition for de-briefing and payment.

One result of the French Indian terror campaign was panicked disruption all along the frontier. In one eight-day period in western Virginia in 1756, 40 persons were murdered or seized by the Indians. The menace was slippery, sudden, and unpredictable. The next barn you smell burning could be your own. Whole counties were emptied of population as refugees fled.

The campaign had a more military effect than merely cancelling the status of non-combatant, or making it unsafe to go fishing or to step into the bushes to answer a call of nature.[41] As frontier regions were deserted by the farmers, foodstuffs for military garrisons had to be hauled a greater distance, increasing the friction in logistics. Also, scared public opinion reacted to the terror by demanding diversion of resources from the war's principal theatres, for revenge

---

40 For example, the Wolf tribe of Delawares from the vicinity of Fort Machault. La Chauvignerie information 26 October 1757, LO 4706.

41 "Daniel Lett went out of his house to make Watter, as soon as he was out he was Shott down". Cadwallader Colden to [unclear], 22 October 1757, LO 4690.

and protection nearer home. Local patrol was a strategical sideshow; nevertheless, in 1756 Maryland was willing to invest in them at the rate of fifty pounds for every hostile Indian scalp.[42] As many American colonies devoted money, men, or both, to turning back the menace at home, the contribution they were able to make to the main war against Canada was diminished. According to one witness, the principal aim of Indian diplomacy when General Amherst was British Commander-in-Chief was not necessarily to gain the Indians as warriors on the British side, nor to ensure they did not oppose his troops, but because of the "infinite mischief to the inhabitants on the frontiers" of which they were capable.[43]

Employment of Indians for purposes of civilian terror and military distraction was largely confined to the French, because the British for a long time could not command sufficient reliable native troops to follow a like policy. The most similar incidents perpetrated by the British were retaliatory raids upon the home villages of Indian peoples who were involved in the French guerilla campaign -- such as a Virginian attack upon the Ohio Indians in 1756, and the destruction and indiscriminate slaughter rained upon the Abenaki village of St.-

---

42 Frégault, 190.

43 Mair narrative, MG 18, L 4, packet 64.

François by Rogers' Rangers in October 1759.[44]

Both French and British had special payments for their Indian irregulars that reflected the military value of service rendered. The scale of payment varied with the state of the war and the urgency of the need for information. Usually a prisoner was worth twice as much as a scalp. In addition to regular army pay, in 1757 the British offered their Indian scouts a five-pound bonus for either.[45] Meanwhile the French at Fort Duquesne -- riding a crest of success -- were giving "nothing for scalps but a little Spirits."[46] In the same region two years later, a British officer reported that the Indians were demanding high pay to be spies -- they were still not sure the Anglo-Americans would win.[47] In the spring of 1760, when British forces on the western front ached with suspence to know if Lévis' desperate attack on Quebec were successful (in which case their war for Canada would be back

---

44 Frégault, 190. Thomas A. Charland, Histoire de Saint-François-du-Lac (Ottawa, 1942), 72 ff. For a daring penetration of Canada by a British and Indian party, see Loudoun to Cumberland 3 October 1756, Pargellis, Affairs, 242.

45 In January 1746 the Iroquois were offered twenty pounds for a male French prisoner, ten for a scalp. Wraxall, 244. Declaring war against the Delawares in 1756, the Governor of Pennsylvania offered a scalp bounty of thirty pounds, with fifty pounds reward for a prisoner. Hamilton, "Johnson", 413. The 1757 British scale is in S.M. Pargellis, Lord Loudoun in North America, 301.

46 Information from prisoner Belestre 20 June 1757, NYCD, VII, 282.

near its beginning again), Johnson wrote to Haldimand,

> The Indian officer at Fort Harkimer has supplied the Ondagae Indians (with whom Mr. Francis has gone) with everything they required for the scout, and has my directions to assure them, and all others, whom he might send on such service, of my clothing them very well on their return, and that I would over, and above that, give them twenty pounds for an intelligent prisoner, which I hope they will be able to bring in soon, and thereby clear up all doubts concerning the fate of Quebec, . . .[48]

Some of the difficulties involved in offering specific payments to Indian intelligence-gatherers were outlined in a comprehensive order issued by the British Southern Indian Superintendent in 1757. The colony of Virginia had passed legislation creating rewards: 45 pounds for an enemy Indian prisoner, and 40 pounds for a scalp. Edmund Atkin ordered his men to ignore this schedule and reward by discretion, because encouraging the Indians to take prisoners, he said, often caused "ill Consequences to the British Interest, they being adopted by the Captors"; while as to scalps, the Indians were able to make one scalp -- and not necessarily that of an enemy! -- appear to be the scalps of four men.[49]

---

47 Mercer to Bouquet 3 January 1759, Charles Morse Stotz, "Defense in the wilderness", Drums in the Forest (Pittsburgh: The Historical Society of western Pennsylvania, 1958), 146.

48 30 May 1760, PAC, MG 21, G 2, vol. 10, 9-10.

49 Atkin's instructions for Christopher Gist 16 November 1757, LO 4847.

Indian warriors had certain skills, especially in moving stealthily through undeveloped forest country, which made them more useful than white men at intelligence-gathering and distant raids.

> On a secret expedition they light no fire to warm themselves, nor prepare their victuals, but subsist merely on the miserable pittance of some of their meal mixed with water; they lie close to the ground all day, and only march in the night; while halting to rest and refresh themselves, scouts are sent out on every side to reconnoitre the country, and beat up every place where they suspect an enemy can lie concealed. 50

"As regards their sense of direction in the woods," wrote Bougainville,

> it is a complete sureness. If they have left a place where they put their canoes, whatever distance they may have gone, whatever turns they may have made, crossing rivers, mountains, they come directly back to the place where their canoes were left. Observation of the sun, the inclination of trees and of leaves that they look at, a long practice, and finally an instinct superior to all reasons, these are their guides, and these guides never lead them astray. 51

According to another observer, not stealth or accuracy, but patience, was the main virtue of the Indian irregular. "The Indians are more cunning than the wisest of us; their patience is invincible -- they would lie for a week to their chin in water before they would aim a blow they were not sure of . . . ."

---

50 Thomas Anburey, With Burgoyne from Quebec (Toronto: Macmillan, 1963), 128.

51 BJ 13 October 1756, p. 54-55.

As illustration, he offered the unlikely story of a Mohawk named Cornelius who went to war all by himself against a distant nation. He left his village with gun, ammunition and ten days' provisions, and came back two and a half years later with twelve scalps on his belt! [52]

Indian guerilla fighters also had shortcomings. The Indian idea of economy of force preferred small triumphs without casualties over more telling but costly projects. Their insistence upon perfect and riskless surprise before moving to the attack was irksome to Europeans who accompanied them on detached expeditions. In March 1756, the first success of a Canadian-Indian detachment operating on the Oswego communication was the capture of several sled-loads of provisions and ten prisoners. The officer in command wanted to proceed directly to an assault on nearby Fort Bull, but his Indian scouts expostulated

> that since we had food to get us back to La Présentation and having eaten English meat [idiom for having taken prisoners] without incurring any casualties, it would be going against the will of the Master of life, to risk a second encounter. [53]

---

52 Captain Pringle to family 15 December 1757, PAC, MG 18, L 8, 65-66.

53 Léry journal 27 March 1756, RAPQ 1926-7, 386-387. On the use of the phrase "eat meat" to mean "take prisoners", see the journal of François-Pierre de Rigaud for August 1746. He was addressing Abenaki warriors prior to a joint French-Indian attack on Fort Massachusetts. "Mes enfans, le temps approche où il faut faire d'autre viande que le porc frais;

Indians "would not venture an attack even to the taking of" a vital position like Fort Edward, wrote Captain Pringle, "if they were sure they must lose a single man."[54]

A more important complaint -- voiced by both French and British officers -- was that reliance upon Indians for direct intelligence from enemy lines was misleading and inefficient. In August 1756, a week after the fall of Oswego, the British Commander-in-Chief was wondering at Albany if that fortress were still intact or not, and wrote to England:

> I must endeavour to remedy that total want of INTELLIGENCE in this Country, the distances are so great, and no way has ever been tried, but by Indians, who are in no Shape to be relied on, that we really know nothing at present: and I am at a loss to Judge what Step the Enemy will take . . . . [55]

Four years later the situation was pretty much the same. "It is difficult," Brigadier-General Gage pondered, "to form any judgment from Indians intelligence they so frequently give us false alarms and [yet]their intelligence sometimes proves true."[56]

---

au reste, nous la mangerons tous ensemble; ce mot les flatta dans la crainte qu'ils avoient, qu'après la prise de fort nous ne réservâmes tous les prisonniers." Francis Parkman, A half century of conflict (Toronto: Morang, 1899), II, 240. Other clear indications of the terminology are in BJ 11 July 1756, pp. 8-9; and the minutes of a meeting between Cgoghan and some Indians at Philadelphia 25 May 1761, WO 34, vol. 39,355-358.

54 Pringle to family 15 December 1757,PAC,MG 18,L 8,65.

55 Loudoun to Cumberland 20 August 1756, Pargellis, Affairs, 227-228.

56 Gage to Amherst 22 April 1760, WO 34, vol. 46A, 227.

The French had the same problem. According to the Chevalier de Johnstone, Indians "never failed to exaggerate the number of the enemy." Bougainville thought, "Say what you will, the wisest thing is to put no trust in the reports of Indians and half-breeds." To one piece of information, Intendant Bigot's reaction was: "As this news has reached us only by Indians, who, however, give it as certain, it may not be true." [57]

The root reason for the fact that Europeans sometimes found Indians unreliable in their reports was that, as Indians, their basic interests were different from those of the whites. It was advantageous for some nations to pledge themselves allies of either side; but also advantageous to limit their exertions and risks while gaining all the credit (and gifts of merchandise) that they could. Some European commentators seemed, naively, to think it should not have been that way. But a detached view of the struggle of civilizations then underway in North America reveals how hard it was to see

---

57 Memoirs of the Chevalier de Johnstone (Aberdeen: Wyllie, 1871), III, 15. In June 1758 General Abercromby wanted to arrange it that Indian reports would discourage the French from marching a force into the Mohawk valley via Oswego. Johnson recommended sending 600 troops to the Oneida portage as sufficiently intimidating. Abercromby decided on 300: "The Indians are good at multiplying and they will swell them to double that number." Abercromby to Stanwix 28 June 1758, WO 34, vol. 45, 321. Bougainville: BJ 13 October 1756, p. 54. Bigot to Belle-Isle 29 August 1760 (P.S. dated 2 September), NYCD, X, 1105.

any Indian interest as complementary with any white one.

Indeed, Indian nations ostensibly on opposing sides of the War of the Conquest often had more in common to protect than they had to quarrel over -- and they knew it. This touched the issue of Indian intelligence-gathering when -- as was inevitably frequent -- rival parties of Indians met each other in the woods en route to enemy lines. There is no known record of such parties engaging in battle, unless whites were present. Oficially enemies, they seem instead of fighting to have sat down to talk things over. Often they were then satisfied merely to swap a few bits of innocuous information before returning back the way they came with boasts of arduous espionage. There are many reports of such friendly encounters between alleged enemies. [58]

---

58 Johnson to Gage 12 April 1759, WO 34, vol. 46A, 61; Massey to Amherst 16 May 1760, ibid., vol. 53, 30; Amherst to Haldimand 5 June 1760, MG 21, G 2, vol. 1, 83-85.

An outstanding example of how Indian spies could encounter not only hostile Indians, but also hostile whites, and still complete the mission, occurred in the winter of 1759. Five British Iroquois left Fort Stanwix to reconnoitre La Présentation on 28 January. In the woods they met a La Présentation party out for a prisoner. The two parties consulted together and decided to cooperate. Two French and two British Indians split off to visit Onondaga, while the other three British Indians accompanied the bulk of the French party back to its base. Father Picquet and a French officer there calculated they were spies and sent them under Indian escort to Montreal. Governor Vaudreuil said he knew they were spies but they were welcome to look around. Returning towards Fort Stanwix, the emissaries visited Sault St.-Louis -- where a captive taken at German Flats slipped them a note for the British command, pleading for help; viewed the cannon assembled for the new French warships on Lake Ontario; and at the building site of Point-au-Baril embraced the ships' masts so they could report their diameter to the British, along with the size of the vessels, the number and weight of their guns, and everything else they learned. And possibly the French Indians who had gone on to Onondaga were able to report to French

headquarters just as many interesting details about British preparations.[59]

The Indians moving so freely between the lines of opposing forces, nominally attached to one army or another but obviously sharing a different set of standards, priorities and aims, were regarded with the deepest suspicion by many of the French and British officers. The whites nevertheless depended upon intelligence provided by Indians, when -- as usual -- other sources were lacking. Indian spies were in a way indispensable, since the natives had contacts and means that no European inquiry could penetrate. For instance, in the spring of 1756 General the Baron de Dieskau -- prisoner of war held in the American colonies -- wrote to Canada to have some money for living expenses sent to him. The paymaster arranged for a 7000 livre letter of credit, and included it in a bundle of letters addressed to the Anglo-Americans' distinguished guest.

> I addressed my letters, open, to Colonel [Sir William] Johnson, to whom I also wrote asking him to please have them sent on for delivery .... [Vaudreuil] managed to have them transmitted by way of an Oneida Indian who, although Iroquois, is attached to us; . . .[60]

---

59 Intelligence report 14 April 1759, NYCD, VII, 382-384. The following summer Amherst ordered commandants of British forts to vet visiting Indians closely; if "you discover or have the least grounds to suspect they are Swegatchie Indians you will in that case immediately secure and confine them in the fort." Amherst to Lt. Coventry 15 July 1759, WO 34, vol. 38, 147-148.

60 Doreil to [the Minister?] 18 June 1756, RAPQ 1944-5, 77.

On a similar occasion two years later, Johnson confessed to the Commander-in-Chief that his house was a post office through which mysterious missives were cleared. "Enclosed are two French letters which were sent me down but through what channel I cannot exactly trace." [61]

To prevent damage to their war effort from hostile Indians meandering around and passing themselves off as friendly, the British had a system of giving written passes or secret signals to the parties they sent out. Members of one squad were issued pieces of red gimp to wear in their hair.[62] However, not all doubts were resolved. Amherst could write of one native who arrived at the headquarters town of Albany during the winter:

> The story of the Indian from Fort Stanwix is a very extraordinary one: I suspect him to be a dog; he can't be kept too close and the affairs must be examined into; his having served under Colonel Parker [New Jersey provincials] may be very true and he is not the more unlikely to be employed by the enemy for a spy; you will do very right in sending him and clearing the upper parts of all the French deserters when the river will permit it. [63]

---

61 Johnson to Abercromby 28 May 1758, WO 34, vol. 39, 73-74.

62 Amherst to Lieutenant Coventry 15 July 1759, WO 34, vol. 38, 148. Hamilton, "Johnson", 467.

Amherst to Gage 12 March 1759, WO 34, vol. 46A, 291-292. Colonel Parker's disaster is described below, pp. 355-356.

The most blatant evidence about Indian solidarity while ostensibly serving two white masters was provided in the affadavit a Cherokee Indian swore for British authorities concerning a conversation he had with a Mohawk ambassador. According to this testimony, the Mohawk had said,

> It was the opinion of all their nation it was not prudent for Indians to kill one another if it should happen that they should light of a party with white people and Indians together to kill all the white people and let the Indians make their escape. [64]

(The Mohawk also revealed another of his tribe's tricks: when Johnson offered money for French scalps, the warriors went raiding the frontier farms of Virginia instead. American scalps for English pay! Diabolical!)

One suggestion for evading Indian trickery and improving the value of their guerilla service was to associate Europeans with them in these enterprises. The Chevalier de la Pause drafted a plan for this purpose. He was dissatisfied with Indian irregulars because they were content to do so little, often aborting long, costly expeditions after the slightest little success, turning back with one scalp, or one prisoner. His plan recommended the formation of four partisan companies each of 53 regulars, Marines and Canadians. Each company would

---

64 [April 1758], AB 150.

need a few faithful Indians as paid guides. He thought this white-Indian mixture -- more determined and loyal than Indians all alone would be -- could conduct more productive excursions. Properly scheduled, the proposed squads would provide a permanent year-round screen of scouts and skirmishers on all the frontiers of New France.[65]

This plan of La Pause' was never implemented. On a more ad hoc, less systematic basis, both British and French formed detachments in which white irregulars and Indians were combined. The Southern Indian Superintendent's knowledgeable advice, however, was that sending whites and Indians out together nullified the potential military usefulness of both. "With respect to command," Edmund Atkin wrote about the Cherokee contingent in the 1758 Ohio campaign, the Indians "should go their own way to work against the Enemy."[66] He had previously spelled out his reasons why whites should be discouraged from going out with Indian war-parties: the whites were

> a Clog upon [the Indians], & baulk them in their Operations; For that when it becomes necessary, they cannot keep them Company either in marching or running, nor endure Hunger, & by making too

---

65 La Pause, "Mémoire sur la campagne à faire en Canada l'année 1757", RAPQ 1932-3, 338.

66 Atkin to Byrd 24 March 1758, AB 70.

> much Noise & Fire in the Woods, make a Discovery of them to the Enemy; . . . [67]

Many of the Indians, in the British connection especially, were not willing to follow European officers anyway. The Delaware King told the Easton (Pennsylvania) conference in 1757,

> If Indians and English shall go to war together, my young Men will not be Subject to an English Captain and if any of Your people will go to war with me I expect they will be Subject to my Directions: we understand our own way of fighting better than you. [68]

There was no equal delicacy among the French native allies who -- although this arrangement bred its own difficulties [69] -- habitually made up **war-parties** under Marine ensigns and lieutenants.

The final solution canvassed -- if Indians could not be trusted on their own, nor combined with whites in perfect harmony and efficiency -- was to dispense with Indian service on detachment altogether, and train up European or colonial troops to replace them. Bougainville had such a plan. He wanted the French government to recruit and send soldiers of a type he said

---

67 Atkin's instructions for Christopher Gist 16 November 1757, LO 4847.

68 Croghan journal 7 August 1757, NYCD, VII, 321.

69 A good account of typical difficulties in white-Indian guerilla cooperation is in Léry's report on his winter raid on Fort Bull in March 1756 (RAPQ 1926-7, 372-394). He led 250 French troops and 110 Indian allies. On the two-week march from La Présentation to the British post, it took a remarkable fund of patience and perseverance, on Léry's part, to keep the Indians on the war-path and his joint party in **efficient** operation. Here is a catalogue of his troubles: - the Indians wanted to camp and await contact from La Présentation - a British

were useless in Europe but very good for the Canadian war -- **irregulars patterned** on the style of Spanish

> miquelets or the light troops of Roussillon. The more you could give us the better -- of men who are practiced making war like the Indians in a country of woods and mountains just like Canada is. They will be a marvellous object of emulation -- and nobody in the world is more prone to such a prod than the Indians! They would sooner die than think that men from the other side of the Atlantic could rival them in their own style of war.[70]

However, no such units of partisans were incorporated in French regular forces during the war. The British first experimented with scouting units composed of domiciled Indians, but towards the end of the war came to rely chiefly on Ranger companies of American colonials. Four hundred such troops were on active service in 1757, 1000 in 1758, and 1539 in 1759.[71]

Iroquois joined them and Léry's Indians believed his story that the British were forewarned - they refused to send this spy back under guard - word of a fire at La Présentation made many of the Indians want to scrap the whole raiding project - Léry wanted the party to keep together, lest the British be alerted by individual stragglers or wanderers. He learned 16 March that 4 braves had detached themselves without orders to go hunt prisoners or scalps in the vicintiy of Oswego - he wanted the Indians to keep the closest watch on the enemy Onondaga whom they insisted should accompany the group; he escaped - "The Indians told me that the Onondaga said the British were en route from the Mohawk country to La Présentation, that they planned to take the fort of that mission, and that they were now only 4 leagues distant from us. Just at that instant an Indian reported that he had heard several reports of firearms. That did it! All my Indians were intimidated." - the Indians insisted there should be no attack on equal or superior forces - almost all refused to join in the assault on Fort Bull (they did guard the gear) - A half dozen warriors did come with the

For duties of la petite guerre -- the little, detached war -- the French command relied upon parties of loyal Indians, often stiffened and led by Canadians from the Troupes de la Marine who were well experienced in forest movement and small-scale operations behind enemy lines. Having mustered the Rangers, the British war effort had much less to do with employing Indian guerilla forces. However, the British felt their solution was second-best, and that the French with more numberous, more willing native allies -- despite Indian shortcomings -- had the better type of troops for collecting intelligence and spreading terror. Brigadier-General Gage regretted that the project of recruiting Mohawk men into the army was dependent upon the tribal government's estimation of the diplomatic and military situation. If only the warriors could be enlisted individually, he wished, taking the King's bounty and pay and in return performing directed military duties; "Was it practicable they would certainly be preferable to all the Rangers on the continent." [72]

---

attack force, and just as Léry was getting his men in position for a quick rush from the woods -- five minutes' more stealth and secrecy essential -- just then, naturally, the reluctant warriors raised the war whoop and the warning! On the other hand, the raid's detailed planning was due to skilful Indian espionage, and it could not have been carried off successfully without the valuable scouting services of La Présentation's itinerant debaters, troublesome as they were.

70 Bougainville memorandum, "Ce que la France ne peut se dispenser de faire pour le Canada" (1758/9), RAPQ 1923-4, 13-14.

There were, then, specific advantages and characteristic difficulties associated with employing Indians for guerilla warfare. The same was true of the second manner in which the European principals sought to utilize the Indians militarily -- by engaging them in close co-operation with the main body of the army.

General Shirley in 1755, planning the advance of a force from Albany to Oswego and eventually Niagara, explained the necessity for Indian retainers to form part of it.

> I am in hopes of procuring a number of Indians to join with me at Schenectady and Oswego, which are necessary in the service for scouts, outguards in marches thro' narrow defiles, and to guard the battoes in their passage thro' the narrow parts of rivers and creeks, and gaining intelligence; . . . [73]

Whenever a big army, either French or British, was to operate in the Lake Ontario or Lake Champlain regions, the attempt was always made to associate with it the maximum number of Indians available. "In the midst of the woods of America one can no more do without them than without cavalry in open country."[74]

---

71 Pargellis, Lord Loudoun in North America, 301-302. Shirley to Abercromby 27 June 1756, WO 34, vol. 46B, 1-6. Abercromby to Haldimand 29 March 1758, PAC, MG 21, G 2, vol. 6, 34-36. Dr. Huck to Loudoun 17 April 1759, LO 6091.

72 Gage to Amherst 9 April 1759, WO 34, vol. 46A, 53-56.

73 Shirley to Robinson 20 June 1755, NYCD, VI, 955.

74 BJ 27 July 1757, p. 148.

A screen of alert Indian scouts and watchers around the force would prevent morale-shattering incidents like the one Amherst had to record at Lake George in July 1759. Within sight of the British camp a squad of eighteen New Jersey troops were ambushed by about forty Indians from Canada. Six of the men reached camp again safely, six were killed and scalped on the spot, and six were carried away prisoner.[75] Scarcity of loyal Indians on the British side made them vulnerable to such debacles. Lack of Indians meant lack of security, which meant the army moved with extreme deliberation. Its orders might call for élan and haste, but the men naturally tended to proceed cautionsly when they knew that no force of friendly Indians was on hand to guarantee them against sudden fatality.

On the contrary, the army with the most diligent native out-scouts could fend off hostile feelers and deprive the enemy of news and success. It could achieve repulses such as one recorded by La Pause --

> Our Indians seem well intentioned. . . . Recently they put to flight an enemy party composed of 18 Indians and 4 English upon whom -- without deigning to reply to the volley that was fired at them -- they ran swiftly, took three scalps, killed the 4 English and seized one Indian prisoner.[76]

---

75 Amherst to De Lancey 7 July 1759, WO 34, vol. 30, 113-114.

76 "Continuation du journal de la campagne 1759", RAPQ 1933-4, 97.

In forest warfare, the army with the best Indian contingent best met strategical demands for security on the march. What made Indians especially good at guaranteeing the security of the army -- by surveillance of the country in which it was operating -- was application of the same stealth, patience and intimacy with the woods that produced their peerless credentials as trackers and raiders.[77] They were not nearly so good at white men's warfare. For instance, they added little spine to a regular force engaged in pitched battle. One European noted that North American Indians almost never fought on an open field, because such fights were decided more by fortune than prudence or courage.[78] No doubt it takes much of a certain type of courage to fight the European-style infantry battle of that day -- where the troops were ordered to perform their drill slowly, coolly and methodically while serving as targets to the other side -- but the Indians thought it was a futile kind of bravery. To white exasperation, they followed counsels of self-preservation, accepting or refusing

---

77 Useful, among other things, in catching their own side's deserters; see Vaudreuil to Berryer 28 March 1759, NYCD, X, 947.

78 Anburey, 127-129. See Morris Bishop, Champlain: the life of fortitude (New York: Knopf, 1948), p. 144, for Indians' tactical training in 1609.

engagements accordingly. In the running battle near Fort Niagara in 1759, when a French relief party tried to fight its way through to the fort and was opposed by British troops, a British officer reported that the Indians attached to his regiment did nothing in the stand-up fight -- "The Indians never came near our right nor did anything but take wretches when in their power." [79]

Indians were good at attacking small parties in the woods, the British commandant of Niagara wrote Amherst, but were not of the proper mettle for laying siege to a fort. Therefore, a British Niagara could be perfectly safe even in the midst of Indian populations loyal to the French: "I am almost persuaded all the Indians between this and New Orleans would not dare to attempt this garrison." [80] It was disconcerting to European generals that Indian custom was for the troops to withdraw for awhile after suffering losses. A period of close contact with enemy forces, in the confused situation following an engagement, was just when Indians were most needed, but least available. [81] Perhaps most distressing of all, the fact that to many whites all Indians looked alike could have been very dangerous in ticklish situations where there were

---

79 Massey to Amherst 30 July 1759, WO 34, vol. 53, 6-7.

80 Eyre to Amherst 18 May 1760, WO 34, vol. 21, 81-84.

81 Wraxall to Fox 27 September 1755, Pargellis, Affairs, 141.

Indian auxiliaries on both sides. One British officer reported from a frontier post that he had been innundated with forty Cherokee warriors, but since there was no interpreter, "I know but little of their designs as yet." [82] He hoped they were honourable!

Another Indian habit that upset French and British leaders who tried to direct them, was that they continued to barter and bargain among themselves right in the midst of the white man's war. The fact that ostensibly hostile scouting parties often met amicably in the woods and exchanged information has been noted above. [83] Indian troops attached to the principal French or British forces did not entirely throw off the role of diplomats either. When shooting engagements were inevitable, the Indians regularly took precautions to limit -- or better, prevent -- native casualties on both sides. According to one Canadian, "The Indians are so much afraid of each other that it is very difficult to get them to fight against one another," [84] but it is more likely their backwardness in this regard arose from racial solidarity and policy, not fear. In the previous war the Canadian government had sternly to reprimand the Caughnawaga Iroquois, who consistently fired three

---

82 William Thompson to Lt.-Col. Armstrong, from Fort Augusta, 9 April 1758, AB 136.

83 See pp. 324-326.

84 Péan memo 15 November 1758, NYCD, X, 898-899.

warning shots when they approached any British force which they thought might contain their cousins the Mohawks. The French Indians promised "to do better" in the future, but they never did. The battle of Lake George in 1755 was preceded by an exchange of formal harangues between leaders of the two sides' Indian contingents.[85] French Indians in the Ohio sent warning word ahead to a British position they intended attacking, "to acquaint the Indians here, that did not intend to fight for the English to move off from hence immediately."[86] The French attack on Fort Bull in 1756 was almost frustrated because just as the party was steathily approaching, the La Présentation scouts whooped too soon.[87] The British got even worse service on the same occasion from Iroquois who were supposed to be their allies -- but who had previously promised Captain Léry and his Indians from Canada to lead the British astray when they were hired to guide the pursuit.[88]

---

85 Lanctot, III, 72. Daniel Claus narrative, Hamilton, "Johnson", 306. Dieskau to the Minister of War 14 September 1755, MG 4, A 1, vol. 3405, pièce 80.

86 Burd to Denny 13 April 1758, AB 150.

87 "Mémoire du Canada", RAPQ 1924-5, 120.

88 Léry journal 26 March 1756, RAPQ 1926-7, 384-385. See also Vaudreuil to the Minister 1 June 1756, Roy, Léry, II, 136-138.

The battle of Niagara in 1759 featured notable contact and co-operation between French and British Indians. On 11 July some of the French Indians inside the fort took the day off to visit enemy lines. Next day they deserted and joined the attackers. Some British Iroquois then came to the fort to talk with their brothers who still clung to the fleur-de-lis, but Commandant Pouchot clapped them in irons as spies.[89] When the French relief force approached, Indians on both sides sought -- successfully -- to disentangle themselves from the normal military consequences of the only situation during the whole war which juxtaposed large bodies of Indian soldiers in opposing armies with a bloody clash imminent.

> An American captain wrote that just before the battle, Some of our Indians went to the Enemy's Indians to prevail upon them not to fight But the French told them, they did not want to fight with our Indians but with us, on this our Indians returned and told us, the Enemy was coming, . . .[90]

Another officer on the British side said that these emissaries, returning, urged him to leave the position he and his unit were occupying,

> for everyone of us would be killed for [the French] had ten times more men than I had; as the men heard them I turned about to ye 46[th regiment] told 'em

---

89 La Pause, "Siège de Niagara (1759)", RAPQ 1933-4, 93-94. Méloizes journal 26 July 1759, RAPQ 1928-9, 50-52.

90 Captain DeLancey to unknown 25 July 1759, NYCD, VII, 402-403.

> I could see their numbers and if they would engage we would drub 'em; the three Indians went off at which ye enemy Indians gave a most horrible yell and advanced 91

Having Indians with the main army raised problems of discipline. When the French advanced to the siege of Fort William Henry in 1757, night orders called for no unnecessary noise around the camp, so that the work of enemy scouting parties would not be made any easier for them. However, the Ottawas in Montcalm's force would not comply. Although sensitively deep in enemy territory, they prayed all night with loud voices to Manitou, asking that they come to no harm, intoning over and over, "Ah! If only daylight would come." A French officer asked for silence, but was told the enemy would not be able to hear these prayers "even if he was only one stone's throw away; Manitou would stop the sound from going any farther." [92] Brawling and drunkenness could have been curbed through liquor control if it had been politic and important enough for the army commanders to do so. "The Indians were out of luck this evening," Amherst wrote in July 1760 at Oswego.

> They had by some means got at Rum and one man was so wounded they expected he would die. I sent a Surgeon to take care of him & the Indians boiled some bark of trees for him as a cure. An Indian boy died, a Squaw

---

91 Massey to Amherst 30 July 1759, WO 34, vol. 53, 6-7.

92 La Pause, "Mémoire et observations", RAPQ 1931-2, 56.

> was drowned, and a Squaw had entertained herself so often with the Soldiers that she was almost dying. [93]

Despite half-hearted regulations to the contrary Indians on military service -- and other troops as well -- often managed to get possession of liquor. Then , the approved enemy being absent, they might very well fall to brawling with their allies.[94] Even William Johnson, the Indians' champion, admitted that one way or another they were frequently drunk.[95]

Another problem was military supplies, especially food. When diplomacy was reinforced by victories, the Europeans were able to muster several hundred Indians to their camp. But then of course they had to support them. In the fall of 1756 the Canadian government sent ninety barrels of pork to the upper country for the Indians.[96] Over the winter of 1757/1758 the French

---

93 Webster, 219.

94 Abercromby to Johnson 26 September 1758, WO 34, vol. 38, 97.

95 Johnson to Abercromby 30 September 1758, WO 34, vol. 39, 115.

96 Information from the Cayuga, Ottrowana, 22 November 1756, WO 34, vol. 39, 1-4.

maintained 600 Indians in the vicinity of the forts between Lake Erie and Fort Duquesne. A year later the British had taken Duquesne, and Colonel Bouquet complained about the commissary: he hoped the Indians would "by degrees return to their former peaceable Way of living, Plant Corn, & Hunt, But in the present Circumstances we are Obliged to humor them tho' the Weight is almost intolerable." [97] In his greatest muster of native strength, Montcalm had a contingent of 1800 fighting Indian men in the 1757 army that took Fort William Henry. The most successful British effort was 1330 Indians -- of whom 800 were warriors and the rest women and children -- who gathered at Oswego for the western invasion of Canada in 1760. [98] When crowds like this had to be fed, the strain on the supply departments of the armies was greatly increased.

Just one week after leaving Oswego in 1759 to lay siege to Niagara, General Prideaux was writing back for more food. His Indians were "voracious". [99] When the post was captured a massive resupply job was necessary. The commandant explained, "So new an acquisition by so many copper coloured gentry must be bare & ill supplied & it will require prudence and attention

---

97 Bouquet to Fauquier 25 August 1759, Stotz, "Defense in the wilderness", 116.

98 BJ 28 July 1757, p. 150-151. Webster, 225.

99 Prideaux to Haldimand 13 July 1759, PAC, MG 21, G 2, vol. 68, 32-33.

to put it on a good footing." [100] "To tell you in short about Niagara," Gage wrote Amherst, "everything without was stole everything within plundered & broke where numbers of Indians are on such occasions there is no restraining them & from thence proceeds our want of axes. . . ." [101]

Amherst had so much experience of combining Indian troops with European and American levies, that his unfriendly estimation of Indians' military services cannot be entirely due to prejudice against the "copper coloured gentry." When two Highlanders were assaulted by two unidentified natives, he called it

> proof of the little dependence that is to be given to any of those scoundrel Indians; we are feeding many of them who would do just the same these villains of the Taways [Ottawas] have done if they found an opportunity; . . . I am thoroughly convinced the best method of treating them is always to keep them under with a strict hand never to trust to them but to be always on one's guard against them; reward them when they have merit & hang them when they deserve it. [102]

"They are a set of villains but we must make the best and most of them we can," he wrote in another letter which showed cunningly how the Indians could be fed without emptying the larder of provisions fit for white troops to eat.

---

100 Farquhar to Amherst 29 July 1759, WO 34, vol. 21, 1-4.

101 Gage to Amherst 2 October 1759, WO 34,vol. 46A,101-4.

102 Amherst to Stanwix 31 August 1759, WO 34, vol. 45, 449-452.

> I am in hopes this campaign will furnish them with occasions to be of real service to us and that they will join us because we are the superiors and successful.
>
> The pork that has been on the ramparts must certainly be damaged. The Indians must be fed and if it saves other provisions [to give them the spoiled meat] there is no loss in it and it's a very proper way of expending it.[103]

Some of Bougainville's strictures on the logistical problems associated with Indian contingents, and other matters related to Indian service, are the most striking comments on either side. In September 1756 on the Lake Champlain line,

> We now have 600 Indians, and hold a council to send them off in detachments, but it is a long job to get them to make up their minds. It requires authority, brandy, equipment, food and such. The job never ends and is very irksome.

With Indians, one never knew until the last moment whether plans would actually be carried out.

> It is said that departure is set for tonight, but it is only a rumour, and the caprice of an Indian is of all possible caprices the most capricious. . . . Between the resolution made and the action taken there passes considerable time, sometimes one nation stops the march, sometimes another. Everybody must have time to get drunk, and their food consumption is enormous.

He concluded that, for a defensive campaign, the best thing would be to have only a few Indians at a time attached to the army, rather than many. The bigger the Indian company, the

---

103 Amherst to Massey 22 May 1759, WO 34, vol. 53, 148.

more paralyzing talk and argument, and the greater strain on resources. A large group was just as likely as a smaller one to contract disgust after an unsuccessful scout, or prudence after a triumph, and go off leaving the army entirely nude of the Indians' valuable services. "It would be better to have on hand only a specified number of these mosquitoes, who would be relieved by others, so that we would always have some on hand."[104]

Indians' incapacity for pitched battle and siege, plus their tendency to intrigue and intermittent attendance upon the white man's war -- plus the disciplinary, logistical and strategic[105] problems they created -- made planners rate very low their contribution in the principal theatres where big forces clashed. Calculating the strength available for the last campaign, La Pause when scraping the bottom of the barrel would not scrape up and count the Indians. Their service, he

---

104 BJ September and October 1756, pp. 36, 37, 59-60.

105 Disciplinary and logistical problems have been indicated. There were two strategic problems that arose when it was vital for success to have Indian troops operate in conjunction with the main body of the army: sometimes the Indians slowed things down; at other times they created a requirement for more haste than the European commanders otherwise desired. On the delay of working with Indians, see Bougainville's comments just above. On haste: General Forbes wrote Stanwix in May 1758 that he had heard the French had assembled Indians at Fort Duquesne," . . . but are in want of provisions, So it is naturall to believe that they will make a push upon us, on purpose to keep their Indians together." AB 294. Another British officer complained that in the 1758 campaign 600 Cherokees recruited in the spring had melted away because the British were so slow getting started. Robertson to Morton

said, was that of casual help ("casuel").[106] A year earlier, Bougainville had put them no higher on the order of battle, and explained why. The Indians were "schemers, opportunist and grasping -- Can we flatter ourselves they will stay constantly attached to the side which is far and away the more feeble and which will have perhaps nothing to give them?"[107] They were good for a coup de main, but a six-month campaign going quickly from one crisis operation to another, shoring up a crumbling frontier, was not their style. Like the Canadians, the Indians were good in the woods, and for exploitation of tactical success, but were the worst soldiers for a defensive: "in the misfortune of not at all possessing the courage of constancy."[108] The British appreciation was the same. Amherst found them "naturally of such a wavering disposition that the least check or success on either side staggers their attachment". He had "no great opinion of their

---

19 December 1758, Pargellis, Military affairs in North America, 430-432. For the 1759 Ohio campaign, the Indian expert George Croghan thought ". . . if we can take the field this spring before the French . . . the Indians on the Ohio will join us but if the enemy take the field first I dread the consequence for I think the Indians will not stand idle spectators and see us and the enemy carrying on a war in their country without being concerned on the one side or the other." WO 34, vol. 39, 161-163.

106 La Pause, "Mémoire fait au mois de 9bre 1759", RAPQ 1933-4, 136.

107 Bougainville memorandum, "Situation du Canada en hommes, moyens, positions", (1758/9), RAPQ 1923-4, 8-9.

108 Ibid.

manner of fighting . . . did not consider them a formidable enemy against his troops,"[109] although he preferred them friendly rather than hostile because of the impact their terror tactics had upon the civilian population.

An important part of the impact made by Indian troops was purely psychological. Quite apart from the physical and strategic damage inflicted on the enemy, their advertised presence on one side tremendously increased the apprehension and doubt on the other, undermining the will to win. The targets of Indian war parties on detached raids were particular military posts or frontier homesteads, but the spasm of fear triggered by these operations was general. Uncertainty seeped through the minds of all the enemy. Accompanying the main army, Indian troops made an invaluable contribution to siege operations by their presence and reputation alone. Both French and British were well aware of this, and found that being able to use the Indians as instruments of psychological warfare made their foibles and frequent ineffectiveness worth bearing.

The secret of the Indians' success, in bringing siege operations to an abrupt halt through the surrender of the besieged, was the fear that they inspired. Their reputation

---

109 Arthur Mair narrative, PAC, MG 18, L 4, packet 64, 13-14.

proclaimed that Indians overrunning a position preferred to take no prisoners at all, senselessly slaughtering everybody.[110a] This tendency has been grossly exaggerated.[110b] La Pause pointed out (in his journal -- not for propaganda) that it was in the Indians' interest to take prisoners, as many as they could. "Today there is no Indian village which would not have at least one-fifteenth of its population made up of prisoners." Even white captives, he thought, found life among the Indians as good as any other life. Prisoners the Indians did not keep and adopt were sold: "Blacks sell for from 600 to 1500 francs and whites between 120 and 200."[111]

However, instances of Indians indiscriminately massacring prisoners who came into their hands were well known. Like all men, they did not always act coolly or from cash motives in the heat of battle. After the war's first engagement, French Indians took part in the occupation of Fort Necessity.

> Then the Indians got in and pillaged them of all their baggage and provisions, shot down all their cows and horses . . . . killed two of the wounded

---

110a "Mémoire sur les limites du Canada" (1761), MG 1, C 11 E, vol. 8, 200-201.

110b For example, in the impression made by W.J. Eccles, "The social, economic and political significance of the military establishment in New France", CHR, LII, 7.

111 La Pause, "Mémoire et observations", RAPQ 1931-2, 61-62. See also Alberts, 114-120; Malartic journal 30 April 1756, MG 4, A 1, vol. 3405, pièce 108, 34; Captain Leduchat's narrative, MG 4, A 1, vol. 3417, pièce 182, 13.

> and Scalped them, and also three of the Soldiers who happened to get drunk and were asleep. Col. Washington upon this compained of the treatment they received, so contrary to the conditions agreed upon and the French Commander pretending to put a stop to it, ran in among the Indians with his Sword drawn, but instead of persuading them from it, he commended them for their courage, and the treatment they had given the English. [112]

During its harassed retreat from Lake George in September 1755, the French and Indian forces "killed what prisoners they had taken and scalped them. We found the poor creatures tyed to each other by threes and fours".[113]

When Captain J.-G. Chaussegros de Léry's raiding party hacked its way into Fort Bull (Oneida portage, March 1756), the fort's commanding officer "then wished to surrender, but M. de Léry was no longer master of his detachment -- who killed all who they encountered, including the commandant. The Indians lifted seventy scalps." [114] Actually, almost the whole of Léry's attacking force on this occasion was Canadian militia -- whose boast was that on guerilla operations they fought like Indians. The shock to the enemy did not nicely allow for all subtleties. The squad that marched to relieve Fort Bull -- too late! -- found a gruesome scene: the whole garrison butchered except

---

112 Report to the Governor of Pennsylvania 16 July 1754, Gipson, VI, 41-42.

113 "Letter from a gunner to his cousin", 10 September 1755, NYCD, VI, 1005.

114 Péan to unknown, 10 May 1756, Roy, Inventaire des papiers de Léry, II, 133-134. Actually, there were 52 killed and five prisoners taken. Léry journal, RAPQ 1927-7, 380 ff.

for five taken prisoner; bodies lying mutilated near the gate and in the courtyard, but mostly in back corners of barracks and storehouses where men had hidden themselves from remorseless horror for as long as they could. The absence of French bodies indicated how outnumbered the defenders had been. They asked for quarter but were shown no mercy. The previous year's lesson from Fort Duquesne, now reinforced, spread everywhere: British troops overrun by the French forces' less disciplined members were doomed. The fall of Oswego showed how well Anglo-Americans took the lesson to heart. The fortress was surrendered almost perfectly intact, as soon as Montcalm displayed his 1500-man contingent of Canadians and Indians in a position where they threatened to make a live attack.[115]

Companion to the average white soldier's dread that enemy Indians would prefer his scalp to his surrender was his terror at the idea that they might not, but instead might take him alive. The Indians were supposed to be sadistic torture fiends. When Léry's scouts fetched him two prisoners from

---

115 Guy Frégault proved the decisive psychological impact of the Canadian-Indian manoeuvre in La guerre de la conquête, 194-201. On page xxv above, note 19 lists five sources bearing upon this event, in addition to the fourteen which Frégault used. The strength of the Indian contingent involved was 260 warriors: 146 domiciled and 114 from the pays d'en haut. Léry journal, RAPQ 1926-7, 402. The Indians' reputation produced in Boston the unfounded report that 500-600 of the Oswego garrison had been massacred. PAC, MG 5, B(1), vol. 10, f. 261.

Fort Bull he was anxious to get accurate information from them and get it quickly. He threatened to leave them to the Indians if they lied -- they spoke right up.[116] The popular belief was that most men would not survive Indians treatment. And what might happen to them then was what a man of civilized tastes would term unpalatable. "Your child shudders at the horrors which he will be forced to witness," Bougainville wrote in 1757,

> It will be with great difficulty that we can control these Indians of the Far West, the most ferocious of all people, and great cannibals by trade. Listen to what the chiefs said to M. de Montcalm three days ago. 'Father, do not expect that we can easily give quarter to the English. We have young men who have never drunk of this broth. Fresh meat has brought them here from the ends of the earth. It is most necessary that they learn to wield the knife, and to plunge it into an English heart.' Behold our comrades, dear Mama; what a crew, what a spectacle for a humane man.[117]

A few days after several boatloads of British soldiers had been overwhelmed on Lake Champlain,

> An English corpse came floating by the Indian's camp. They crowded around it with loud cries, drank its blood, and put its pieces in the kettle. However, it was only the western Indians who committed these cruelties. Our domesticated ones took no part in it; they spent all day in confession.[118]

La Pause agreed with Bougainville's statement that not all the French Indians were cannibals.

---

116 Léry journal, RAPQ 1926-7, 385-386.

117 Bougainville to Madame Herault 30 June 1757, BJ, p. 331.

118 BJ 28 July 1757, p. 150.

> The domiciled [Indians] who practise an appearance of the Catholic religion are no longer man-eaters. The northern [Great Lakes] Indians are. The domiciled are not really less cruel; the missionaries who accompany them when numbers of them march preach to them to take scalps for the glory of God.[119a]

There is other evidence too, that some of the excesses Indians committed were urged and approved by their European allies. Bougainville said Canadian officers -- doubling as business speculators, as usual -- egged on the Indians to loot and kill out of "greed for gain, the certainty of getting very cheaply from the Indians all the goods they had pillaged, . . ."[119b] Father Roubaud, Jesuit missionary at Saint-François, agreed that white polity and white men led the Indians into many of their infamous crimes against humanity. He appologized to Amherst the conqueror and interceded on behalf of his Abenaki parishoners. They were not more cruel than other Indians, and he was satisfied that the abominations they did they were pushed to.[120] A man whose job it was to do a lot of the pushing ought to know. A similar revelation on the British

---

119a La Pause, "Mémoire et observations", RAPQ 1931-2, 61-62.

119b Bougainville to Madame Herault, September 1757, BJ p. 332.

120 Roubaud to Amherst 15 September 1760, WO 34, vol. 39, 325-328. The British probably exonerated Father Roubaud from implication in Indian atrocities, judging from the reaction to his request to be permitted to remain in Canada after the conquest. He wrote Amherst that he was not French but from Avignon, and that he liked the British conquest ("C'est un des plus beaux jours de ma vie.") In February 1761 he was still in Canada, and still ministering to the Abenakis. Johnson to Amherst 12 February 1761, WO 34, vol. 39, 339-342.

side is a letter Amherst's secretary sent Colonel Frederick Haldimand in March 1759: "Between us, one does not approve what we did to the prisoners, of whom they say that two were killed in cold blood. I hope it was the Indians who were the agents of it."[121]

The Indians gloried in their gory reputation. They had advertising tricks to increase its effectiveness in cowing the opposition. A shocked British missionary described an Oneida war dance in 1815:

> This shew of savage military tactics exceeded in sublimity of horror any thing that I had ever witnessed, . . . imagine 20 or 30 of these warriors half naked, painted in various forms, so as to increase an appearance of ferocity; . . . war whoop -- a sound so terrific and savage, that it cannot be heard without a chilling emotion of terror, that penetrates to the very soul; . . .[122]

Some Indian aids to psychic impact were highly individualistic. "We observed a young Indian," wrote a British officer,

> who was preparing for the war-dance, seated under a wigwam, with a small looking-glass placed before him and surrounded with several papers, filled with different paints. . . . He first smeared his face with a little bear's grease, then rubbed in some vermilion, then a little black, blue and green paints, and having viewed himself for some time in the glass, in a rage he wiped it all off, and began

---

121 MG 21, G 2, vol. 68, 28.

122 Reverend Joshua Marsden, The narrative of a mission to Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and the Somers islands (New York: Johnson, 1966), 191-192.

> again, but with no better success, still appearing dissatisfied. We went on to the council, which lasted near two hours, and on our return found the Indian in the same position, and at the same employment, having nearly consumed all his stock of colours! [123a]

(This document reveals the perennial teen-ager in history. Then as now, his carefully planned get-up was meant to shake and scare the adults.) Interestingly, one French officer reasoned that an Indian warrior really used war paint in order to conceal from the enemy any sign of fear that might creep into his face.[123b]

Amherst's 1759 decision about recruiting the Stockbridge Indians shows how, as an advertiser, he suppressed his product's bad qualities and tried for an effect based on nothing more substantial than ferocious shouts and vermilion.

> I know what a vile crew they are . . . . I shall however take them into His Majesty's service for this next campaign to keep them from doing mischief elsewhere, . . . The French are afraid of them and though they have but very little reason for it it will be right not only to keep up their terror but to increase it as much as we can . . . I shall for that reason engage as many of them as I can for the ensuing campaign. [124]

123a Anburey, 127 (reference to year 1778).

123b Captain Leduchat's narrative for M. Lamy de Chatel, MG 4, A 1, vol. 3417, pièce 182, 11-12.

124 Amherst to Gage 26 February 1759, WO 34, vol. 46A, 288.

The Indians' reputation for not accepting civilized laws of war always undermined the morale of the white troops they faced. There were numerous instances of the reaction General Forbes found among his provincial troops -- (he called them the scum of the southern colonies) -- "who have wrought themselves up, into a panick at the very name of Indians."[125] Usually resolute men made agonizing reappraisals of their bravery and self-esteem when meeting Indian menaces. One squad of American scouts, stationed on the Massachusetts frontier specifically for protection from rampaging French Indian parties, waited until dawn to march out to the scene of an Indian atrocity and then timidly "marched only about two small gun shot from the fort [and] went westward instead of going eastward where the cattle were killed" and the Indians probably were.[126] In July 1757 a reconnaissance force of 300 New Jersey troops (under Col. Parker) was attacked while afloat on Lake Champlain by about 500 French and Indians. "The Indians who accompanied M. Corbière raised their whoop and fired at the same time. The enemy offered a feeble resistance. Two barges only escaped; the others were taken or sunk."[127] As a military

---

125 Forbes to Pitt 6 September 1758, George Louis Beer, British colonial policy 1754-1765 (New York: Macmillan, 1907), 62-63.

126 See depositions of S. Bogs and W. Millar at Boston, 24 December 1756, PAC, MG 18, N 8, vol. 94-3, 292-296.

127 NYCD, X, 647.

unit, the Americans were wiped out, right off the face of the earth. They suffered heavy casualties, 161 prisoners were taken, and only about 50 men ever arrived safely back at Fort Edward. On the French side, the casualties were one Indian slightly wounded. When two respectably-sized forces meet and the damage is so disproportionate, the evidence of unmanly terror flight on the part of everyone in the defeated group is very clear.[128] Again, when British troops -- although secure in Fort Duquesne, renamed Pitt -- were warned of a possible Indian attack,

> This information, you may be sure, struck a panic into our people, being 300 miles from any aid, and surrounded by the merciless savages . . . . I must own I made my sincere application to the Almighty, to pardon my sins and extricate us from this deplorable situation . . . [129]

The most absolute failure of nerve when faced with the apparition of Indian warriors was a French petite-guerre success of 17 May 1757. A British scouting party of 24 men took a French carpenter prisoner near Fort Carillon. A small squad of only

---

128 Ibid. PAC, MG 12, B, War Office 1, vol. 1, 324-331. PAC, MG 11, Colonial Office 5, 48, p. 378. The prisoners taken were eventually repatriated: "When I left Quebec the prisoners were daily arriving who had been Redeemed from the Indians and Several of the People who were taken in the Action upon the Lake came away with us by Answering to the Names of the Troops who were included in the Capitulation [for Fort William Henry]". Shaw to Loudoun 24 November 1757, LO 4897, 4898.

129 Stotz, "Defense in the wilderness", 150.

seven Canadians tracked and crept up close to the retreating British, "uttered the death cry and the English immediately fled, leaving their prisoner and even their arms and packs."[130]

Both French and British were keenly aware that the horrid reputation of their Indian retainers had an important impact on the other side. It was in pursuit of this psychological advantage, for example, that they used to deck out colonial militiamen as Indians. Some of the most significant actions of the war were decided by threats to unleash the Indians. The fall of Oswego was one. The same tactic delivered Fort William Henry into Montcalm's hands. Soon after surrounding the British position he sent in a letter to the commandant.

> Sir:
> This morning I invested your position with numerous forces, superior artillery and a great number of Indians from the upper country -- to whose inhumanity a detachment of your garrison [the 300 New Jerseys] can only too eloquently testify.
> It is my humane duty to summon you to surrender the position. I would still be master, able to restrain the Indians and to make sure any capitulation would be observed, as they have not to the

---

130 BJ, p. 112.

> present had anyone killed. It is possible I would not be master in other circumstances, and your obstinacy in defending the place can only cause a few days' delay and would inevitably imperil an unlucky garrison which can not be relieved, seeing the position that I have taken up. I ask a decisive reply within the hour.[131]

The threat featured in this summons was an Indian rampage-massacre if the defence were prolonged. A prudent British command yielded to it.

Nevertheless, the Indians did get out of hand when the fort was occupied. Several dozen British sick and wounded were not able to march with the garrison.

> He . . . saw the French Indians about five o'clock on the morn of the 10th of August drag the said wounded men out of their huts, murder them with their tomahawks and scalp them; . . . the French troops posted around the lines were not further than 40 feet from the huts where the said wounded lay then . . . several Canadian officers particularly one La Corne were present and . . . none either officer or soldier protected the said wounded men.[132]

Further, in search for plunder, the Indians attacked the marching line that left the fort. The soldiers, although armed, did not dare to defend themselves. Several persons were murdered trying to hang onto their personal property. Then the line

---

131 Montcalm to commanding officer of Fort William Henry, 3 August 1757, RAPQ 1931-2, 57.

132 Affadavit of Dr. Miles Wentworth, at Boston, 17 October 1757, WO 34, vol. 25, 73-76.

broke and scattered while French officers vainly sought to restore order. The Indians seized several hundred captives, whom French officials later ransomed.[133] The whole debacle proved once again the fearsome nature of Indian troops, how easily they ran amuck and how difficult it was to restrain them.

The British ploy outside Niagara was the same as the French had used at William Henry. This time the British general had the greater number of Indian auxiliaries. After repulsing the relief force from Lake Erie, Sir William Johnson wrote to Captain Pouchot, "advising him to deliver up the fortress while it was [still] in his power to keep the Indians within the bounds of humanity."[134a] On this occasion too, psychological warfare that employed the reputation of Indians was successful. Nobody knew better that Pouchot, who had been dispensing terror parties against the American frontier for three years, how unwise it might be to take a chance, and await an attack by storm from an army that included red men.

- - - - -

Indian alliances were very important to the makers of military plans for the Lake Ontario theatre.[134b] Indian

---

133 See ibid. and affadavit of Captain Ingersoll, pp. 68-72. La Pause, "Mémoire et observations", RAPQ 1931-2, 61. See also note 228 above.

134a Mair narrative, MG 18, L 4, packet 64.

134b See a typical measure of the importance the French attached to this subject in the fact that Vaudreuil wrote no fewer than fifteen letters to Versailles on the subject during

allies were potent instruments of psychological warfare. As scouts and skirmishers, they helped ensure that the vital aim of security on the march and in camp would be achieved. Their performance as intelligence-gatherers gave eyes to headquarters' strategy planners.

For most of the war, the French enjoyed more of these military advantages than the British did. French alliances with Indian peoples were firmer and produced larger contingents of warriors -- a continuation of the pre-war situation in which Canada exercised general diplomatic predominance in the western interior. This successful diplomacy rested upon a well-understood mutuality of common interests between Indians and Frenchmen. As far as the Indians were concerned, it was mainly a matter of commerce, unless it became one of protection. The French sought controlling influence. Their diplomacy was not without friction, but bribery, propaganda and some genuine friendship helped to allay suspicions, repair breaches and compensate for complaints.

However, the basic prop of Canadian diplomacy towards the Indians was military strength. In peacetime, the use of force against recalcitrant peoples was occasionally necessary to keep the alliance system intact. In wartime, the Indians could not afford to love a loser. Force can create the most

---

1758 -- many more than on any other matter. Minister to Vaudreuil 20 January 1759, MG 1, B, vol. 109, f. 315. See also Vaudreuil to the Minister 13 August 1756 (MG 1, C 11 A, vol. 101, 95), in which the Canadian Governor reports his rival Johnson was keenly bidding for Iroquois alliance and "refusing them nothing, not even money."

compelling of common interests. It was essential for the Indians not to oppose the strongest power in their region -- if they could tell which power that was, or was becoming.

In 1754-1757, repeated proofs of French ability to defend and control the borderlands of Canada reinforced the necessity for getting along well with the French. The Indians seemed more attached to the French than to the English, La Pause said, but not because they liked one better than the other: "It is that they fear the French more, because they are the stronger, at making war in the forest, ..." [135] Johnson told the Board of Trade,

> Your Lordships will please to consider the peculiarity of the Indians' character and that they do not look upon themselves as principals in the present war, therefore I conceive it is both natural and reasonable to expect that these Peoples attachment to us & the assistance they will be disposed to give His Majesty's Arms will be proportionable to our success & the appearances of it. [136]

From 1758 on, Canada's alliances with native peoples -- end-product of a full century of diplomatic nurture -- gave way under the strain of multiplying British successes. Indian auxiliary troops became increasingly available to the British, while the French found their traditional allies more and more

---

135 La Pause, "Mémoire et observations", RAPQ 1931-2, 67. See also Plessis journal (1756), RAPQ 1928-9, 221-224.

136 Johnson to Lords of Trade 28 September 1757, NYCD, VII, 278-279.

reluctant about coming forward. With the frontiers of France's citadel in North America crumbling, and the British beginning to break into the western preserve Canada had kept guarded for so long, the tribes re-shaped their policies in accordance with the military preponderance of a new power, and left the house of their French father.

Indian alliance, as a factor of power and strategy, was thus a product of all other factors combined. Although Indian alliances -- and the military aid that went with them -- could be encouraged by careful and complex diplomacy, the basic rule was that Indian nations gave their official friendship to whoever was near enough to supply them, and powerful enough to threaten. Both French and British found that nothing succeeds like success. Indian alliances could not be built up in isolation from developments in other aspects of the war. Instead, they were a sensitive, sometimes tardy barometer of the two clashing empires' overall military fortunes.

1915/3

FRENCH AND BRITISH STRATEGY IN THE LAKE ONTARIO THEATRE OF OPERATIONS, 1754-1760

by Malcolm MacLeod

Thesis presented to the School of Graduate Studies of the University of Ottawa as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy



Grand Lake, Nova Scotia, 1973

© Malcolm MacLeod. Ottawa, Canada, 1974

CHAPTER VI

FACTORS DETERMINING POWER AND STRATEGY: MATERIEL

Geography, the pre-possession of fortified positions, Lake Ontario seapower, and numerous Indian alliances, all gave important advantages to the French during the opening years of the war. Their strategic lead in the Lake Ontario sector was paralleled in other theatres. Yet the war's outcome was not that the French were victorious. Instead, they collapsed into conquest. Obviously, there is still something more to be understood about the factors that guided and limited the war's development, or its end result is not going to be intelligible. The so-far-missing something can be stated in one word: resources.

The contending armies needed four types of expendable resources -- men, munitions, food and trade goods. In the case of each item, there were methods of organizing and using what was available, of conserving the supply, and of attacking the enemy in the rear so as to deprive him of his. It was the North American commanders' task to acquire if they could, to husband and to allocate; but for the most part, the enemy's strategic rear was beyond their reach. Both Canada and the British colonies faced west, with their roots and dependence deep in Europe. The rear, therefore, was the Atlantic ocean.

If one side could sever the other's supply line from the old continent for a long enough period, the result would be an enemy growing feebler, throttled for want of the components without which the war machine could not work. Seapower was the prospective cutting edge for transoceanic lifelines. In the middle of the Eighteenth century the British navy was sharply honed for such surgery; the marine force of France was a blunted paring knife. Directed from European capitals, the two navies unequally contested for control of the passage. The British government fostered their fleet with vigour and generous budgets. The French navy, very economy-minded, contracted the habit of indifference, partly from policy, partly from defeat.

The armies' most important consumable, men, will be discussed in the next chapter. Here we shall note how powerfully strategies were affected by available supply of the other essential items. Ample stocks of munitions and trade goods arrived in the American colonies from England. Canada needed the same types of imports, and even in foodstuffs was not self-sufficient. This made her war effort more vulnerable to the pressure of hostile seapower. But French shipping was increasingly swept off the ocean. Of the two rival empires, the one that was the more dependent upon support from overseas had the more fragile and interruptible system of materiel supply.

1. Provisions

Napoleon used to say his army marched on its stomach. The troops who fought for Canada in the 1750's did not march much -- theirs was a war of position, not movement -- but they still had to eat. So did the civilians, and the livestock, although it is customary for military leaders to put priorities the other way around. Providing adequate supplies of foodstuffs was a prerequisite for keeping the community going, and for its defence. One of the era's great commanders, Frederick the Great of Prussia, wrote that a general's "primary duty" was "to procure nourishment for the soldier wherever you assemble and wherever you wish to conduct him."[1] La Pause called provisions "the foundation of operations."[2]

For the French, this essential foundation was quite unsound. The French leaders, intermittently isolated from Europe, were faced with the problem of prosecuting the war mainly with Canadian resources. The colony's agricultural base proved too limited, especially in manpower, to sustain first their ambitions, then their hopes, and finally their necessities. The Anglo-American enemy, on the other hand, had a

---

1 "The instruction of Frederick the Great for his generals", Thomas R. Phillips, Roots of strategy, 323-324.

2 "Mémoire sur la campagne à faire en Canada l'année 1757", RAPQ 1932-3, 337-338.

generous food base on this very continent, making Europe unimportant. While French starvation became chronic, it was only in unusual circumstances that the British were straitened for want of food, and then only temporarily. On both sides, the food-supply situation was an influential shaper of plans and projects.

Just how constricted the French were for provisions can be seen in the number and variety of sources on which they drew to feed the people and the army. The principal source was Canadian agriculture. Although Canada in the mid-1700's was a more urbanized society than it was to be again until 150 years later -- with 25% of the population dwelling in the towns -- that still left a 75% majority of the people living in the countryside, where they carried on crop farming, husbandry and fishing. In good years during the second quarter of the Eighteenth century there were modest exports of foodstuffs -- cheese, salted beef, flour, biscuit, peas, fish products -- to Louisbourg, the West Indias and France. "I fear we shall never get Canada if we must git it by Starving of them for want of victualls," an Albany merchant wrote in 1756, "for there farmers are many & Enjoy there land as yet without fear I believe & in time of warr they Suffer nothing to be Exported of Eatables,..."[3]

---

3 R. Sanders to Messrs. Rob and Rick Roy 7 January 1756, PAC, MG 18, C 6, 157-158. On Canadian farm surpluses, see Allana G. Reid, "Intercolonial trade during the French regime", CHR,

The colonial government exerted overall control of agricultural products. Even in peacetime (1738), the captains of militia were authorized to "take possession in any place whatsoever of as much wheat as was required for the troops, the hospitals, and the poor, paying for it at a rate of four livres per bushel."[4] Vaudreuil's plan for the 1759 reinforcement of the Lake Ontario area showed how each of Canadian society's main sections -- peasants, seigneurs and church -- had become channels through which the country's disposable wealth in food was flowing into the government's hands for war purposes. The Governor wrote that men could be sent west only as provisions became available:

> I shall be able to employ part of the flour coming in daily from the tythes, from the toll for grinding, and from the savings of each farmer, in sending thither an augmentation of the forces, . . . 5

After firm laws had mobilized the regular, legitimate surplus, farming people could still send extra food into the official depots if the inducement were right. In July 1759, Montcalm recorded, it appeared that the Montreal region had been exhaustedly "drained" of all cereal crops.

XXXII (1951), 236-251; and "General trade between Quebec and France during the French regime", CHR, XXXIV (1953), 18-32.

4 Hocquart ordinance 17 February 1738, Historical section of the General Staff, [Canadian Army], A history of the Organization, Development and Services of the military, and naval forces of Canada (Ottawa: King's Printer, no date), I, 24.

5 Summary of 1759 campaign plan 1 April 1759, NYCD, X, 953.

> It was useless to be optimistic about finding any more -- at least so our administrators claimed. But scarcely had one adopted the wise tactic of buying grain through private negotiation than they found [about 55,000 gallons] and they will turn up more grain yet. 6

While scraping the bottom of the Canadian breadbasket, authorities at Quebec simultaneously mined five other sources of provisions:

1) The Indians. At many of the interior posts, the French were feeding the Indians. This was a diplomatic obligation no matter how scarce provisions might be. At the same time Indians fed the French. When they settled near the forts they were encouraged to plant and harvest crops which the French would then buy for cash, both to feed the garrison and to re-distribute to the Indians as presents. Céloron de Blainville reported that Chatakoin on Lake Erie "would not be advantageous for a fort, as there are no native villages near."[7] Vaudreuil ordered Clauzonne Chabert de Joncaire to acquire the products of Seneca hunting and fishing to stock Niagara's larder. A plan for a thrust down the Mohawk river towards Albany, which was frequently canvassed during 1756-1758, included a project to have the Iroquois provision the expedition

---

6 Montcalm journal 11 July 1759, Casgrain, Manuscrits ... de Lévis, VII, 572.

7 Céloron journal 16 July 1749, Collections of the State historical Society of Wisconsin, XVIII (Madison: the Society, 1908), 38.

as it traversed their territory above Oswego.[8]

2) American merchants. In peacetime there was quite a large trade between British and French colonies in North America. According to Virginia's Governor in 1755, French forces in Canada were chiefly supplied from Pennsylvania, New York and other northern colonies. This was a gross exaggeration, but it seems clear that Louisbourg troops at least, ate a lot of American food. Flour, beef and pork arrived at that unagricultural seaboard outpost both from Canada and the English colonies, and West Indian rum, sugar and molasses were transshipped in exchange. No doubt some American foodstuffs found their way from Louisbourg to Quebec. During the first two years of hostilities, before war was officially declared, British authorities in America found it difficult to suppress this trade. War or not, for many American businessmen and exporters it was

---

8 BJ 7 February 1757, p. 85. Frank H. Severance, An old frontier of France (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1917), II, 415.

business as usual, if possible.[9] After 1756 embargo and sea-power gradually cut Canada off from sources of American provisioning.

3) British forces. Among the mixture of motives that impelled the French to attack British fortified places, was the desire to capture stocks of provisions. One economical operation in which expenses were recovered was the siege of Oswego. When it fell the French seized weapons by the ton and bateaux by the score, and a neat list was made of the items hauled away to fill Fort Frontenac's cupboards:[10]

352 casks biscuit
1386 quarts (55,440 gallons) bacon and corned beef
712 quarts (28,480 gallons) flour
7 quarts (280 gallons) salt
90 sacks peas
33 live cows
15 live pigs
11 quarts (9440 gallons) rice
200 sacks flour
1 granary full of flour
1 granary full of peas

The 1757 capture of Fort William Henry produced another immense booty, including 50 yoke of oxen, about 140 tons of pork,

---

9 Dinwiddie to Board of Trade January 1755, George Louis Beer, British colonial policy 1754-1765 (New York: Macmillan, 1907), 74-75. In a 1755 account of North American affairs written for the Duke of Cumberland, John Barrell waxed eloquent against the French, and trading with the enemy: "The French, that restless Nation! not Satisfied with being the disturbers of Europe, are now become the Plague, the Pest of every Corner of the Globe! against such Enemys None can be too much on their guard! and surely England Cannot be too Speedy in preventing every Supply from her Plantations that tends to Strengthen the Common Enemy of Mankind." Pargellis, Affairs, 74.

10 Léry journal for 1756, RAPQ 1926-7, 404. The list is also in MG 1, C 11 A, vol. 102, 237. See too the references cited on page 216 above.

170 tons of flour, and lesser amounts of other provisions.[11] And this was not a convenient by-product; Vaudreuil had written to France, "I flatter myself that the provisions we shall find in the English forts will indemnify us twofold for those we shall have consumed on the expedition."[12] Smaller actions -- like the raids on Fort Bull (March 1756) and the German Flats (November 1757) -- were also aimed at destroying the enemy's provisions and acquiring some of them for French use. Food shortages necessitated such policies. In October 1759 Lieutenant-Governor De Lancey of New York had not yet heard of the British victory at Quebec. If the French there held out, he wrote Amherst, "It seems to me that as soon as Mr. Wolfe is embarked they will endeavour to attack Crown Point for provisions or do it in the winter."[13]

---

11 After the food from Fort William Henry had been transported to Carillon, Bougainville recorded on 26 September 1757, "By an exact state of provisions presently in the magazines of this fort, there is flour and pork there to nourish the troops who are scheduled to hold on campaign until the end of October, the garrison which will pass the winter here, and a corps of 3000 men, if one wished to send one here in the spring, until July 1st." BJ, pp. 184-185. On the tactic of capturing food from the enemy, see Gilles Archambault, "La question des vivres au Canada au cours de l'hiver 1757-1758", Revue d'Histoire de l'Amérique française, XXI, 40; Stanley, New France, 159, 162; and R. Sanders to the Committee of War [Boston] 12 August 1757, PAC, MG 18, C 6, 215.

12 Vaudreuil to Moras 12 July 1757, NYCD, X, 585.

13 De Lancey to Amherst 1 October 1759, WO 34, vol. 29, 207-210.

4) Louisiana. While Fort Duquesne stood, Canada's burden in supplying it was greatly lessened by food convoys being sent from the Illinois country.[14]

5) The most important source of extra food was shipments from Europe. Only small aid could be expected from the Indians, the enemy and Louisiana. When Canadian agriculture proved insufficient to carry all the grocery bills of a wasteful war, large-scale imports from bountiful France were the most practical method of making up shortages. From 1757 on, these imports became very important. But they were never enough. Doreil complained in 1757 that only three of a group of eighteen ships had brought food.[15] Canada's soldiers criticized the French Court's priorities: "The ship the LIBERTE," wrote Bougainville in September 1757,

> carrying complete clothing for 3200 men and 60 recruits, entered the harbour today. At first it, as well as several others, had a cargo of wheat and salt pork. The order came to unload in order to take on another cargo. It is the result of some intrigue among the subordinate ministers. We suffer from its effects. 16

As the noose of famine tightened in 1758-1760, France was petitioned to make the latest advances in military provisioning

---

14 "The cost of these supplies nearly emptied the Louisiana treasury. They cost 600,000 livres for eight months". Stanley, 291, note 24.

15 Letter dated 25 October 1757, Archambault, 39-40.

16 BJ 28-30 September 1757, p. 185.

available for the war in Canada. Flour and meat were bulky; but a convenient, hardy and nutritious dehydrated product -- food powder (poudre alimentaire) -- had been developed and stockpiled for the oft-postponed invasion of England. At Versailles in January 1759, Bougainville requested at least 30,000 rations of this compact provision to be sent to Quebec with the year's troop replenishments.[17] After Quebec fell, another officer linked this handy food with Canada's impoverished condition. He envisioned 500 French and 1000 Acadians marching from the Bay of Fundy to join the forces in Canada, sustained en route by the only provision light enough that quantities sufficient for such a long trek could be carried along.[18]

Drawing upon all these sources, the Canadian command was just able to limp through the war and avoid surrendering on account of too little food. The trend was downhill all the way. A naval officer who visited Canada in 1756 cheerfully reported that the colony had stockpiled provisions for two years, so that the people were "as tranquil over the war's events as if

---

17 Bougainville to the Minister of Marine 7 January 1759, RAPQ 1923-4, 40.

18 Masse de St. Maurice, memorandum of 3 January 1760, NYCD, X, 1065.

they were enjoying full and uninterrupted peace."[19] His report was not accurate, but it does indicate that some of the talk he heard appreciated the fact that insufficient food-supply could become the worst chink in the country's armour. There was a bad harvest in 1756, and that fall they began to mix an equal measure of peas with wheat-flour in making bread. Ration cards appeared, although perhaps Bougainville's word "famine" was at this stage a little too strong:

> A police regulation has ruled here [Quebec] that bread will be distributed to the public only in the afternoon. I went to see this distribution. It presents the image of a famine. They fight to get near the wicket through which they pass the bread. Those who cannot get near hold out their permits on the end of a stick.[20]

Some good news in 1757 was that there was surplus at Detroit, for feeding Fort Duquesne.[21] In the Saint Lawrence valley, however, "The scarcity we are experiencing gets worse eech day. Quebec is suffering greatly and if our supply-ships do not arrive within two weeks, we are going to be very hard up."[22] The daily army ration -- two pounds of bread, one-half pound of pork and four ounces of peas -- in July was cut to 1½ pounds bread, ¼ pound bacon.[23] Even after the ST. PATRICE

---

19 Plessis journal, RAPQ 1928-9, 219.

20 BJ 22 November 1756, pp. 71-72.

21 Ibid. 5 March 1757, p. 89.

22 Vaudreuil to Lévis 19 July 1757, Casgrain, VIII, 42.

23 Two pounds of cereal food per ration was quite standard in European armies. O.L. Spaulding, Warfare (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1925), 545-551. The regular French

arrived with 4000 barrels of flour, Bougainville heard rumours that people in Quebec were still dying of hunger.[24] The harvest was bad that year, due to rains and even frost in August.[25]

At the beginning of December, there was more bad news on the dietary front: horsemeat. When this item first appeared on the army's menu, some of the soldiers mutinously insisted on interviewing the chef. The Béarn regiment's grenadier company did not want to accept it; Brigadier-General Lévis, highest-ranking officer in the Montreal region, had to listen to their complaints. Aside from an overcivilized superstition against eating the uncloven hoof, the troops protested the distinction that permitted civilians to go on eating normal fare. The peasants did not have to eat horsemeat, was their grievance, "not even their negroes and their . . . Indian slaves."

> The Chevalier de Lévis replied to their representations, that the horsemeat he had issued to them was of good quality; that the civilians had the feebleness and prejudice to not want to eat it; that soldiers ought to think differently; . . . since the provision-relief which the king had sent had been captured.[26]

Two months later, February 1758, Doreil wrote that "the people perish in misery."[27] But, Montcalm explained to the

---

army ration is spelled out in the Bigot-Cadet-Martel agreement of 26 October 1756, Severance, II, 404. For a prisoner's ration see MG 5, A 1, vol. 441, f. 284.

24 BJ 9 September 1757, p. 181.

25 Bigot to Moras 24 August 1757, Archambault, 31-32.

26 Lévis journal December 1757, Casgrain, I, 118-122.

Minister of Marine, "the troops are waiting patiently without a murmur, for better treatment."[28] They had to wait and wait. Provisioning problems were not relieved during 1758-1760. When Fort Frontenac was blown up by Bradstreet's men in August 1758, the winter's provisions for the whole pays d'en haut was in storage there -- "an irreparable loss under the present circumstances."[29] When he viewed the state of the larder in April 1759, Lévis worried that the armies could not be subsisted for more than one month on campaign.[30] At the end of August he was so anxious to get the La Présentation Indians' corn crop safely into government granaries he had it harvested before it was ripe.[31]

Five days after the famous battle outside its walls, the fortress-port of Quebec -- link with the mother-country -- was surrendered to the British. According to the men who made the decision, it was on account of the city's low food-supply. At a council of war to consider the situation on 15 September Bigot, the supply expert,

---

27 Doreil to [Belle-Isle] 26 February 1758, RAPQ 1944-5, 120.

28 Montcalm to Moras 19 February 1758, NYCD, X, 688.

29 BJ 6-12 September 1758, p. 277. Three thousand barrels, according to Dr. Huck, writing Lord Loudoun on 10 September 1758. LO 5914. An impartial account says 10,000 barrels, probably favouring Bradstreet by exaggerating the damage he did.

30 Lévis journal April 1759, Casgrain, I, 175.

31 Lévis journal 27 August 1759, Casgrain, I, 200.

recorded his vote: "Considering the extremity to which the place is reduced for provisions my advice is to ask for a capitulation." On the 18th, when all the meat and wine had been consumed and 700 loaves of bread for several thousand people was the major item still left in the stores, the capitulation was signed.[32]

There is some disagreement in the sources as to just how bad was Canada's situation for food during the last year of the war. A couple of British witnesses, who had opportunity to know, thought the stories of famine they had heard were very overdone. "Far from a scarcity of provisions in this country", wrote one soldier during the Quebec campaign, "We found great quantities of cattle of all kinds and grain in abundance we have burned near three thousand houses here or more . . ."[33] Wolfe's widespread, terroristic destruction of farmsteads ensured that the 1760 state of French provisions would be worse than it had been before he began his siege of Quebec and countryside.[34] Nevertheless, when Amherst the following autumn completed the work

---

32 "Proces-verbal du conseil de guerre tenu à Québec" 15 September 1759; State of provisions in the stores at Quebec 15 and 18 September 1759, RAPQ 1922-3, inset plates at pp. 256, 304, 368.

33 Charles Leslie to his father 23 September 1759, from the MEDWAY off Quebec,PAC,MG18,L 5, vol. 4, pp. (renumbered) 3-4.

34 "We burned and destroyed upward of 1400 farm-houses, for we, during the siege, were masters of a great part of the country along the shore, and parties were almost continually kept out ravaging the country, so that 'tis thought, 'twill take them half a century to recover the damage". New York Mercury 31 December 1759, quoting an American soldier back from

of conquest, he reported to his Prime Minister that Canadian peasants "do not brew beer from malt, and for lack of molasses have nothing to drink but water," but "there does not appear to be any want of cows, bullocks, sheep or poultry", and -- the Béarn gourmets would have appreciated this touch -- "there are too many horses."[35]

Other indications show that while the French had sufficient food-supplies to maintain life, their Indian alliances were strained, and military plans were cramped and dislocated, by shortage of provisions. "I believe you guessed very right as to the parties that are coming to our posts," Amherst wrote Gage in mid-winter 1759/1760,

> being nothing more than the Swegatchie Indians who are forced to come for want of provisions; in the situation Canada is now in it would not surprise me that the French should choose to get rid of them. 36

Choose to get rid of allies? It is a drastic choice, which only real hardship would produce. Boasting to captured French officers how the final campaign to occupy all of Canada would be easy, General James Murray explained his reasoning: Lévis' army "can not subsist on air, and so they will be obliged to surrender on account of provisions."[37] Vaudreuil was afraid he might be right.[38] One

---

Canada, A. R. M. Lower, Canadians in the making (Toronto: Longmans, Green, 1958), 84.

35 Amherst to Pitt 4 October 1750, Cognets, Amherst and Canada, 290.

36 Amherst to Gage 27 January 1760, WO 34,vol.46A,399-400.

37 Malartic to Lévis 26 May 1760, Casgrain, II, 332.

French officer, recorded in March 1760 his opinion that meat consumption had to be further curtailed in Canada, for the various species of domestic animals had been so over-slaughtered that they were verging towards extinction.[39a]

What was left to eat? Bread, and for "another expedient, in order to please as well as nourish the soldiers, brandy would be the only thing . . . "[39b] Vaudreuil issued an edict withdrawing all brandy from the civilian market for the encouragement of the troops; with everything so scarce, it was "their only comfort".(leur unique douceur)[39c] When finally brought to bay at Montreal, Lévis' shrunken permanent-force army had food left for only fifteen to twenty days.[40a] Arriving in France after the conquest, Vaudreuil was officially scolded for having surrendered after his previous optimism. However, the Minister of Marine admitted the government had been aware of the weakest link in Canada's defences: lack of food.[40b]

The British had few similar worries about food-supply. At the beginning of the war, before colonial markets had adjusted to the new demands and when the army commissariat functioned badly through inexperience, some shortages occurred.

---

38 Vaudreuil, Instruction to Lévis 16 April 1760, NYCD, X, 1069-1071.

39a Vezon, "Evenéments", RAPQ 1938-9, 5.

39b Ibid. La Pause would not agree with this advice. The habitants, he said, not only had tobacco pipes permanently inserted between their teeth, but "on account of the huge business in beverages that is done in this country, they have become addicted to eau-de-vie, which is why they are more sluggish than they used to be." "La population et culture des terres," RAPQ 1933-4, 212.

General Shirley's son wrote from Oswego in 1755,

> Our bateauxmen desert us in large numbers, as do the soldiers who are dissatisfied at our being obliged to allow them no more than half a pound of bread and no rum . . . . We have now only eight days' bread, pork and beef enough, but no rum or peas . . . . [41]

Later on, problems practically disappeared. American agriculture easily produced surplus enough to feed the thirty to forty thousand troops of the British/American army. Businessmen contracted to provide certain quantities at set intervals, dealing with the Deputy Quartermaster General on the general staff.[42a] It was not even necessary to impose special controls over foodstuffs. Abercromby thought of impressing provisions in 1758, but was dissuaded from doing so.[42b] Records of food on hand at various British forts throughout the war always reveal great richness.[43] When Fort Stanwix was to be garrisoned over its first winter by four hundred men, headquarters calculated the post would need 774½ barrels -- about 62 tons, 65 bateaux full -- of flour, pork,

---

39c Edict of 6 June 1760, MG 1, C 11A, vol. 105, 123.

40a Lévis journal 6 September 1760, Casgrain, I, 303.

40b Minister to Vaudreuil 5 December 1760, MG 1, B, vol. 112, 339

41 Jack Shirley to Governor Morris 11 September 1755, John A. Schutz, William Shirley (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina press, 1961), 214.

42a Canedy, 162, 188.

42b Pownall to Abercromby 28 March 1758, AB 84. Prevost to Abercromby 20 August 1758, AB 548.

43 E.g., "Return of provisions at Saratoga" 7 November 1757, LO 6800.

rice, butter and peas. The only problems this seemed to raise were how many men would have to be assigned to transport it up the Mohawk from Albany, and how long would they take. Providing this huge store of food was not given a thought.[44] For the winter of 1759/60, Oswego was stocked with 1070 barrels of flour, 684 of salt pork, and many other items including rum, rice, peas and butter, five boxes of candles and 156 live bullocks.[45]

Army-produced food made exceptions -- significant in detail but unimportant in quantity -- to the general rule that provisions for Anglo-American forces were procured on the ordinary market. Gardens were established at several interior posts, to ensure a minimum supply of vegetables. Sometimes the troops fished, or bought game from the Indians, or turned food-processors, brewing spruce beer and boiling out maple sugar.[46] They also practised husbandry. Amherst wrote Niagara's commanding officer he was sending him "some sheep with a ram & a bull & cows . . . that you may have a breed of both at Niagara."[47]

---

44 Calculation of stores needed, WO 34, vol. 45, 29.

45 List signed by Major Christie 7 November 1759, PAC, MG 21, G 2, vol. 27, 26.

46 Eyre to Amherst 15 April 1760, WO 34, vol. 21, 61-68.

47 Amherst to officer commanding at Niagara 29 July 1760, WO 34, vol. 23, 71.

The British provisioning effort was unlike the French in that quantity was rarely any problem. Both armies suffered similar shortcomings, however, in these respects: variety of food was restricted; there was ignorance of some basic principles of nutrition; and the technique of preserving foods by pickling or salting was often detrimental to the health of men who were deprived of fresh supplies during lengthy wintertime periods. For these reasons, as well supplied as they were, the British suffered no less than the French from diet deficiency diseases.[48]

But quantity was the main thing. Two events in late 1757 underline the difference between the two sides in provision supply. In Canada, we saw, as the first snows of winter fell the troops were eating horsemeat and not liking it. By contrast -- like the Biblical man who pulled down his barns to build bigger -- the British were making room in their Albany storehouses by throwing food out. According to the commissary, a certain lot of meat had been there too long, "had become a perfect Nusance, so that none could be prevailed on to carry it away, till Applications was made to the Mayor, who ordered one Johannas Flansburg

---

48 E.g., poor food supplies at Quebec over the 1759/1760 winter helped cause the British to bury 1000 of 4800 men. Christopher Lloyd and Jack L. S. Coulter, Medicine and the Navy, 1200-1900, III (Edinburgh and London: Livingstone, 1961), 118-119.

a Carter to do it." But what was not found fit for soldiers' palates was apparently fine for anybody else. The meat was fished out of the river where Flansburg dumped it, "was dress'd at a Publick Tavern and highly praised by [the patrons] for good in its kind."[49]

Why did the French become so short of food? Because the war brought an influx of new mouths to feed -- troops fresh from France, prisoners, Indian allies, Acadian refugees.[50] Because the British navy more and more effectively sealed the sea-lanes against assistance from overseas. Because the nature of the soil and the amount of cleared land placed limits that prevented the expansion of Canadian food production to meet new needs. Because in 1757 the northern climate struck one of its worst blows ever. Because in Canada leading administrators and businessmen were banded together in a dishonest league that was as willing to starve as feed the people, providing the price

---

49 Robert Leake to Loudoun 5 November 1757, LO 6797.

50 During 1755-1760 about 2000 Acadians fled to Canada, congregating in largest numbers near Bellechasse and at Nicolet and Bécancour. Robert George LeBlanc, "The Acadian migrations" (Master of Arts thesis, University of Minnesota, 1961), 30-40. "Counting the Acadian refugees," wrote Doreil in October 1757, "the augmentation of Indians, the English prisoners there have been nine to ten thousand extra mouths more than usual to nourish." RAPQ 1944-5, 114. Compared with peacetime, this meant about fifteen per cent additional people to be fed.

were right.[51] And because an unalterable personnel shortage meant the very same men had to farm for food and fight the enemy. Since they could not do both at once, and immediate defence needs were paramount, food production suffered greatly.[52]

These then were the main features of opposing attempts to fill the stomachs armies marched on. On the British side generally plenty, improved by improvisation. Among the French a scarcity-producing combination of circumstances and stalwart endurance in the face of dearth, but -- ruinously -- gradual isolation from outside help which, if it were to arrive at all, had to come in by sea.

Calculations concerning provisions played a consistently important part in planning from very early in the war. The state of the enemy for food was one of the key discoveries the British tried to make from their captives and deserters. While they

---

51 It is hard to calculate how much damage to the supply side of the war effort may have been done by the corrupt, monopolistic manoeuvres of the syndicate around Intendant Bigot -- the infamous Friponne. By fair means or foul, the merchants in the league amassed provisions which their partners who bought for the Government purchased at prices inflated sufficiently to provide huge kickbacks and immense profits. The primary producer was often cheated -- like the Montreal area farmer who wanted to sell 130 head of cattle to the army and finished up with no payment for his herd and a small fine for a technical infraction, while the swindling ring made 18,000 livres. "Mémoire du Canada," RAPQ 1924-5, 137-138. For the sake of higher prices, they promoted scarcity by keeping secret hoards off the market (Montcalm journal 12 June 1759, Casgrain, VII, 534-535), and probably by routinely shipping unnecessarily large quantities of food to the frontiers, away from centres of population (on this ploy see Archambault, "La question des vivres au Canada . . . .", RHAF,

collected intelligence and relished French discomfiture, Canada's defenders wrestled with the strategical consequences of shortage.

The first signs of developing deficiencies showed as early as 1756. The commanding officer of Toronto, dispatching an Indian war party, had no food to give them and had to tell them to hunt en route.[53] The raid that blew up Fort Bull would have starved without British food.[54] By the end of that campaign Lord Loudoun -- the British Commander-in-Chief whose idea of army was administration -- had already declared the possible importance of mere food in the war against French Canada. Thinking ahead on the 1757 campaign in a letter to his superior, he predicted success if two prerequisites were met: " . . . if the Fleet will prevent their having Supplies from

---

XXI, 16-50). Ruthless measures may indeed have managed to scrape up food where gentler methods would not. Robbers usually have more than other people until they're caught. On the other hand, farm folk may have preferred to hide or waste surplus stocks rather than sell to a government of grafters for the small price (if any) that was being offered. Sometimes the syndicate's overreaching greed actually discouraged production, as when the crook-commissars monopolized all the colony's wheat at the edict price of 6 livres per minot, and at next sowing-time would not let any go for seed under 24 livres. "Mémoire du Canada", RAPQ 1924-5, 134. The most serious military result of their dishonest provisioning system was alienation of the people. When rations were reduced in autumn 1757, Montcalm wrote, "The Canadian has a bad tone upon this occasion; . . . The great unrest arises from the Canadian not having confidence in the government, remaining convinced that the scarcity is artificial and instigated by certain persons' greed." Montcalm journal 6 November 1757, Casgrain, VII, 316. There is a close link between massive militia desertion in the final campaign, and several preceding years of systematic robbery and self-indulgence by people in high places. For the racket's genesis in a 1748 partnership between Bigot and Messrs. Gradis of Bordeaux, see Denis Vaugeois, "François Bigot,

Europe, and the People here can be brought not to supply them, which will be difficult, . . ."[55]

The British were very interested in everything they could learn or guess about Canadian menus. A young woman taken prisoner in September 1756 was "the first that has mentioned their being scarce of provisions."[56] In 1757 a returned prisoner told Loudoun there had been plenty of food in Quebec during September and October, before he was exchanged.[57] This was a deception engineered by the French, it seems clear, for in fact the situation was starting to be a little desperate, causing near-mutiny in the troops, civil disturbance, strict rationing and reduced diets. A French trooper who deserted Carillon about the same time had a different story -- "He was at Montreal, for four days [autumn 1757] & that his provision for that time

---

son exil et sa mort", RHAF, XXI, 236. See also the excellent article by J. F. Bosher, "Government and private interests in New France", Canadian Public Administration, X (1967), 244-257, in which he shows that the syndicate's fraudelent career was in keeping with a characteristic attitude of the era -- not that the State interfered with private enterprise, but the opposite.

52 Chapter VII will detail how the Canadian militia was the largest single force available to the French command. The leaders tried to excuse from active duty enough men to sow, tend and harvest crops. Vaudreuil scheduled the William Henry expedition so as to be "sure of the return of all our Canadians in season to save their harvest." Vaudreuil to Moras 12 July 1757, NYCD, X, 585. Bougainville stressed, "We must arrange expeditions of war -- as well as the circumstances and the enemy will permit it -- for times when the land does not demand the presence of the habitants". Archambault, 30-31. But councils of perfection were hard to follow, because the enemy never permitted. Recurrent transport chores and unscheduled emergencies pressed the agricultural work on the insufficient shoulders of nuns and priests,

was two pound of Bread & four of Horse flesh, --"[58]

A perspicacious strategical paper on the British side -- "State of Canada in October 1757, with some thoughts on the manner of reducing it", by "C.M." -- laid stress on the food factor.

> By the state & condition of Canada in 1757, it is easy to guess what it is in 1758 for though they may receive some supplies yet a small matter will not relieve them or enable them to support themselves another winter. They can only have flour and salt provisions as to any more European troops the Governor and Intendant wrote to prevent their being sent as those that are already there together with the indians have eat up the country. 59

This anonymous thinker was very close to the French leaders' minds. Here is Montcalm's own appreciation, in February 1758.

> I cannot give you any information yet concerning the next campaign; the operations will depend on the prompt arrival of provisions and of the good

---

women, children and the aged. Food production declined when it was necessary that it expand.

53 Noyelle to [commanding officer Fort Frontenac] 19 April 1756, PAC, MG24, L 3, vol. 3, 1464.

54 Léry journal 1756, RAPQ 1926-7, 384-386, 388.

55 Loudoun to Cumberland 2 October 1756, Pargellis, Affairs, 237.

56 Loudoun to Cumberland 3 October 1756, Pargellis, Affairs, 242.

57 Shaw to Loudoun 24 November 1757, LO 4897, 4898.

58 Bois, questioned in December 1757, LO 5132. See

> or bad bearing of the enemy. The article of provisions makes me tremble; notwithstanding the reductions in the rations the scarcity is greater than we should have believed. 60

Late arrival of provisions immobilized the French army until after mid-May.[61] The British were able to accomplish several things that campaign to make the French problem even worse than it already was. They did not surrender up -- as in 1756 and 1757 -- any more well-stocked larders. They made sure the food and labour spared keeping Duquesne going was thrown away when they chased the French out of the Ohio valley. And a secondary result of the raid on Fort Frontenac was to put a big dent in French supplies. "The English colonel Bradstreet . . . found there two millions [livres worth of] merchandise, two thousand barrels of flour and five hundred barrels of pork."[62]

In 1759 it was the same story -- provisions again a key item in strategic planning. Vaudreuil, ambitious for the Ontario area but wary the British might forestall him by moving early, gathered sufficient reinforcements to put between 1600 and 1700 men under Pouchot, Niagara's commandant, for the campaign's

---

also the answers of Jacques Perron, 27 June 1758, WO 34, vol. 39, 95-98.

59 This sensible and accurate, therefore important document of 25 pages is in PAC, MG 18, L 4, packet 57, See pp. 27-28.

60 Montcalm to Moras 19 February 1758, NYCD, X, 686-688.

61 Lotbinière's 1758 narrative, NYCD, X, 891. Daine to Belle-Isle 19 May 1758, Ibid., 704-706. Doreil to Belle-Isle 16 June 1758, Ibid., 717-719; RAPQ 1944-5, 134-135.

62 Malartic journal, cited in Archambault, 47.

opening phase. Except for lack of food, he explained, he would have sent more.[63] On the borders of Lake Ontario, where everything was hard to gather together because of the considerable distance from settlements, even the British had less stocks of provisions than they would have liked. In 1759 Amherst wanted Brigadier-General Gage to take the Niagara army downriver against La Présentation. Gage would not obey, telling the Commander-in-Chief "he thought it impracticable to establish a post there in so short a time, and furnish it with provisions."[64] Haldimand agreed. Sir William Johnson proposed a raid, to destroy La Présentation and exercise his Indians. Gage finally rejected even this approximation of what his commander wanted; food shortages, personnel scarcity, work to be done at Oswego and Niagara, and a host of other factors all combined together to make it a bad idea. In fact, he told Amherst, the size of garrison planned for Oswego might have to be reduced on account of provisions.[65]

Meanwhile, Wolfe's August manoeuvring near Quebec was mainly directed against the French food-supply. A British

---

63 Vaudreuil's summary of the plan for 1759, dated 1 April 1759, NYCD, X, 953.

64 Johnson diary 16 August 1759, in Doughty, Knox' Historical Journal, III, 196.

65 Johnson diary August and September 1759, Ibid., 197 ff. Gage to Amherst 11 September 1759, WO 34, vol. 46A, 99-100.

serviceman wrote to England how Admiral Holmes and General Murray were plundering the country some distance above Quebec, and how it was hoped Amherst would send through a reinforcement from Lake Champlain.

> If he should not it is thought another attempt will be made to force their trenches and if that should not succeed they hint as if the greatest part of the army will winter at Isle Condre [Ile aux Coudres, sixty miles below Quebec]; and before they go to their cantonment will procure all the stock and necessaries that the country and their security will admit of; after which they will consume the houses and standing corn so as effectively to disress the enemy the ensuing winter, this destruction has already begun in St. Paul's Bay, and Contignous, and I suppose will be executed ere long each side the river and upon the isle of Orleans. 66

The declining state of French provisions was welcome intelligence for the British in 1760, and an important determinant of French operations. In April Amherst was glad to hear from one of his western listening posts into Canada, that

> Some Swegatchie Indians have been with [Haldimand, at Oswego] who informed very few French had been there this winter having been obliged to go to Montreal for want of provisions; but a good many boats were expected when the river opened. 67

However, no French ships pierced the British blockade of the Gulf of St. Lawrence that year. When Lévis lifted the siege of Quebec

---

66 Nathaniel Cotton to Secretary of State, from PRINCESS AMELIA at Island Madame 27 August 1759, PAC, MG18,L5, vol. 4, pp. (renumbered) 12-15.

67 Gage to Amherst 20 April 1760, WO 34, vol. 46A, 221-224.

in May he was extremely short of provisions. After careful inventory he decided to send all the battalions -- despite the fact he might need them momently to fight -- back to winter quarters, in order to conserve food.[68] Malartic advised Lévis, "It is of the greatest consequence to conserve provisions and to make the enemy believe that you are in want of them."[69]

The war's most intricate strategical plan that was built around provisions as a major consideration, was one La Pause wrote in 1759. Its title was, "Suppose the English come down the Rapids" from Lake Ontario. He opted for the unorthodox view that if both Quebec and Montreal were threatened simultaneously, the former ought to be given up and all French forces concentrated at Montreal. This line discounted -- perhaps too strongly -- the link with the mother country. But La Pause was thinking of the army's food, most of which was produced in Canada, and a very great deal of that in the Montreal region. In imagination, he had Quebec abandoned and combined French armies fighting victoriously first at the foot of the rapids, then on Lake Champlain. Then they would hope to re-take the capital. He thought this plan was better than staying right on in Quebec, because if the Anglo-Americans took Montreal nothing would prevent the loss of most of the colony -- that is, of almost all the army's provisions.

---

68 ". . . pour ménager les vivres et pouvoir reformer (la marine) un corps de milice [sic]". La Pause, "Narrative of events after 1 December 1759", RAPQ 1933-4, 141-146.

69 Malartic to Lévis 25 May 1760, Casgrain, X, 224-225.

> One could object to all this: but how will we pass the following winter? We should send to France as many people as we possibly could -- and if they are taken [at sea] or not is of no importance. It is necessary to have all the livestock retire into the unsettled country; we shall eat them and act, generally, as if shipwrecked, in the hope of recieving powerful aid once spring comes. 70

Milking many sources for food, and struggling with inherent, characteristic difficulties, war-pressed New France became dependent upon European supplies of provisions. But the British in North America were self-sustaining. Bourlamaque, second-ranking French soldier at the Conquest, recognized Canada's root weakness in an optimistic appraisal he wrote in 1762. How could Canada, when and if recovered, be defended "independent of aid from Europe"?[71] Food was the key. There had to be a one-year's stockpile ahead. However, not only was the colony deprived of this foresight at the opening of hostilities in 1755, but the organization of this very important commodity was throughout handled clumsily as well as crookedly. Provisions should have been economized on all along, wrote another backward-glancer -- but instead, during the first years horses at the Lake Champlain forts were fed bread.

---

70 RAPQ 1932-3, 368.

71 Bourlamaque, Memorandum on Canada, NYCD, X, 1142.

> 'Tis true 'twas the surplus of the ration of two pounds, which quantity many do not eat, . . . but it would have been proper to have baked and delivered only what could be eaten and that the King or the contractor should have credited the soldiers with the overplus . . . in order to economise this object so important in a country where 'twas to be feared the enemy would cut off all communications with France. . . . [72]

2. Trade goods.

A second requirement of the war effort was for ... articles of general consumption other than food -- hardware, dry goods and other manufactures. Eighteenth century Canada always needed to import most manufactured and many partly-processed items. The British colonies were also basically dependent on Europe for these things, though in lesser degree. Such goods were needed by the armies, and by the communities in general.

More especially, they were the indispensable foundation of Indian diplomacy, for one of the strongest cements for alliances between Indians and white men was mutually profitable trading relations. As Sir William Johnson said, "Trade with the Indians is one of the chief means by which we

---

72 [Dumas?], "Observations on certain peculations in New France", NYCD, X, 1130.

may expect to obtain & retain them in our interest."[73] After arranging a treaty of friendship with the Creek people, Georgia's Governor Henry Ellis testified,

> I conclude the French will not find it an easy task to withdraw them from our interest, unless some very imprudent steps are taken on our side, & our Enemies are enabled to make extraordinary efforts by a great Supply of Goods, or Augmentation of their Numbers. [74]

Bougainville did not hestitate to put wares ahead of numbers for making weight with the red men; according to him, the conservation of Canada depended upon sponsoring a trade which Indians, the customers, found advantageous.[75]

What were the goods which the Indians were so anxious to get, and both French and British to supply? Chiefly textiles, every kind of small metal implement and tool, firearms and ammunition, and liquors. When Fort Frontenac was taken in 1758, some items of its inventory were in low supply, and others, like strong drink, were given specially careful handling by the British commanders. Booty which was carried away and later divided up among members of the victorious army -- said to be only one-fifth of the French fort's contents in merchandise -- gives

---

73 Johnson to Amherst 22 February 1759, WO 34, vol. 39, 153-160.

74 Ellis to Loudoun 28 November 1757, LO 4911.

75 "Mémoire sur l'état de la Nouvelle-France" (1757), RAPQ 1923-4, 49.

a good idea of the homely, everyday side of Indian trade.[76]

178 Gold and silver laced hatts
33 Pieces of gold lace
16 Pieces of silver lace
400 Pieces of ribband
445 Pieces of gartering
45 Pieces of ferriting
239 Pieces of napp'd frieze
3690 Mens shirts
828 Pair of full'd wollen stockings
1978 Woollen caps
1674 Plain coats
375 Callimancoe gowns
689 Childrens gowns and frocks
1110 Blankets
120 Ruggs
313 Laced coats
85 Pieces of white linnen
16 Pieces of striped ditto
56 Pieces of cross-barr'd stuff
662 Childrens shirts
383 Skains of tent cord
147 Fine fuzees
400 Muskets
46 Pair of pistols
205 Brass kettles
78 Barrels of gun-powder never divided, but sent to the magazine at fort Stanwix

Another captured French trading-post included among its domestic wares thimbles, three dozen combs and two bed gowns.[77] Once the

---

76 An impartial account, 25-26. In addition to the items listed, the Anglo-Americans also seized furs that had been taken in exchange -- many no doubt from further west and passing through Frontenac on the way to Montreal: 4950 raccoon skins, 4007 deer and elk, 732 bear, 360 beaver, 55 fox and 53 otter.

77 Fort Lévis. Amherst to Massey 27 August 1760, WO 34, vol. 38, 241.

necessities were obtained, the Indians also set some store upon trinkets. Among its haberdashery, Fort Frontenac had 270 bags of vermillion. A typical merchant's document covers two thousand beads of black and white porcelaine, and fifteen polished fruit stones.[78]

Also typical, these goods were British in origin, illicitly supplied to a French trader by an Albany wholesaler. The part played by British manufactures in the Canadian Indian trade was considerable.[79] In many items, Indians preferred British over French goods because they were of higher quality, or cheaper; whenever possible the French adopted the rule that the customers were right. Referring to the 1750-1755 period, Johnson said that at Oswego

> The chief Trade there was rather carried on with the French than Indians, by which means our enemies procured assortments and supplies of Goods from us to support their Trade at and from Niagara. 80

It went on at Albany too, where the praying Iroquois were "freely admitted to trade . . . in behalf of the French, who by this means supply themselves with Indians Goods from Us and so

---

78 R. Sanders to Mons. PMP 23 June 1753, PAC, MG 18, C 6, 57.

79 This is thoroughly documented in Jean Lunn, "The illegal fur trade out of New France, 1713-1760", CHAR, 1939, 61-76.

80 Johnson to Lords of Trade 17 May 1759, NYCD, VII, 375-378.

fight Us with Our own Weapons."[81] Weapon is the word to stress. To the imperial powers rivalling for Indian contacts, peacetime trade was war carried on by other means. Bolts of cloth, small kegs of rum, shiny tin pots and dull iron hatchets -- such unlikely items seemed to sway thrones. The military posture of the State, in relation to the Indian governments of northeastern North America, depended upon good supplies of humdrum merchandise.

On the Canadian side, apart from what could be smuggled from the American colonies, the merchandise of the strategic Indian trade had all to be imported from Europe. In the 1750's, not even cloth or canvas was made in Canada.[82] The supply was not so constricted on the American side. Some simple manufactures, like rum, were carried on in the colonies, and in more complicated items the colonial economy was sufficiently developed that articles might seem commercially indigenous, even though they were produced abroad in the first instance. When Johnson gave Loudoun a list of arms and other things necessary for the Indian trade, the Commander-in-Chief decided to order them imported from the United Kingdom, remarking it

---

81 Wraxall to Fox 27 September 1755, Pargellis, Affairs, 141.

82 According to Jean Hamelin, Economie et Société en Nouvelle France (Les cahiers de L'Institut d'Histoire, numéro 3), p. 34.

would be cheaper by half than buying them on the ordinary American market.[83]

The history of this type of materiel resembled the development of the war itself. During the first two or three years the French triumphed. Then the balance reversed, and the British proved in the long run to have the only secure and plentiful supply.

Canada's clandestine supply of British trade goods was not immediately cut off when the war began. Some American merchants had to be dragged kicking and screaming into patriotism. Although "very prejudicial to the general Interest, yet those People have but one Maxim of Conduct -- that private Profit is the highest and only motive of Action."[84] As late as June 1757, two years after the first blood-letting and over twelve months after the official declaration of war by the Mother countries, Loudoun was writing to Johnson,"As to Major Weavers carrying on the trade with the French Indians it is a very bad practice but till we can stop that everywhere I am at a loss what to advise and must leave it to you to manage as your own prudence shall direct you."[85]

---

83 Johnson to Abercromby 24 March 1758, AB 64.

84 Wraxall to Fox 27 September 1755, Pargellis, Affairs, 141.

85 Loudoun to Johnson 9 June 1757, WO 34, vol. 38, 29-34.

And in September:

> I think it necessary to acquaint Your Lordships that I find the frenchified Oniedas are carrying on a very considerable trade for the Sweegachie Indians at the German Flatts, to which place the traders are now carrying great quantities of rum & other goods, so that the pernicious trade formerly carried on from this town with the Cahnawage Indians is like to be revived under another dress at the German Flatts, ...[86]

While they were still receiving substantial amounts of English trade goods, as well as French manufactures annually arriving at the port of Quebec -- and especially when the British trade emporium of Oswego was closed down by military action in 1756 -- the French were winning the competition for Indian allegiance through trade goods. Bougainville stressed the need not to be satisfied with a military monopoly, but let the seller beware.

> It would appear that all the Indians of this region sigh over the destruction of Oswego, where they used to find trade goods at a low price, . . . all the things they use are sold at an excessive price at Frontenac, Niagara, and La Belle Rivière [Fort Duquesne]. Moreover, these posts are badly supplied with food and merchandise. The Indians realize this difference only too well. Let us hasten then, to supply these posts abundantly 87

Just two weeks after writing that note of guarded optimism in September 1757, Bougainville had worse news to record in

---

86 Johnson to Lords of Trade 28 September 1757, NYCD, VII, 278-279.

87 BJ 1-10 September 1757, p. 180.

his journal.

> The SOCIETE, 120-ton ship from LaRochelle, was wrecked on the flats of Beaumont, . . . The cargo was wine and brandy for the account of various merchants and powder and scarlet cloth . . . . This ship perished precisely where the TOISON D'OR, . . . with wine, brandy, and part of the effects of the Berry regiment, was shipwrecked July 25 . . . . [88]

There were further casualties the following spring, including "the FOUDROYANT . . . carrying some recruits and all the King's presents for the Indians . . . shipwrecked on the coast of Newfoundland."[89]

Moreover, the sea was becoming enemy territory. That same autumn of 1757 was when the British first wintered a fleet at Halifax, signalling the start of a greater effort to prevent communication between France and Canada. Cut off from renewed supplies of trade goods, the French also experienced a drying up of the illegal flow of British merchandise through clandestine channels. Soon British intelligence was receiving reports that the Indians of the Ontario peninsula, traditionally francophile, were becoming restive. Through the Iroquois they sought trade contacts with the British; the French were failing to supply them; "their Familys are naked mostly."[90]

A crippling stroke fell in 1758, when a British raiding force confiscated the huge store of Indian trade goods that

---

88 BJ 26 September 1757, p. 184.

89 BJ 30 May and 3 June 1758, pp. 209-210.

90 Johnson to Abercromby 24 March 1758, AB 64.

had been assembled at Frontenac for the entire pays d'en haut. It was Oswego in reverse, except the French had no capacity for recovery. While the normal scale of the fur trade fell off during the war years -- only 120 men contracted to take canoes west in 1759, compared with a yearly average of 618 during 1751-1754[91] -- the diplomatic demands for trade goods as gifts and bribes rose enormously. The French could not support their Indian friends in the manner to which they had become accustomed. From the 1758/9 winter on, peoples previously pro-French increasingly toyed with British alliance.

Canada's restricted supply of merchandise had other results besides the dislocation of Indian diplomacy. The civilian population was on inconvenient short rations for cloths and metals, as well as food. Militarily, the forces' efficiency depended upon a long list of mercantile items: all kinds of cutting weapons, work tools, tobacco to smoke, footgear, canvas, rope, boats, oars, harness. Even in cases where the raw materials were colony-produced, gear for processing them had to come from France. As Canada became starved for these necessaries, French plans and operations were affected. La Pause proposed the creation of a cavalry unit for the 1759 campaign around Quebec. There were no saddles available, but no matter. Rude Canadian habitants would do well

---

91 Engagements for the west, in Montreal judicial archives, RAPQ 1930-1, 403-453; 1931-2, 243-365; 1932-3, 245-304.

mounted bareback, fighting Tartar-style![92]

There were short-comings not only in the quantity of trade goods, but also in their quality and administrative handling. An early complaint about shoddy goods is in Bougainville's account of ambushing a British supply convoy.

> Villiers put them to flight and knocked off a great number, and would have knocked off a lot more were it not for the poor quality of the tomahawks furnished by the King's Store.[93]

The army needed boots whose soles adhered to the uppers, and tomahawks with blades not too brittle, firmly attacked to their handles.

What was chiefly needed, however, was enough. Scarcity hindered Montcalm in organizing the army the way he wanted: "The augmentation of [troupes de terre] could not be made for want

---

92 La Pause, "Projet pour la défense du Canada pendant la campagne 1759 . . . . ", RAPQ 1932-3, 371.

93 BJ 10 July 1756, pp. 6-8. In April 1755 French regulars for Canada were already embarked before discovering that muskets and bayonets they had been issued were in many instances defective, and having them exchanged. Doreil to the Minister of War 22 April 1755, MG 4, A 1, vol. 3404.

of clothing."[94] Economy was not always observed, hastening the day of embarassment and shortage. In mid-October 1756, the army had been without candles for two weeks. "To make up for it, they melt salt pork into tin lamps and use it instead of oil. I admire, wrote Bougainville with spleen,

> with what persistence and what industry they use all means here to squander the King's money. Candles which come from France with much difficulty are frightfully expensive here, oil which is made from fish in this country, and for which because of the war there is very little demand, goes almost for nothing. So in all the posts they burn candles and do not send oil there at all, although our general has often asked for it. Another colony like this and the king of the sea would destroy that of the land. 95

Meanwhile, the British prospered with plenty of trade goods of all kinds, and civilian and army gear. They did not run out of candles;[96] nighttime illumination in their barracks and tents symbolized good materiel support, lightening the task of war. True, unusual requests might give pause or perplexity to the supply

---

94 Montcalm to Moras 19 February 1758, NYCD, X, 686-688. There seems to be a conflict between this statement, and what he wrote to Paulmy 4 November 1757, when he said there was plenty of clothing for three years ahead. NYCD, X, 670-671.

95 BJ 16 October 1756, p. 56. It is an understatement to say that Bougainville's Canadian journal -- the record of his most important army services -- is very sarcastic. After returning to France at the Conquest, he became a noted deep-sea navigator and explorer: through asperity to the tars.

96 Major Christie's list of articles left at Oswego, 7 November 1759, included 5 boxes of candles, PAC, MG 21, G 2, vol. 27, 26.

department. "The Inclosed Warrant came to my hand yesterday," ran a British War Office minute, "in which I observe we are to supply Pioneer Axes 11, Pioneer Saws 1. These are Stores that never have hitherto been supplyed by the Officer to any Regiment . . ."[97] Shortcomings were revealed when the forces entered unprecedented terrain -- "Please send us three or four Cross Cut saws to Seperate the numberless, damnd, petryfyd old Logs hard as Iron, & Breaks our Axes to pieces;"[98] when operations were pushed too quickly ahead; or from the mere size of the continent over which war was waged. Brigadier Stanwix found he could not get construction of the new fort at the Oneida carrying place off to as speedy a start as it needed because of want of spades, shovels and axes.[99] "Two hundred axes I wrote for so long ago are not arrived," wrote Gage from Oswego in October 1759,

> & I can with truth say nor anything else I have demanded as immediately necessary from the day of my arrival here to this time; not that I can say anybody is to blame on this account for I am sensible that a ship might make her voyage to England in the time that it would require to send orders to [New] York for any necessaries wanted here & transport them hither. 100

---

97 C. M. Stotz, "Defense in the wilderness", Drums in the Forest (Pittsburgh: The historical society of western Pennsylvania, 1958), 84.

98 Lt.-Col. Adam Stephen to Bouquet August 1758, from Stoney Creek, Ibid., 93.

99 Stanwix to Abercromby 16 July 1758, AB 443.

100 Gage to Amherst 2 October 1759, WO 34, vol. 46A, 101-104.

These inconveniences were rare. British industrial supremacy told for more and more as the war went on. More crucial, the British had the marine capacity to be sure of delivering. What was wanted could usually be supplied in bulk, and on schedule, even if the need were unusual or located far away. One idea Loudoun had before he was superceded was a winter attack on Carillon. Gear was an important part of the scheme, complicated by the fact everything had to be kept secret. He planned to take 3000 regulars and 1000 Rangers. Shoes, stockings, socks, mittens and woollen caps gave no trouble.

> Flannel waistcoats I have; those first ordered for the Royal Americans were taken at Sea; the second set is just arrived . . . every Soldier in this Country carrys a Blanket, and I will have some ready in case of Accidents. Snow shoes I can provide by my Rangers, . . . and a few Men going with them in the Front beat a Path for the others to follow without them. Clamps for walking on the Ice is the most difficult to provide without giving Suspicion, but I think I shall accomplish that. 101

Typical supply documents show generous quantities of tools supplied to frontier forts. The first request from Fort Stanwix was turned down, but 18 broad axes, 90 felling axes, 18 hand saws and 12 cross cuts, with other items, were made available easily.[102] In the summer of 1760, while French troops

---

101 Loudoun to Cumberland 17 October 1757, Pargellis, Affairs, 401.

102 "Account of Stores & Tools to be sent from Albany to Fort Stanwix" 29 June 1759, WO 34, vol. 53, 150-152.

were operating almost barefoot in awful poverty, engineer's stores received at British Niagara -- which was not even building, merely undergoing repair -- were tremendous: ten casks of nails, of six different types from 4- to 24-penny; six coils of rope of six different sizes from 3-inch to 4½-inch, some white, some tarred (for the ships, no doubt); 24 adzes; 18 mason's trowels; 5 augers, 14 bits; 20 pulley-blocks; 100 spades; 21 planes of six different types from "joiners long jack smoothing" to "stocks with six pods each"; 100 felling and 30 broad axes; saws -- 18 crosscut, 12 whip and five others; and over two dozen other items.[103]

Give us the tools and we will finish the job. For Indian trade, for the civilian economy and for the armed forces, many manufactured items were needed. As was the case with food, the North American antagonists did their best to harvest such merchandise from each other, as well as in their respective colonies and especially overseas. Again, the supply to Canada

---

103 Statement by Issac Mendes 3 June 1760, WO 34, vol. 23, 37-40. Four-penny nails were (are) 1½-inch nails; 24-penny nails are 4-inch spikes. These terms -- not yet wholly archaic in English-speaking parts of the Maritimes -- come from the price for 100 each size which was standardized in England prior to the mid-1400's and persisted thereafter through many price fluctuations. American Association for State and local history, Technical leaflet number 15, "Nail chronology as an aid to dating old buildings"; Arminta Neal, Help; for the small museum (Boulder, Colorado: Pruett press, 1969), 129.

dwindled while the British grew. The Indian people flocked to the side with the fullest inventory of sale goods. A well-supplied conqueror overwhelmed Canada's defences by the weight of his baggage. One of the things Amherst noted when he came into possession of Montreal was how "dry goods of all kinds has been extremely scarce."[104]

3. Munitions.

Munitions was a third indispensable type of materiel. Both British and French were dependent upon Europe for their supply, in varying degrees. Once again, the French were much the more so.

All small arms used by the British forces in 1755-1760 came from England. Powder and shot initially came from England and Holland, but after 1757 the British command made contracts with forge-operators and dealers around Boston, who supplied both.[105] The Board of Trade put on foot an enquiry to determine just what American capacities were. Another iron works was found in New York colony -- sole survivor of several that had previously been in operation. This firm's annual production for 1750-1756 was 475 tons; it was thus in a position to be able

---

104 Amherst to Pitt 4 October 1760, Cognets, 290.

105 Furnaces at Hanover, Plimton and Middleborough, Massachusetts. Pargellis, Loudoun, 323.

to supply some of the army's needs.[106] There would have been more American facilities for iron manufactures if the British government -- guided by mercantilism -- had not passed laws inhibiting their establishment in the interests of mother-country commerce.[107]

Canada was even less self-sufficient. The single iron works in the colony was a government-owned operation at Saint-Maurice near Trois-Rivières.[108] Once flourishing, in the 1750's this enterprise was stagnant, and production low. "There are none in Canada who can manufacture shell and shot," Le Mercier wrote. "Some might . . . have been made at the forges of St. Maurice; but that establishment can scarcely supply the metal necessary for the service in the Colony."[109]

---

106 Robert Livingstone's plant at Ancram. De Lancey to Lords of Trade 1 December 1757, NYCD, VII, 335.

107 E.g., see Governor Clinton of New York's reference, in a document dated 14 December 1750, to a British Act of Parliament passed 23 George II, " . . . to encourage the importation of Pig and Bar Iron from His Matys Colonies in America; and to prevent the erection of any Mill or other Engine for Slitting or Rolling of Iron; or any plating Forge to work with a Tilt Hammer; or any Furnace for making Steel . . . . ", NYCD, VI, 604-605.

108 For a contemporary description, see Franquet, 21, 112-113.

109 30 October 1757, NYCD, X, 655.

The vulnerable supply line from France worked well until 1757. A great quantity of munitions arrived in the 1756 ships, making a stockpile greater than necessary for one year's operations.[110] The next year it was topped up. Not very much arrived in 1758,[111a] and French army and colonial officials had already begun to quarrel over the allocation of what resources there were. Doreil was happy, at the end of July, to note that LE BIZARRE, with a half-load of gunpowder, had arrived after breaking into and out of besieged Louisbourg in sight of the British fleet.[111b] His joy over the arrival of so small a quantity bespeaks shortage.

Vaudreuil stated the situation bluntly in November. Only the munitions that had been captured from the enemy, he said, allowed French forces to keep shooting. The annual requisition for powder was a

---

110 MM. Paillet & Meynardie to Etienne Augé 24 April 1756, MG 24, L 3, vol. 3, 1474-1475. Mercier's requisition is in MG 1, C 11 A, vol. 100, 168.

111a For the Minister of Marine's attempt to get 6000 muskets and 50 tons of gunpowder sent to Canada in 1758, see MG 1, B, vo. 106, 237.

111b Doreil to [Belle-Isle] 30 July 1758, RAPQ 1944-5, 148.

large one, but it ought to be filled. The Governor proposed firepower as a remedy for scarcity of personnel.

> What is wanting in people can be made up by multiplying the fire of artillery and musketry, and taking up good positions; . . .
> There is no country where so much [gunpowder] is consumed, both for hunting and distribution among the Indians; burning of powder is equally a passion among the Canadians, but I think we gain thereby in the day of battle, by the correctness of their aim in firing. 112

From the end of the 1758 campaign French forces were hard-pressed for the munitions without which they could not fight. When Fort Duquesne was abandoned, the materiel which had been transported there with heavy effort had to be given up.[113] Montcalm's headquarters had foreseen that supplies risked in so distant a theatre might very well be cut off, and had opposed maintaining the Ohio posture. By April 1759, Lévis estimated that the army could hardly subsist one month once it took the field, with its "magazines stripped of everything."[114] They were down to 40 tons of gunpowder. However the French government, while not daring to risk very many troops on an

---

112 Vaudreuil to Massiac 1 November 1758, NYCD, X, 863.

113 It was too cumbersome to be portaged while in contact with the enemy. Vadureuil to Minister of Marine 20 January 1759, Stotz, "Defense in the Wilderness", Drums in the forest, 137-140.

114 Lévis journal April 1759, Casgrain, I, 175.

ocean passage where British seapower was dominant, did consign considerable reinforcements of materiel to the Canadian army, including 125 tons of powder. The munitioneer's ships successfully raced the British assault fleet into the Saint Lawrence estuary.[115] At mid-July Montcalm thought he was in quite good condition for a defence on two or even three fronts -- providing the Governor did not drain away vital resources for chimerical projects such as the wasteful reconquest of the Ohio valley. At Quebec he had an immensity of cannon, enough mortars, 4000 bombs and plenty of shot; the gunpowder without which all this was useless would still have to be carefully doled out.[116] How carefully was shown when Lévis brought a convoy of men and supplies to the top of the Saint Lawrence rapids in August. He could not stop worrying whether he had been too generous to that particular sector. If there was an ounce more gunpowder than was absolutely required at any particular location, it meant someone else was short. Finally, he decided to send some of the powder that had just been transported from Lachine, back to the storehouse there.[117]

---

115 Belle-Isle to Montcalm 19 February 1757, NYCD, X, 943-944. La Pause, "Relation de la campagne 1759 en Canada," RAPQ 1933-4, 195-197.

116 Montcalm journal 11 July 1759, Casgrain, VII, 572.

117 Lévis journal 30 August 1759, Ibid., I, 200.

Very soon after nobody could have extra, nobody had enough. Following the loss of Quebec, failure to re-take it in the spring of 1760, withdrawals in the Lake Champlain area, and the cutting off of all aid from Europe, the French forces had "munitions for one battle only."[118]

Even though they had better colonial sources and more secure links across the sea, the British were almost as concerned as the French to economize on munitions and prevent waste. In 1757 the army undertook to collect, on more or less permanent loan, the stands of muskets which several American coastal cities had gathered for emergency protection against sea-raids. This initiative did not meet with universal co-operation. The seaboard was nervous. New York city council refused to impress citizens' arms, and was highly reluctant to give up its own arsenal. "I wrote a very civil letter to the Mayor and Aldermen," Governor De Lancey told Abercromby, "which I hope will persuade them out of their 1000 stands, . . ."[119] They finally agreed to sell them.[120] Pownall of Massachusetts successfully borrowed 230 belonging to the city of Boston, and capitalized on the privateers: "I have got between 50 and 70 Arms out of the Prizes

---

118 Lévis to Belle-Isle 14 July 1760, PAC, MG 18, K 8, vol. 11, XI, 413-414.

119 De Lancey to Abercromby 17 May 1758, AB 261.

120 De Lancey to Abercromby 22 May 1758, AB 279.

brought in by the KING GEORGE."[121]

Leaders on the British side all agreed that provincial troops were wasteful. Provincially-supplied muskets regularly disappeared: ". . . there have been so many embezzled, lost, sold, &c by every species of carelessness & fraud"[122] that Pownall suggested making the men buy their own arms and rent them to the government. In the temporary breakdown of British discipline following the 1758 defeat at Carillon, waste was one of the complaints voiced by the commandant at Half Moon. "The Ammunition is fireing foolishly away on all sides, and indeed I see nothing goeing here as it ought, but Confusion more & more arising, . . ."[123] Rustic colonial soldiers fired unnecessary shots not only in panic, but all the time. This was a prime charge against the Rangers --

> I told Captain Rogers . . . that no Stores could support their Extravagance in Amunitions, . . . he said his people could not do without practicing at Marks, . . . I got the better of their constant firing upon the Island but no sooner than they get into the Woods, they make them ring, they fired yesterday above one hundred shots in hearing of the Garrison, . . . 124

---

121 Pownall to Abercromby 12 June 1758, AB 350.

122 [Pownall to Abercromby April 1758], AB 138.

123 Chas. Cruikshanks to Captain Christie 19 July 1758, AB 456.

124 Haviland to Abercromby December 1757, LO 6859.

MATERIEL

To combat waste of weapons, the British had a rule that court-martial followed automatically for any soldier who turned up without his musket. This was even the case when men escaped from enemy custody -- they had to come back with their muskets, or have a convincing story.[125] An extreme of economy over munitions was put forward in 1758 by Captain Christopher Atkins of the armed sloop CHARMING POLLY. Many American vessels were anxious to evade his embargo patrol in Chesapeake Bay. He told Abercromby about one ship, which

> came from the Bay of Honduras Loaden with Logwood . . . when I chac'd Him I follow'd as far up the Dellaware as a Place they call Newcastle He firing upon me very briskly, likewise the Fort at NewCastle & Two Companies of your People all ready to give me a Volly when they thought me near Enough, imagining me to be a French Privateer, so that I was oblig'd to leave of Chace, . . . PS. I think at least He ought to be made to pay £6.8 for shot, that were fir'd at Him. 126

Studious attention to conserve on munitions was one reason for the British plenty. More important was the faithful, prodigious supply which the British government kept on sending to North America. Pitt's instructions to Amherst at New Year's time, 1759, are just one example, but a good one. The Prime Minister laid down the outline of the year's strategy, and said he understood from reports that Amherst had enough arms and tents to equip

---

125 Proceedings of a court martial of the line 22 September 1758, PAC, MG 21, G 2, vol. 22, 19-23.

126 Atkins to Abercromby 3 April 1758, AB 103.

the required forces. Nevertheless, 10,000 muskets and 6000 tents were being dispatched forthwith to New York, in case unforeseen needs should arise.[127]

The history of some captured cannon traces the altered state of French fortunes in the matter of munitions. The cannon in question were those which Braddock's force -- bent on attacking Fort Duquesne -- optimistically took into the woods in 1755. When the British were routed, the French gathered up everything that had been abandoned or overlooked. They brought into the French arsenal "artillery and warlike stores etc. found on the field of battle belonging to the English":[128]

4 brass cannon (11 pounders)
175 11-pound shot
2 brass cannon (5½ pounders)
57 shot measuring 6 and 3/4 inches diameter
4 brass mortars (7½-inch diameter)
3 brass mortars (for grenades)
17 100-pound barrels of gunpowder.

The guns stayed in service under new proprietorship. Some were sent to bolster the batteries at Niagara and Frontenac.[129] Fortifying against the British with captured weapons the British not only paid to manufacture, but also with back-breaking labour had dragged into the interior for them, was

---

127 Pitt to Amherst 29 December 1758, NYCD, VII, 359.

128 Contrecoeur to Vaudreuil 11 July 1755, MG 18, L 4, packet 60, 14.

129 Vaudreuil to La Valtrie 22 April 1756, MG 24, L 3, vol. 3, 1468.

the first chapter in the French munitions story. A happy chapter.

Some of these same guns were the ones Bradstreet found in Fort Frontenac when that post surrendered to him in August 1758. Naturally, he wrecked them. "The enemy have taken considerable provisions, quantity of merchandize, eighty pieces of iron cannon, large and small, many of which they left after breaking the trunions, . . . "[130] "In truth we spiked them but they are nonetheless lost to us," Bougainville moaned.[131] He spoke too soon, underestimating the desperation of the threadbare army to which he belonged.

When the French in 1759 were worried about the Rapides approach to Montreal, it was decided to establish fortifications with artillery to guard it. Salvage teams were sent to Frontenac to repossess the derelict guns.[132] Several were reclaimed from the fort's ruins and the waters of the harbour.[133]

---

130 Montcalm to Belle-Isle 9 September 1758, NYCD, X, 831.

131 BJ 6-12 September 1758, pp. 277-278.

132 Pouchot, I, 240.

133 Montcalm to Bourlamaque 23 March 1759, Casgrain, V, 304. Lévis journal 22 August 1759, Ibid., I, 197.

After they had been jury-rigged and repaired by the artificers, these were the guns employed at Fort Lévis in the last noisy shooting match of the Canadian resistance (August 1760). It was a much mishandled and swapped Braddock cannon Captain Pouchot spoke of when he explained how his fort's firepower gradually flagged: "One of these three pieces and the most important one, wanted a third of its length, having broken twice."[134]

Cuddling such scraps of ordnance, the French were opposed by an enemy to whom to ask was to receive. Because of all the new forts and ships under construction in 1759-1760, Amherst sent over a request for several dozen more guns. "We are preparing 140 pieces of cannon to send you," Ligonier wrote him in February 1760, "of such calibre as I imagine you must want with stores in proportion."[135] Amherst wrote thanks from New York in April, he had received them.[136] In the final stages the French could not shoot even the few twisted wrecks of guns they had left. On the eve of the capitulation, Lévis noted in his journal that there were only munitions left for

---

134 Pouchot, II, 34.

135 Ligonier to Amherst 16 February 1760, PAC, MG 18, L 4, packet 11, 31

136 Amherst to Ligonier 28 April 1760, Ibid., 36.

> a musketry affair, and provisions for about 15 to 20 days. General Amherst's army was composed of 15,000 men; Murray's, of 4000; and the force from Lake Champlain, of 9 to 10 thousand. They will be in position momently to combine their forces, with more than 150 mouths of fire. 137

4. Seapower.

What brought the French to this pass -- starved for materiel, while the British were well-supplied? The answer is: for munitions and trade goods -- (and in Canada's case for many essential foodstuffs as well) -- the North American combatants were dependent upon supplies arriving from Europe. This was largely true, also, of the manpower to fight the war. Thus there was no more important question for French or British strategy than this: Could the passage of materiel across the Atlantic Ocean, from the Mother-country, be sure and steady enough to maintain the war effort?

This was a question of seapower. Seapower is the ability to use the ocean for transport, and to deny its use to an enemy. Naval rivalry was a major facet of Eighteenth-century French/British competition, and the 1750's was a period of relative French weakness. Canada's fate was decided at that juncture because British seapower was able to constrict, and finally cut, the flow of

---

137 Lévis journal 6 September 1760, Casgrain, I, 303-304.

French supplies to the war zone. No other factor so powerfully caused the struggle's outcome. It must be noted that this oceanic seapower did not enter into the strategic manoeuvres and manipulations of the planners in North America. For Amherst and the other British Commanders-in-Chief, as for Vaudreuil, Montcalm, and Lévis, general British supremacy at sea was part of the overall situation in which they were set to do their best. Naval capacities were decided and directed in European capitals, beyond their control.

> Upon the navy depend the colonies, upon the colonies commerce, upon commerce the capacity of a state to maintain numerous armies, to increase its population and to make possible the most glorious and most useful enterprises. 138

Unexpectedly, this precise appreciation of the value of naval strength was penned by a Frenchman, not a Britisher. However, it was the British government which more consistently acted upon such precepts. Although France's situation and resources were well suited to developing naval power, the government preferred to spend money on a continental policy rather than control of the oceans.[139] There were some -- a few -- who opposed this bent.

---

138 Choiseul wrote this in the 1760's when Canada had already been lost. Gerald S. Graham, The politics of naval supremacy (Cambridge: University Press, 1965), 17. The classic statement and convincing proof of Choiseul's idea is A.T. Mahan's The Influence of Seapower on history.

139 See G. F. G. Stanley's discussion of French anti-colonialism in New France: the last phase, 270.

In 1745 Maurepas urged the importance of naval power to France, and the necessity of rescuing the fleet from lack of sufficient funds.[140] In Canada in 1757, Bougainville read the news of European victories on land, and wrote,

> But all this money used up to relieve the house of Austria, to destroy the equilibrium in Germany and the north, would it not have been better spent in overwhelming, by a strong naval force, the British navy, its merchants, and its colonies? 141

From the point of view of a man who was engaged in trying to defend transatlantic New France, the question was rhetorical and the answer obvious. Taking the long view, enlightened by the Conquest, La Pause blamed everything on former Governor La Galissionière, "the principal author of Canada's troubles." When he first advocated territorial expansion into the Ohio valley, superior authorities ought to have either made sure of the means to do it successfully,or else modestly redesigned the policy to suit French capacities.

> In this expedition nothing was foreseen; they did not know everything they were getting into. Our colony was not in a fit state to support so distant an establishment nor to defend it against the forces of the English colonies. Our seapower in Europe could not sustain such enterprises. 142.

---

140 Maurice Fillion, "La crise de la Marine française, d'aprés le Mémoire de Maurepas de 1745 sur la marine et le commerce", RHAF, XXI, 230-242.

141 BJ 15 October 1757, p. 189.

142 La Pause, "Mémoire et réflexions politique et militaries sur la guerre du Canada depuis 1746 jusqu'à 1760", RAPQ 1933-4; 147-148. Walter L. Dorn, in Competition for empire 1740-1763 (New York: Harper, 1940) agrees, writing that "in view of the weakness of the French navy", the occupation of the Ohio

While France stressed land over water, the British developed seapower first and foremost. It was characteristic of the great powers that the opening European acts of the war were: on France's part, the dispatch of considerable land troops to North America in 1755; and by England the resolution to intercept their passage by naval force.

The "tyrannical despotism which the English exercise at sea" -- of which French diplomats complained -- was the British state's highest priority.[143] An American Governor wrote to Loudoun, "I heartily wish that the Ministry may . . . not allow the French to outnumber us in our own Element as well as by Land."[144] Wolfe recognized that "whatever diminishes our naval force tends to our ruin and destruction."[145] Bougainville feared lest the king of the sea should overcome the king of the land.[146]

Merely from the contrary priorities of the two mother-countries, Canada as a colony in the French empire was vulnerable

---

valley was "imprudent" (p. 272).

143 Rouillé to Neuilly 6 October 1755, MG 18, A 7.

144 Dobbs to Loudoun 20 October 1757, LO 4676.

145 Wolfe to Rickson 5 November 1757, MG 18, L 5, vol. 2.

146 BJ 16 October 1756, p. 56.

to being overcome by seapower. The colony's particular situation in North America made things worse. Voyages to Canada were necessarily "long, fatiguing, dangerous."[147] Of all France's colonies, Canada was

> the most useless through the misfortune of having been badly located from its origin. It is situated 150 leagues from the mouth of the river St. Lawrence. More time and risk is involved in ascending the river to Quebec, than it takes to go from France to the river's mouth . . . . [148]

A partial remedy, La Pause thought, was to establish an ocean port at Gaspé. Shipping from Europe could then turn about twice as quickly, and make more than one voyage per year. As a winter harbour for French warships and a base for privateers to prey on American coastwise commerce, Gaspé could have many advantages.[149] Bougainville concurred.

---

147 Bougainville, "Mémoire sur le Canada . . . ", RAPQ 1923-4, 23.

148 Sieur de Boulaye, Memorandum on American colonies, RAPQ 1965, 78-79.

149 La Pause, "La population et culture des terres", RAPQ 1933-4, 213-214. Colonel Rostaing argued in favour, and offered to direct the establishment. Rostaing to the Minister of War 23 May 1755, MG 4, A 1, vol. 3404.

> I cannot conceive how France has failed to make at Gaspé a solid establishment and a strong place. It is the doorway of Canada and its location is infinitely preferable to that of Louisbourg as the key to the colony, as a depot, and as a trading center for all the fisheries. 150

However, they may not have considered how easy it would be -- once a port had been established at Gaspé and a sizeable population planted there -- for the British to seize it and turn the base the French had built into their own convenient station for blockading the Saint Lawrence mouth. Since there were no naval facilities in that area, it was from Halifax -- several hundred sea-miles out of the way -- that the British during 1757-1760 sought to prevent French supplies from entering the river. "I am not at all surprised," wrote the Governor of Massachusetts, "that ye enemy have got up their provision vessels A frigate or two in Gaspé before ye river broke up would have prevented this . . . ."[151]

In the short run of the 1750's, therefore, it was good for the French that the colony was as isolated as it was. As long as the enemy controlled the sea, distance from the ocean was a safety factor. After the 1711 disaster of Sir Hovenden Walker,

---

150 BJ [12 October 1758], p. 289. Bougainville advocated an establishment at Gaspé, and one at Sept-Iles as well, in his 1758-9 memorandum, "Quel établissement assurerait à la France le fleuve Saint-Laurent et la libre entrée de ce fleuve?", RAPQ 1923-4, 21-23.

151 Pownall to Amherst 25 June 1759, WO 34, vol. 25, 551-554.

another British assault by sea upon the settled portion of Canada was postponed almost 50 years. This was largely because of the lower river's navigational hazards. These hazards (and their reputation) effectively protected Canadian interests in 1758. Sir Charles Hardy brought a British fleet to the mouth of the river in the fall of the year. Wolfe urged a run, at least a feint, up towards Quebec. The admiral would not, and "urged many reasons and difficulties which timidity ever suggests".

> Though he knew one hundreds [capital war ships of 100 guns] went up every year, in short, though he knew he would infallibly meet Chalfour his squadron and might gain immortal honor that way . . . & lastly, though he knew all the Canadians were on the Ticonderago side & had left the river all free yet no notice could induce him to make his ships heads point westward, . . . 152

La Pause was wise in his final reflections upon the whole course of the war. During a period of maritime weakness, France in the 1750-1755 era should have stopped the drift towards war, or taken all means of compensating for lack of seapower. There should have been firm alliance with strong maritime powers in Europe. Large numbers of men should have been sent to Canada early on, while peace prevailed. Provisions in bulk, capable of sustaining

---

152 Captain Thomas Bell, 1758 journal, PAC, MG 18, L 6. "Chalfour" was Captain Chaffault de Besné of the French navy, who brought a squadron of six men-of-war (four disarmed) from Brest to Cape Breton in the spring, and then went up to Quebec, Gipson, VII, 191.

a long war, should have been stockpiled. From the first declaration of war, all the French colonies overseas ought to have been regarded as places that were cut off and surrounded.[153]

It must not be thought that the French were completely powerless at sea. It took several years of war before the British had bested the French navy or chased it into port, made chance of capture so great that merchantmen preferred not to sail, and laid close siege to Canada. At first France kept well in touch with her colony. Safe, well-escorted shipments kept up the fighting strength. French vessels were seized at sea, but British ships had no immunity from capture. In 1755 one British frigate took the vessel in which Abbé Jean-Louis Le Loutre sailed from Quebec for France; but another -- with the new Governor of South Carolina on board -- was itself made prize by units of the French navy.[154] Some French privateers thrived -- like the letter of marque (twenty-six 12-pounders) that sailed from the Saint Lawrence for the West Indies in 1758 and took 25 British ships while cruising off the seaboard, including one with the whole clothing and

---

153 La Pause, "Mémoire et réflexions", RAPQ 1933-4, 162-163.

154 Concerning Le Loutre, see L'Abbé L'Isle Dieu's letters for 1755-1761 (the period of Le Loutre's captivity), RAPQ 1937-8, 163-164, 174-175. The captured British frigate was the BLANDFORD (Rouillé to Neuilly 9 September 1755, PAC, MG 18, A 7).

baggage of the British 47th Regiment.[155] A batallion of soldiers without their pants testified France was still at sea.

Some well informed Britishers faced up to the fact that French seapower might even be sufficient to land an army in Great Britain.

> I believe the French would be pleased to invade us, if they knew how to get over. My opinion is that they will try what their fleet can do first, & if they beat ours -- then we may expect a very formidable attack; we have been rather tardy in providing against their great power -- but I still hope that it is not too late. The confidence or rather stupidity of the people of this country surpasses all belief; secure in their ignorance & presumption they set the whole force of France at defiance. 156

In 1755, 1756 and 1757 large French fleets sailed to Louisbourg and made Atlantic paths generally safe for French shipping. In December 1757 a British observer vented his frustration about reinforcements and supplies arriving in Canada "before ours which they have alwayse hiterto done, . . ."[157] As late as June 1759 Governor Pownall of Massachusetts was still afraid of a French naval attack on New York or Boston.

---

155 "I mention this to Your Lordships to shew the necessity of having some of the King's Ships to cruise here: The great Success this ship has had will without doubt encourage others of the Enemy to infest these Coasts next year". DeLancey to the Lords of Trade 13 December 1758, NYCD, VII, 352. See also memorandum in Barrington to Amherst 4 January 1760, PAC, MG 18, L 4, packet 9, 39-41.

156 Wolfe to his mother 8 February 1756, PAC, MG 18, L 5, vol. 3, part 1, 414.

157 William Martin memorandum 7 December 1757,LO 6846.

> The whole [British] fleet is up the river & no fleet to guard our coasts We lie open to check-mate & sure if the French knew their own interest this would be a good move for them. 158

Indeed, a seaborne attack upon the Atlantic coast was very strongly urged by the staff in Canada in 1758 dispatches to the French government. Such an attack -- they chose Carolina -- would take the pressure off Canada. While admiring the aptness of this strategy, the authorities told Bougainville the assault would not be made. The reason was lack of money. This meant two things. First, the French government was feeling a lack of funds. The British navy, blockading French ports and sweeping merchant ships from the sea, was destroying the commerce which was the underpinning of French state finances. In 1759 one Englishman was "sure the French must come to terms the postponing the payment of their annuities manifests their distress."[159] A French merchant wrote to the Baby brothers in Montreal that "money -- that great motivator and the essential nerve of war and everything else -- is lacking."[160] Secondly, what cash and credit they had they preferred to spend on other things. Versailles' predominant strategy was a land one. The official policy line

---

158 Pownall to Amherst 25 June 1759, WO 34, vol. 25, 551-554.

159 J. Warde to Geo. Warde 16 November 1759, PAC, MG 18, L 5, vol. 3, part 1, 523-525.

160 Havy to Baby frères 12 February 1759, PAC, MG 24, L3, vol. 3, 1698.

was that strength on land could make up for losses caused by weak seapower. Choiseul told Voltaire to tell King Frederick of Prussia "that in spite of our losses . . . although the King may lose for a time his possessions in America, he is still able, if he so wishes, to annihilate the power of Prussia."[161] This kind of threat was supposed to produce diplomatic retrieval of places captured by the enemy. It often worked, as in the case of Louisbourg, 1748. On a less happy occasion, letting lapse the sea arm produced Lévis' sigh of anguish in isolation: "I fear that God, and France, have abandoned this miserable colony."[162]

While France concentrated on Europe and land power -- seeming to abandon Canada -- Britain had an opposite policy. Compare the two governments' spending on naval forces. The 1760 budget for the French fleet allowed nine million livres. For its navy, the British government made available several times as much, £ 3,640,000.[163] Such disparate allotments were typical, and had

---

161 Choiseul to Voltaire 20 December 1759, Marjorie G. Reid, "Pitt's decision to keep Canada in 1761", CHAR, 1926, 24-25.

162 Lévis to Bigot 15 May 1760, PAC, MG 18, K 8, XI, 361-362.

163 Roughly equivalent to 63 million livres. Richard Pares, "American vs. continental warfare 1739-63", The Historian's Business (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1961), 155-156. Pares writes, "The starvation of the French navy for the sake of the army was one of the greatest causes of [British] naval victories".

the result to be expected. When the French ships LYS and ALCIDE were seized in 1755, a Paris observer wrote,

> According to the public all is lost . . . our fleet dispersed . . . Louisbourg blocked . . . an English fleet heaved to on station in the Saint Lawrence river, which will dispute and prevent our entry, when we try to get through to Quebec carrying the necessary assistance. . . . [164]

Their premature panic was justified when the British did carry out this cassandra program during the next few years. Commenting on the 1757 reinforcements for Canada, a French businessman wrote, "I fear they they will not be sufficient, for it is there [in America] that the English will be concentrating all their attention."[165]

Debating whether to commit resources in Europe or on the seas and beyond, Britain found a wiser answer than France did. Naval strength guarding the links with her American colonies, and making too costly those of France with Canada, was maintained. Men, orders, trade goods and munitions flowed from England. Sixteen British ships of the line, concentrated at Halifax in 1757, knew humility when they learned that twenty-two French ships were ready at Louisbourg to wreck any sea-borne approach.[166] It was the last time the British navy was outdone in the western Atlantic. That autumn part of the fleet was left to winter in Halifax: British naval might planted closer to the French positions on a permanent basis.[167]

---

164 Abbé L'Isle Dieu to Président du conseil du Marine 30 July 1755, RAPQ 1937-8, 157.

From then on the navy, the unofficial navy (privateers) and semi-official navies belonging to several colonial administrations, thickly covered the approaches to Canada. The eastern Atlantic was patrolled as well. Already during 1757 the insurance rate on a cargo bound for Canada was about 45% of its value, and the price of imported goods in Canada had more than doubled since pre-war days.[168] "The sea swarms with English corsaires," Doreil wrote to Belle-Isle in June 1758, "and we have not one out."[169a] The French government initiated undercover contacts to get vessels of neutral countries, especially Spain, to do the dangerous carriage to Canada.[169b] Of thirty or so ships that left Bordeaux for Canada that year, ninety per cent either did not arrive, or were captured

---

165 MM. Gradis to DuQuesne 14 April 1757, RAPQ 1957-9, 14.

166 Colville's journal, MG 18, L 1. Gipson, VII, 103, 113.

167 Colville to Loudoun 15 November 1757, LO 4799. Colville journal, MG 18, L 1.

168 Louis Perrault to Madame Guy 16 October 1757, MG 24, L 3, vol. 3, 1579-1580. MG 4, A 1, vol. 3405, items 14, 128.

169a Doreil to Belle-Isle 16 June 1758, RAPQ 1944-5, 134; NYCD, X, 718.

169b Marine departmental correspondence in 1758 and 1759: PAC, MG 1, B, vol. 108, 83, 134, 194, 222; vol. 109, 351; vol. 110, 83. One particularly interesting idea, after the fall of Quebec, was to arrange for vessels to sail from ports in Great Britain, under the English flag, with crews of Irish Catholics. They would have British customs clearance to Quebec as a British port, and if on arriving there they found it still in British hands, they would not unload their food cargoes on the pretext of unsatisfactory prices, but

going back.[170] Montcalm began basing his defence plans on the assumption that no more reinforcements would be arriving.[171]

France's principal fighting ships, upon which the security of all French movement on the oceans ultimately rested, were smashed in the 1759 battles of Lagos and Quiberon Bay.[172] "If these ships can get to their destination," wrote a munitioneer dispatching cargoes to Canada in 1759, "the profit will be prodigious; but the risks are considerable."[173] The mounting risk convinced the French government that efforts in North America had to be curtailed. In the spring of 1760 a French officer who had been captured, and Captain Samuel Holland of the Royal Americans, were watching Lévis

---

instead go on to the (French) West Indies. De Clonard memorandum, MG 5, A 1, vol. 442, f. 251.

170 According to Claude de Bonnault, who studied the Gradis papers. RAPQ 1944-5, his introduction to "Les archives de la famille Gradis et le Canada", pp. 267-275. Appendix 2 -- "Shipping bound for Canada, 1758" -- is my attempt to count the arrivals and non-arrivals for one year of the war. The lists are no doubt incomplete. Statistics of vessels captured at sea are not reliable indicators of naval strength, for on both sides merchant captains often thought it to their advantage to be taken by the enemy, to collect the insurance or make a claim on the government. In 1757 John Hale reported to Loudoun from South Carolina that sea-captains were clamouring to have their ships appraised at higher values, which he refused, having "great reason to believe if there Ships had been appraz'd at what they call their full Value, they would throw themselves in the way to be taken by the Enemy, as it's not the first time it has been done . . . . " (3 December 1757, LO 4939). Similar evidence on the French side is in Minister of Marine to De Ruis 25 November 1757, MG 1, B, vol. 106, 313.

lift the siege of Quebec. "Ah! A single ship of the line and the place would have been ours," said the Frenchman. Holland answered, "You are very right."[174] But the ships that came were British.

While the relative degrees of seapower were obviously of crucial importance in determining the outcome of the war of the Conquest, seapower was not a factor in North American strategy as we have been analyzing and understanding that term. We are studying the plans and reasoning of the men on the spot in the new world. The policies that brought seapower massively into existence, or played it down, were determined in England and France, whence all but the smallest naval units received their orders. Seapower on the Atlantic Ocean is outside the scope of this study. Nevertheless, it is necessary to have established the basic trend of affairs so as to understand the constraints and limitations under which North American strategists operated.

Overall French seapower strategy was important to Canada chiefly because it determined the scale of manpower, food, trade

---

171 "General reflection on the measures to be adopted for the defence of this colony" [September 1758], NYCD, X, 874-877.

172 Captain A. T. Mahan, The Influence of Seapower upon History (Boston: Little, Brown, 1894), 298-304.

173 Abraham Gradis to Moise Gradis 20 February 1759, RAPQ 1944-5, 283.

174 G. F. G. Stanley, New France: the last phase, 259.

goods and munitions that could be dispatched with a good chance of arriving. Particular plans could also help. Vaudreuil wrote in May 1756 that well-publicized preparations for a sea-borne invasion of England from France would distract the British navy, "contain the Enemy and assure the passage of the assistance we are expecting."[175] La Pause, writing about the campaign to be waged in Canada in 1757, visualized that the army would be faced with one of three situations, depending upon the home government's appreciation of relative naval strength and decisions taken in the light of that appreciation. The best that could reasonably be expected was that French seapower might balance that of Britain -- in which case Canada could receive troop reinforcements and a naval squadron, and Montcalm could be somewhat ambitious. Secondly, as in 1756, France although inferior at sea might pass some aid across to Quebec, and create a diversion in Europe to aid New France as well. Thirdly, they might not be able to send any help at all, which would leave the army in Canada to contend with British superiority on this continent.[176]

In the closing years of the war Canadian staff planners continued to be very aware of all the possibilities and problems of French seapower. Bougainville promulgated the details for

---

175 Vaudreuil to [Lavaltrie?] 7 May 1756, PAC, MG 24, L 3, vol. 3, 1478-1479.

176 La Pause, "Mémoire sur la campagne à faire en Canada l'année 1757", RAPQ 1932-3, 333-338.

Canada's replenishment despite British blockade. Ships must leave France by March 15th at the latest. Should the normal entrances to the Gulf of Saint Lawrence be closed, Canadian pilots could guide the vessels in via the Strait of Canso. If necessary, men and supplies could reach Canada overland from northern Acadia on snowshoe.[177] After the fall of Quebec La Pause still thought naval strength could make the difference between eventual victory or defeat. If France were able to send additional men and materiel in 1760, he wrote, Quebec could be retaken by combined forces. Then the fleet that had convoyed the assistance could attack Louisbourg while Lévis, replenished, re-took Oswego and Niagara. By the campaign's end the French could be in possession of Carillon again also. Then the extra troops could go back to Europe. "Twenty ships of the line and about twelve thousand disembarked troops could produce all this change . . ."[178] It would still be necessary to preoccupy the British with a threat of invasion or of interior (Irish) revolt. Weakness of seapower had produced a failure of the French connection, making Canada vulnerable; only an immense -- and unexpected -- reversal of that weakness could extricate the colony.

---

177 Memorandum for the French court [January 1759], RAPQ 1923-4, 15-16.

178 La Pause, Memorandum of November 1759, RAPQ 1933-4, 139.

On the British side, the most interesting thing to observe is how the idea slowly dawned, that in their navy they had the instrument which could make a Canadian war effort impossible for the French. During 1755-1757 the settled policy was to attack Canada overland. This was hard going, and gave away to the French all the advantages of previously seized and fortified positions. In 1757 the main British force left off assaulting the Lake Champlain gateway long enough to be shipped to Halifax, and then right back when the scheduled attack on Louisbourg was called off. Long enough for Montcalm to capture Fort William Henry while those troops were absent. "We want a cup of comfort, but I dont desire to see your faces this way again," wrote a Royal Navy officer to one of the British brigadiers in North America. "Act in your own spheres upon the land, & we [chastise?] them by sea, block up the river of St. Laurence . . ."[179] Another document from 1757, anonymous, argues that the way to beat the French in North America was purely and simply to stop men and supplies from crossing the ocean to them. To date the British had done what they could by far-from-foolproof general cruising -- the guerre de course, haphazard war against trade. What must be done instead was to attack Quebec, to deprive French forces in America of their vital link with Europe.[180] This is the first and finest clear statement

---

179 Holburne to Col. John Forbes 8 November 1757, LO 4785.

180 "Considerations offered . . . upon a Scheme for Attacking Louisbourg & Quebec, 1757", Pargellis, Affairs, 294-298.

that the attack on Quebec was against the army, and only incidentally against a position.

The use of the British navy, to accomplish in North America what the army unaided could not, became permanent government policy. Early in 1759 Amherst wrote Sir John Ligonier, bilingually, that appearances for the up-coming campaign "look well & if we can hinder the French from throwing in great succours by the river St. Lawrence il me semble nous avons beau jeu."[181] He had thought about winter attacks on some positions in the interior but decided against it: "I should be lopping off a branch when it would be time that I should try at the stem & the root." In June 1760 the Admiralty wrote Admiral Colville that even if Quebec had been retaken from Murray, "Nothing can afford a more probable hope of reducing all Canada this campaign . . . than the totally shutting up the river St. Lawrence."[182] He was to prevent all provisioners and warships, "if they should escape H M squadrons" in European waters, from going upriver; to watch Gaspé and stop movements of supplies on land as well as afloat; batter Quebec to pieces with the ships' armament if it were again in French hands; and stay blocking the river as late in the fall as weather permitted -- "taking care at

---

181 "It seems to me we've got them licked!". Amherst to Ligonier 18 January 1759, PAC, MG 18, L 4, packet 11,12-14.

182 Admiralty to Colville 20 June 1760, PAC, MG 18, L 4, packet 24, 71-74.

all events to prevent the enemy sending any succours into Canada and to be equally attentive thereto whether Quebec be or be not in His Majesty's possession."[183]

- - - - -

Seapower is the theme that links together the three questions of supply that have been discussed in this chapter, and also important aspects of the manpower problem, which is surveyed in the next. "We must not flatter ourselves, " wrote a French Minister of Marine,

> that a navy which has been long neglected and in the greatest disorder can resist, with very inadequate resources, one which has been manned, armed and supplied long beforehand. France will never succeed in making war with advantage, or even on an equality, against a maritime power such as England, unless the French navy is in commission all the year round like the English; without that, all plans and expeditions are liable to fail. 184

Among the plans that failed in the wake of French naval weakness in the 1750's, were projects for adequately feeding, arming and equipping the forces defending Canada. Meanwhile British shipping, plentiful and protected, carried copious munitions and gear for the other army. The American colonies' sound agriculture ensured

---

183 Ibid.

184 Berryer memorandum 3 March 1760, quoted in Pares, "American vs. continental warfare", Historian's Business, 156-158.

easy provisioning. Only infrequently did the British suffer -- in very mild form -- the shortages of materiel which plagued the French, warped their plans, and undermined their capabilities.

Seapower's influence, exerted through its effect on necessary resources, was all-pervasive. Far from deep water, Sir William Johnson boasted to Iroquois councils how the British navy would strangle New France. While diplomatically distributing Canada-bound cognac that had been seized, he told them,

> We have discovered the passage of the vessels which are carrying succours from France to Canada; we have captured many of them . . . ; that is the surest means of reducing Canada. We shall blockade the passage so closely this spring that not a single French ship will escape us. 185

"Thus at last behold the arrival of the evil so much predicted," wrote Bougainville jealously. "The enemy open their eyes, sense the advantage which numbers and abundance of everything gives talents, even limited [ones]."[186]

Abundance of materiel resources was an important controller of strategy, and a key to the Conquest. Montcalm thought that Canada could not avoid being "reduced in the long run, considering . . . the difficulty of transporting provisions and

---

185 Noyan's report in Vaudreuil to Moras 21 April 1758, NYCD, X, 700.

186 BJ 1 September 1758, p. 266.

reinforcements."[187] "We are in no condition to take the field," wrote Lévis in June 1760, "lacking provisions, munitions, and -- in general -- everything."[188] After several war-years' normal consumption and the British sea-squeeze upon his army's supplies, which needed constant replenishment from Europe, "It is surprising that we still exist at all."[189]

---

187 Montcalm to Paulmy 23 February 1758, NYCD, X, 691.

188 Lévis to Berryer 28 June 1760, PAC, MG 18, K 8, vol.11, 406-407.

189 Ibid.

CHAPTER VII

FACTORS DETERMINING POWER AND STRATEGY: MANPOWER

Of all materials needed in the prosecution of the war, manpower was the most necessary. Other factors of power were neutral and without effect until men worked upon and used them. Among all the plans that were made, human resources for carrying them out was a common and linking consideration.

Troops to fight the war and do the indispensable back-up labour came from three sources. The attempts of both French and British, to maximize the assistance that Indian allies could render along these lines, has been noted above in chapter V. The second source was Europe. Considerable armies were dispatched from the mother-countries to fight in North America. Thirdly, the colonial governments mustered large groups of their own people into military service, to such an extent that the war was as much a case of Canadians fighting Americans as it was French versus British.

When manpower was mobilized, the personnel effort was still by no means finished. Since men were not plentiful -- indeed, the hardest commodity to come by -- it was important for both armies to husband them carefully, and guard against every wasteful, shrinking tendency. Illness, desertion, and loss of

men killed, wounded or taken prisoner in action, were the major perils that had to be met and if possible, evaded. The intake and conservation of manpower produced a certain-sized force; and the size of the force put an inescapable ceiling on the level and type of strategy that could be undertaken.

1. Permanent force troops.

At Brest between 6 and 15 April 1755, the first French regular troops sent to Canada since 1665 were embarked in the warships ACTIF, ALGONQUIN, ILLUSTRE, LEOPARD, LYS and OPINIATRE. Four battalions of the French army (Troupes de Terre) were destined for Québec: one from each of the Béarn, Guienne, La Reine and Languedoc regiments. Each battalion contained 556 or 557 officers and men, totalling 2226 fighting soldiers. On 3 May they sailed in convoy with twelve other vessels, including several in which were embarked 1200 army folk for Louisbourg. In addition to the infantry, the Canadian contingent also comprised two dozen general staff and medical personnel, 134 servants and 16 dependents of army men.[1] These people did not all arrive safely in Canada. The LYS (built for sixty-four guns but armed with only twenty-two to make room for troops and supplies)

---

1 Doreil's embarkation returns, PAC, MG 18, D9(6) and N9(6).

and the ALCIDE (sixty-four guns), were roughly captured in an illegal yet partly effective peacetime quarantine which units of the British navy had established in the Atlantic ocean. Thus eight companies of the Languedoc and La Reine regiments -- 348 soldiers; 16% of the troops bound for Canada -- were delivered into the enemy's hands. In 1755, then, the number of French regulars that actually boosted the forces, with which Canada menaced the pirate empire's American colonies, or defended herself, was just under 1900.[2]

By the end of that campaign season, the number of serviceable regulars in Canada was down to 1700. When paymaster Doreil wrote to France on October 25th, 1755, seventy-nine men had died of sickness or from enemy action, and another ninety-two were sick or wounded in the hospitals. Adding these perils to the loss exacted on passage, Doreil calculated that the spring of 1756 would see in Canada only three-quarters of the regular troops which the French government had earmarked for that country the previous year.[3] Paris responded to the challenge and not only kept up its forces in North America, but increased them. The second battalions of the La Sarre and Royal

---

2 Ibid., Rouillé to Neuilly 19 August 1755, PAC, MG 18, A7. L. H. Gipson, The British empire before the American revolution, VI, 103-115.

3 Doreil to [Belle-Isle] 25 October 1755, RAPQ 1944-5, 51.

Roussillon regiments -- 1112 men -- were embarked at Brest on 23 and 26 March 1756, into vessels of a six ship squadron which also carried three engineer officers and a new staff for the forces in Canada. At the same time, 1200 men were being loaded at La Rochelle, to complete and augment the Troupes de la Marine stationed in Canada.[4] This made a hundred more men than the court had tried to send in 1755. According to the Marquis de Montcalm's aide-de-camp they were a fine body of troops.

> The soldiers before going on board were to eat; all embarked without confusion or disorder and with an unbelieveable ardour and gaiety. What a nation we are! Ah, France! happy is the man who commands this people -- and who is worthy of it! 5a

The convoy arrived intact at Quebec on 12 May.[5b]

Again in 1757, France sent both replacements for the regular troops in Canada, and additional units to reinforce them. Doreil had called for a minimum of 255 men to keep up to strength the units already committed.[6] According to unofficial but knowledgeable information from Messrs. Gradis (shipowners), the court planned to do much better in strengthening the expeditionary force, and destined 800 men of the Foreign Legion (Volontaires

---

4 Vaudreuil to [Lavaltrie] 7 May 1757; MM. Paillet and Meynardie to Etienne Augé 24 April 1756; PAC, MG 24, L 3, vol. 3, 1474-1479.

5aBougainville's journal, RAPQ 1923-4, 204-205.

6 Doreil to [Belle-Isle] 1 November 1756, RAPQ 1944-5, 92-93.

5b Bringing the effective strength of La Reine, Languedoc, Guienne and Béarn regiments to 1734 at mid-June, when La Sarre and Roussillon numbered 1025. Review dated 15 June 1756, MG 4, A 1, vol. 3417, item 150. See also items 29, 137.

étrangers) for a trans-Atlantic crossing. During the first half of March these troops were being congregated in Blaise and St. Malo -- but they were apparently not of the same mettle as the happy warriors dispatched the previous year. The observer wrote of their venereal diseases, bad outfits, and unwillingness: officers as well as men. "The malcontent of the troops comes from their not being forewarned of their embarkment for Canada."[7] At sea, he thought, they might mutiny and take over the ships. These soldiers' passion was so strong that officials assembled them and said it was up to every individual whether he went or not.[8] At first 650, then only 580 of the legionnaires, opted for a Canadian sojourn. They embarked in the merchant vessels JASON, DAVID, BRETON, ROBUSTE, RENOMMEE and SUPERBE.

The ships RENOMMEE and SUPERBE, with over 200 troops on board, were seized by the British, so that just 369 men of this lot stepped ashore at Quebec during June and July.[9] Most of these reluctant reinforcements were formed into 40-man companies to replace the Languedoc and La Reine units captured by the British in 1755; the remainder were dispersed throughout the

---

7 Gradis letters dated 8, 12 and 16 March 1757, RAPQ 1944-5, 276 and RAPQ 1957-9, 8.

8 Abraham Gradis to De la Rivière 8 March 1757, RAPQ 1944-5, 276.

9 Coujard and Segaud to Loudoun 29 October 1757, LO 4099. Doreil to [Belle-Isle] 22 October 1757, RAPQ 1944-5, 112-113.

army to help fill other gaps -- and to create new ones. For these recruits lived up to the promise of their embarkation. Montcalm complained of their indiscipline, and as early as October two of the Foreign Legion officers, having deserted to the enemy, were telling the British Commander-in-Chief all they knew about the organization of the French command opposing him.[10]

The 1757 addition to the regular forces in Canada was nine companies each of the 2nd and 3rd battalions, Regiment of Berry (780 men). Since the British were "concentrating all their attention" on America, one of the Gradis partners thought it was not enough, and that the French government "ought to have embarked at least ten or twelve battalions of our best troops . . . ."[11] At any rate, the soldiers escaped British molestation in their crossing. They arrived in the Saint Lawrence at the end of July in the worst of health, with over one-quarter of their number out of action. Other reinforcements for Canada in that year included a large -- 650 men -- augmentation of the Troupes de la Marine, and detachments of artillerymen, scouts and engineers.[12]

---

10 Ibid., Montcalm to Moras 19 February 1758, NYCD, X, 686-688. See also LO 5034.

11 MM Gradis to Du Quesne 14 April 1757, RAPQ 1957-9, 14-15.

12 Doreil to [Belle-Isle] 15 August 1757, RAPQ 1944-5, 103. BJ, 13 June 1757, p. 115. At the end of March, the total which the French government was planning to send was 2405 men. Minister of Marine to Vaudreuil and Bigot 31 March 1757, MG 1, B, vol. 105, 179.

In 1758 the French government did something about sustaining the units already in North America, but did not add to them. Doreil's estimate the previous autumn was that 500 more men would be needed to keep up strength. This guess was too pessimistic -- on 30 April he found that 450 were enough for that purpose. An additional 750 recruits should also be sent if the forces in Canada were to fulfil a recent ordinance which prescribed that infantry companies should be built up to fifty men each.[13] This additional requisition was not approved. The 500 replacements that were sent embarked in four dozen or so vessels -- naval and merchant -- that attempted to run to Quebec through a British sea gauntlet. "They all have some souldiers aboard, some a Serjeant & 8 others 20 & so on --" reported the Governor of Massachusetts.[14] He could tell because British ships were capturing a sizeable percentage of these vessels as they approached Newfoundland, and were bringing them into Boston. On 19 May eight ships of a ten-vessel convoy from Bordeaux anchored at Quebec and let ashore 198 recruits; another six ships arriving on June 16th had 131. By 30 July these were all the new troops that had come. The Marines took ninety-nine of them and the remaining 230 -- about one-half of Doreil's minimum requirement --

---

13 Doreil to Belle-Isle 22 October 1757 and 30 April 1758, RAPQ 1944-5, 112-113, 124; NYCD, X, 701-704.

14 Pownall to Captain Cuningham 13 June [should be July], [1758], AB 353.

were distributed among the weaker regular regiments.[15]

French regular units in Canada wasted away further during 1759. The paymaster's annual request to bring the eight battalions up to strength was for 730 additions. He repeated the proposal to make all companies 50-strong by sending another 750.[16] Montcalm supported these projects to make approved paper strength real, and also expressed the urgency for reinforcements. Bougainville was sent to Versailles to press these claims in person, but was granted far less than the staff in Canada wanted. In consolation, the Minister of Marine offered his notorious parable: ". . . told me very pertinently that one did not try to save the stables when the house was on fire. I then could obtain for these poor stables only four hundred recruits and a few munitions."[17] Later on the French government decided to do a little better than that. In February Bougainville was in Bordeaux organizing 800 recruits that were to be sent to Canada in several ships. Not only that, but seaport gossip reported

---

15 Daine to Belle-Isle 19 May 1758, NYCD, X, 704-706. Doreil to Belle-Isle 16 June and 30 July 1758, RAPQ 1944-5, 134-135, 147-149.

16 Doreil to Belle-Isle 25 October 1758, RAPQ 1944-5, 165.

17 "Memoir since November 15, 1758", BJ 322-323, and RAPQ 1923-4, 5. After General De Gaulle had said "Vive le Québec libre" in Montreal in 1967, it was this homely explanation of the Minister of Marine that Mayor Drapeau had in mind when he told De Gaulle that France had not always been eager to aid canadien aspirations; had left the Canadians "tied to the barn."

"some hundreds of recruits" for Quebec were being embarked at Dunkirk in privateering vessels.[18] At the same time, however, the Minister of War wrote officially to Canadian headquarters that the government had decided not to send additional whole units, on account of the probability the British would seize too costly a portion of them en route. Of the replacements that were shipped, between 500 and 600 men safely arrived.[19]

If according to the rule of other years, the Troupes de Terre received the lion's share of this addition -- say 400 men -- then their available strength in 1759 was 3900 or so; 8% less than the paper establishment of 4,230 for the eight battalions.[20] The previous year, after the failure of the French government and navy to deliver sufficient replacements to keep up with wastage the understrength had been 219 men, or 5%. The debilitating trend continued and intensified. After the disastrous 1759 campaign, La Pause calculated that the available strength of regulars in the spring of 1760 would be about 2800. This was 1430 short, precisely one-third below allotted establishment.[21]

---

18 Abraham Gradis to Moise Gradis 20 February 1759, RAPQ 1944-5, 282-283.

19 Belle-Isle to Montcalm 19 February 1759, NYCD, X, 943-944. La Pause, "Relation de la campagne 1759 en Canada", RAPQ 1933-4, 196-197. Minister of Marine to Rostan 16 March 1759, MG 1, B, vol. 110, f. 150.

20 Doreil figured the two Berry battalions at 540 men each, and the first six battalions at 525 each.

21 Mémoire of November 1759, RAPQ 1933-4, 136.

In that year, 1760, nothing got through from France, although a few hundred troops were sent as far as the Bay of Chaleur. When the British army rounded up the French forces at Montreal in September and reported they had 4000 prisoners to send to France, they were counting 1000 Marines, 250 servants and dependents -- and a 65% remnant of eight French regular battalions which had consumed themselves in the defence of Canada to such a degree, that their commanders referred to them in dispatches as the débris of an army.[22]

Eight battalions of Troupes de Terre were not the only French permanent forces engaged in the War of the Conquest. For seventy years prior to the 1750's, a special army organized and administered by the Department of Marine (in charge of the navy and the colonies) had the first responsibility for Canada's defence. French-language documents refer to these soldiers as the Troupes de la Marine, of which the best short English translation, which will be used, is Marines. They were land soldiers, not sailors.

---

22 Amherst to Pitt 4 October 1760, Louis de Cognets, junior, Amherst and Canada (Princeton, New Jersey: Louis de Cognets, Jr., 1962), 290. Débris: Bougainville, "Mémoire à la Cour," 12 January 1759, PAC, MG 18, K 8, vol. 13, 343-344; La Pause, "Relation des affaires du Canada depuis [December 1759]," RAPQ 1933-4, 147.

French Marines were first stationed here in 1683. In 1734 their total number in Canada was 750 men.[23a] In the early 1750's there were thirty companies, nominally of fifty soldiers each:[23b] the troopers for the most part from France, under Canadian officers. The corps was several hundred understrength when French regulars were committed to North American hostilities in 1755. In 1756 a reinforcement of 1200 newly raised men was sent over. This expanded Marine company strength to 65 each, and made a total of 1950.[24] They were further augmented the following year. Ten new companies were sent, raising the establishment to about 2600.[25] The personnel of the very important artillery service were included in this organization.[26]

Montcalm's regular army headquarters was not perfectly happy with the augmentation of the Marines. A 1757 report observed, "The troops of the Colony being completed in preference to ourselves -- both the old companies and

---

23a Beauharnois to Maurepas 10 October 1734, NYCD, IX, 1040. Sieur de Boulaye, "Mémoire . . . sur les colonies françaises d'Amérique", RAPQ 1965, 78-80.

23b Memorandum on the troops, 29 August 1749, MG 4, A 1, vol. 3393.

24 Vaudreuil to [Lavaltrie] 7 May 1756, MG 24, L 3, vol. 3, 1478.

25 But incomplete. Robert Stobo's report, MG 12, A, vol. 307.

26 MG 1, C 11 A, vol. 102, 256. "Memoir on the next campaign in Canada. Artillery of Canada . . . . ", 11 January 1759, NYCD, X, 935-937.

the ten new ones recently added -- next year they will not stand in need of, I would say, any recruits at all."[27] The Governor and the general were quarrelling about the disposition of recruits that arrived, warned Doreil, and the matter ought to be settled at home before they were shipped.

The Marines were kept fairly well up to full strength again in 1758 when they received 99 -- over one-quarter -- of the replacements that came from France. But at the end of 1758 the paymaster reported them about 500 understrength, and repeated the admonition that it should be settled overseas which recruits -- of any sent -- were for the regulars, "without which they will not have the best of them."[28] The Marines perhaps were given very few of 1759's arrivals, for an expert estimate of their strength in the spring of 1760 was put at 1000 -- only 45% of establishment.[29] A detailed but undated roster in the Public Archives of Canada shows what was probably the final state of the Troupes de la Marine in Canada, at the time of the 1760 capitulation and the return of the men to France as prisoners on parole. It shows 40 companies, the strengths of which varied from 12 to 30 men,

---

27 Doreil to Belle-Isle 22 October 1757, RAPQ 1944-5, 112-113. See also BJ 13 June 1757, p. 115.

28 Doreil to Belle-Isle 30 July and 26 October 1758, RAPQ 1944-5, 147-148, 165.

29 La Pause, Memoir of November 1759, RAPQ 1933-4, 136.

with the average being 22. The total number of officers and men was 989.[30]

The headquarters staff of the Marines in Canada comprised a Major-General as Inspector (stationed in Quebec), and two Lieutenants as Adjutant-Majors (in Trois-Rivières and Montreal).[31] Paperwork was their business. They handled the detailed planning and administration of the force, and worked closely in cooperation with the civilian workers of the Intendant's office on supply service and accounting for all French forces in Canada.[32] As La Pause pointed out with disdain, Governor Vaudreuil was only a capitaine de vaisseaux[33] -- which is to say, he made a career within the Marine Department. His overriding, sympathetic authority was often useful to the Marines in their rivalry with the Troupes de Terre. The headquarters of the regular army was larger and more concerned with strategy and operations than with bureaucratic paperwork. Its principal members were three general officers -- in 1756 Maréchal de camp Montcalm, Brigadier Lévis

---

30 "Etat des Troupes de la Marine", PAC, MG 21, G 2, vol. 225-2, p. 551. A less complete roster dated 25 September 1760 is in MG 1, C 11 A, vol. 105, 203.

31 Ibid.

32 "'Tis a pity [Doreil] has not more to do, for the Commissaries of the Marine do, as it were, the whole". Montcalm to Paulmy 18 September 1757, NYCD, X, 638-640.

33 "Dissertation sur le gouvernement", RAPQ 1933-4, 207-208.

and Colonel Bourlamaque[34] -- from whose ranks commanders of combined regular/Marine/militia/Indian armies acting on the different fronts were chosen. Each had a bright young officer as aide-de-camp. Then there were a major-general (executive officer for the Commander-in-Chief), a quartermaster-general (aide-maréchal de logis de l'armée), one or two other adjutants and a civilian paymaster (commissaire ordonnateur des Guerres).[35]

While both Troupes de Terre and Troupes de la Marine are properly classified as French permanent forces, they did not necessarily get along well together on that account. It has already been seen how the two forces competed for numbers and quality of reinforcements. The home government raised and maintained both outfits, but they were separately recruited and trained. There was sometimes friction between the two departments of the royal administration that had charge of them. Moreover, the Troupes de Terre were the military mainstay of the French state and the most renowned army in Europe, while the Marines had a particular identification with the puny colony of Canada. Although the rank and file were enlisted in France, Marine officers in Canada were men of this country. Their

---

34 These 1756 ranks are in Vaudreuil to [Lavaltrie] 7 May 1756, PAC, MG 24, L 3, vol. 3, 1478-1479.

35 Montcalm makes interesting comments on some of the headquarters staff in his letter to Paulmy, 18 September 1757, NYCD, X, 638-640. See 1755 plans for a 12-member headquarters establishment for Canada and Isle Royale together (with seven doctors attached as employees): MG 4, A 1, vol. 3403, 18.

leadership and command of the unit explained why French regular officers referred to the Marines as the troops "of the colony". According to La Pause' analysis of Canadian society, the Marine officer corps was practically indistinguishable from the Canadian merchant class, because so many members of it were involved in trade, and the customary, prestigious thing for merchants' sons was to become Marine officers. He thought the Canadian style of service undermined the Marines' military usefulness, in two ways. First, he found many Marine officers much more anxious to get appointed to some quiet interior post with a lucrative fur-trade monopoly, than to do anything martial. Second, the force was so split up that men were often separated from their officers for long periods or even permanently, decaying the standard of discipline.[36]

Whether for these good substantial reasons, or from perverse human weakness, there were misunderstandings; rivalry that was usually friendly -- but not always; and lack of perfect co-operation between these two types of French permanent forces in Canada. The available documentation leads one to suspect it was European bloody-minded superiority behind most of the trouble,

---

36 "Dissertation sur le gouvernement", RAPQ 1933-4, 207-208.

but that may be because wrong attitudes and snide remarks, on the Marine side, have not survived on paper. As some regular officers probably suspected, perhaps the Marine leaders could hardly write anyway. Their side of the quarrel has almost disappeared from history, to their credit. However, the regulars were military men first, back-biting snoops and critics only second. In September 1757 Montcalm reported that some of the soldiers in the regular battalions were disrespectful of Marine officers; the previous month he had hanged a corporal of the La Sarre regiment for this offence.[37]

On the British side, the regular troops in the war were all part of the same army organization. Nevertheless, there was also a two-fold distinction among them. Some units were shipped from Europe, while others were organized and manned entirely in North America.

In peacetime before 1755, the only soldiers maintained by the British government in the American colonies south of Nova Scotia were 700 men of the New York and South Carolina independent

---

37 Montcalm to Paulmy 18 September 1757, NYCD, X, 638-640. "On the 14th they broke the head of a soldier of La Sarre who was wanting in respect to Sieur de Langis, officer of colony troops". BJ 22 August 1757, p. 178.

companies. Two regiments of 500 each were sent in 1755. After recruiting 400 more men in America they were badly mauled near Fort Duquesne by a much smaller force of French Indians and Marine troops. After this disaster, the British government became more earnest about providing military manpower in North America.[38]

In December 1755 the Duke of Cumberland urged and got a Cabinet decision to create ten new regiments in the British army, and the following month it was resolved to raise the number of troops serving in North America to 13,400, counting both regulars and provincials. During the 1756 campaign season, about 4000 of this number were regulars. In January 1757, a large reinforcement from Britain was earmarked for the American war. The decision was "Six Irish battalions, augmented to 1000 each, to be ready for embarkation by February 20. Orders to be sent Loudoun [John Campbell, Lord Loudoun, Commander-in-Chief in North America] and American governments to raise same numbers of troops as last year."[39] On 24 July that year a headquarters return reported thirteen regiments from Britain in Loudoun's

---

38 Gipson, IV, 42, 304. Robert Leckie, The wars of America (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), 46.

39 Minute of 26 January 1757, Stanley M. Pargellis, editor, Military affairs in North America, 1748-1765 (New York: D. Appleton-Century, 1936), 475. J. W. Fortescue, A history of the British army, II (London: Macmillan, 1935), 294, 302.

expeditionary army. About ten per cent understrength, their total number of officers and men was 12,903, of whom almost 5% -- 626 -- were sick. There were another 7650 British regulars on this continent, comprising three regiments in Nova Scotia and other units not under Loudoun's immediate command, tied down to local defence of different colonies so that they were not available for offensive war against French possessions. This considerable force was still being added to. The 24 July document noted two more regiments (with 2290 officers and men) were on their passage, as well as another 2500 Irish and Scots replacements. The grand total was 25,359 -- not to mention women who were mustered six to a company of sixty to provide the men of the expeditionary force with at least one of the comforts of home (laundry).[40]

The situation at the beginning of the 1758 campaign was that there were in North America twenty battalions from the British regular list. There were four independent companies in New York, and three in Carolina -- 700 men. There were two

---

40 The 13 regiments under Loudoun's immediate command were given as: Lt.-Gen. St. Clair's; Col. Forbes'; Col. Whitmore's; Lord Blakeney's; General Bragg's; Lord Murray's; Gen. Kennedy's; Gen. Murray's; Col. Webb's; Col. Perry's; Col. Dusseaux's; Col. Prevost's; Gen. Abercromby's. Return dated 24 July 1757, PAC, MG12, B, War Office 1, vol. 1, 160-161. Re laundry -- Loring to Cleveland 5 April 1756, PAC, MG 12, A, Admiralty 1, vol. 2045-2052.

companies of the royal artillery, and ten engineer officers.[41] The top command consisted of a Major-General commanding in chief, with two aides-de-camp and a combined secretary-judge advocate; a brigade major; provost marshal; deputy quarter-master-general; commissary of stores and provisions; commissary of musters; and three brigadier-generals.[42] Half of this force of professional soldiers was committed to the main attack upon Canada, but General Wolfe did not think it gave a good account of itself:

> I do not reckon that we have been fortunate this year in America. Out force was so superior to the enemy's, that we might hope for greater success; but it pleased the Disposer of all Things to check our presumption, by permitting Mr. Abercrombie to hurry on that precipitate attack of TIENDEROGE, in which he failed with loss. 43

The prognosis for Canada darkened as British regulars continued to outnumber French regulars by at least 5 to 1. An order of battle prepared from the strength returns in March 1759,

---

41 BJ 26 July 1758, p. 251. The ten engineer officers were men properly so rated in the British army. In addition, ten of the foreign officers recruited for the 60th Regiment had engineer's qualifications. S. M. Pargellis, Lord Loudoun in North America (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1933), 319. In 1757, the total number of military engineers in Canada was six: Desandrouins, Lotbinière, Pouchot, La Morandière, Germain and Léry. Léry journal RAPQ 1928-9, 236.

42 "List of the staff serving in North America" (25 December 1757 - 24 June 1758), PAC, MG 12, B, War Office 1, vol. 1, 255.

43 Wolfe to Rickson 1 December 1758, PAC, MG 18, L 5, vol. 2.

shows 21 British regular battalions totalling 16,088 soldiers, plus over 1700 in the independent companies and rangers, 300 grenadiers and 240 artillery, plus more artillery and some marines that would be accompanying Wolfe on the Quebec campaign. The whole came to about 19,000.[44]

As sidelines like Louisbourg and the Ohio were decided, this force of permanent army troops was increasingly concentrated upon the invasion and occupation of settled Canada. While French resistance flagged, the British army was well maintained. In August 1760 the Secretary at War wrote General Amherst about replacement and reinforcement troops that were on their way -- over 3000 of them. At the end of the campaign there were 24 battalions of British regulars in North America, containing 18,570 rank and file plus officers.[45]

The home countries of these soldiers were on both sides of the Atlantic. Those enlisted in Europe, it often seemed, were the worst troops the British army contained. The North American Commander-in-Chief complained that the men he received in 1756 were the dregs: "I do not doubt, we have got the whole Vices of

---

44 Huck to Loudoun 17 April 1759, LO 6091. See also Royston to Goodnesse 26 July 1759, PAC, MG 18, L 5, vol. 4, p. (renumbered) 10.

45 Revised establishments are in Barrington to Amherst 2 December 1760, PAC, MG 18, L 4, packet 9, p. 108.

the Irish Army; those I shall endeavour to reform; but I am afraid, we have likewise got the whole Diseases."[46] Gage's and Burton's regiments had "some Men in them that with all the Severity they are able to use, they are not able to lave of Theft and Drunkenness, . . ."[47] In 1757 the decision was taken to make up losses in the expeditionary battalions by making most of the rest of the army support them. Two thousand men, "taken equaly from Every Battaillon in Brittain and Ireland should be Ready as soon as transports Can be Gott, to Embark for america, . . ."[48] The Duke of Cumberland thought the army could "not spare a number of Disciplined men, out of the few we have left . . . ."[49] He was reassured by Sir John Ligonier that those sent would be second-rate troops, or worse.

> Intimation was given by the King's Commands to me though not in orders, not to Send the Best men for the American draughts; it has been added according to your Royal Highness' orders that they must be Recruits, . . . 50

Again in 1760 the worst available men were sent, accompanied by a pun and an apology:

---

46 Loudoun to Cumberland 5-6 January 1757, Pargellis, Affairs, 292.

47 Loudoun to Cumberland 2 October 1756, Ibid., 235.

48 Ligonier to Cumberland 12 July 1757, Ibid., 383.

49 Cumberland to Ligonier 22 July 1757, Ibid., 386.

50 Ligonier to Cumberland 3 August 1760, Ibid., 386.

> The greatest part of the men of which this body is composed I am afraid are not tall nor of a very showy appearance but if the reports of the officers who have reviewed them are to be credited they are all fit for the service in short [!] they are the best which we can send you at present. 51

It seems clear that British officers in North America had some reasonable cause for complaints about the quality of troops Britain was sending. However, a steady, generous supply -- even of less than top-notch troops -- was a balm for shortcomings.[52] And there were paeans of praise for some of the British soldiers, similar to Bougainville's "What a nation we are!" for the French. For instance, how proudly beat Colonel Alexander Murray's highland heart:

> I am so fond of this Regiment, . . . You would be pleased to see the harmony and decency in appearance of the Stirling Bodys, so clean, sober and neat, and do their manoeuvers like Clock work, and was you in my tent you would by their tongues think you were in Edinburgh. They talk the broadest I ever heard and are proud of it. 53

The British regular forces, unlike the French, recruited in America as well as in Europe. The chief reason for this was to take advantage of a large reservoir of manpower close to the scene of hostilities. Also, Americans seemed more apt soldiers

---

51 Barrington to Amherst 23 August 1760, PAC, MG 18, L 4, packet 9, p. 75.

52 See Amherst to Haldimand 31 October 1759, PAC, MG 21, G 2, vol. 1, 34-35.

53 A. Murray to unknown 4 October 1760, PAC, MG 18, L 2.

for certain types of fighting. It had previously been thought very difficult to inveigle Americans into British regiments. In 1746, when Governor Shirley of Massachusetts was given the task of organizing a new regiment (the 50th), he was told to expect a very pronounced "Averseness to inlist as Soldiers" among the colonials.[54] Without special bonuses and bribes, wrote Admiral Warren, "I don't think you cou'd get ten Men in all the Colonies." Sir William Pepperell, who was raising the 51st regiment, was similarly pessimistic. However, within a month Shirley had signed up three-quarters of his establishment, and Pepperell had half his.[55] Their example proved that soldiers could be found in America, and one of the British government's responses to the approach of war in 1755 was to repeat the experiment on a larger scale. A new regiment -- the 60th, or Royal Americans -- was created on 25 December 1755, to absorb the remnants of the 50th and 51st and to recruit up to a strength of 4000 men in four batallions. The men were enlisted in 1756-1757, and trained as light infantry. Colonel Thomas Gage had advised that Braddock's failure would have been a different and happier story "if he had

---

54 Warren to Shirley 2 April 1746, Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery, San Marino, California, USA, Huntington Miscellaneous 9708.

55 Shirley to Pelham 15 May 1746, Huntington Miscellaneous 9709.

had the help of Indian auxiliaries, or better, if he had been able to employ the services of regular troops specially trained for warfare in woods."[56] It was thought that well-disciplined troops who could fight in open or dispersed order, and still keep their cohesion, were a special requirement of the war in America, and that country-and frontier-dwelling Americans, experienced with the environment, would profit from the training. All the new regiment's personnel had to be "active and able to endure fatigue."[57] Officers, as well as men, carried rifles. The men came from every part of the colonies, and the officers were British or German Protestant with light infantry experience. Also on the regular establishment, but composed mostly of Americans, were the Rangers -- woodsmen and adventurers recruited into a para-military organization for scouting and skirmishing. There were 1000 Rangers in 1758, and 1500 in 1759.[58]

After 1758, in the Royal Americans alone one-fifth of the British regulars in North America were men who actually belonged to the colonies, not to Britain in Europe. There were colonials

---

56 Gage to Earl Albemarle [January 1756], J. R. Alden, General Gage in America (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1948), 34-35.

57 Gage's proposal for raising a regiment of light infantry, WO 34, vol. 46A, 1.

58 Alden, 28. R. W. Hale, The Royal Americans (Ann Arbor: The William L. Clements Library, 1944), 9-15. Prevost to Cumberland 23 May 1757, Pargellis, Affairs, 340-341. Abercromby to Haldimand 29 March 1758, PAC, MG 21, G 2, vol. 6, 34-36. Huck to Loudoun 17 April 1759, LO 6091.

in other regular units too. When drafts of men from Europe were not sufficient to replace losses, many regiments sent recruiting parties to tour the colonies and attract enlistments. During the winter of 1758-1759 Amherst decided to increase the light infantry of each regiment to a full company of 100 in a battalion of 1000. "This will make a fine light alert corps for this country & I intend they shall all be good marksmen . . . ."[59] Many of these men were enlisted in the colonies, as well as the whole establishment of the new regiment which Gage formed on his own initiative in 1758. "Brigadier Gage's light infantry who wanted a great many men are completed," wrote Amherst. "The yankees love dearly a brown coat."[60]

The material inducements to enlist, on both sides of the ocean, were a soldier's pay, a bounty on joining up, and often, a grant of land on discharge. There were other appeals also: to adventure, and to patriotism. In a passage of rich linguistic inventiveness, Peter Pond explained how he joined the British army in Connecticut at the age of sixteen.

> I gave my parans to understand that I had a strong desire to be a solge . . . the same inklanation and sperit that my ancesters profest run thero my vanes . . . . One Eaveing in April [1756] the drums an

---

59 Amherst to Ligonier 18 January 1759, PAC, MG 18, L 4, packet 11, pp. 12-14.

60 Ibid. Alden, 42-43. Gage's proposal, WO 34, vol. 46A, 1.

> instraments of Musick were all imployed to that degrea that they charmed me. -- I found miney lads of my acquantans which seamd detarmined to go into the Sarvis. I talkt with Capt. Baldwin and ask him weather he would take me in his Companey as he was the recruiting offeser. He readealey agread . . . [61]

The "drums an instraments of Musick" were sweet persuaders, but liquor was quicker. "To see a drunken man lugged through the streets on a soldier's back guarded by others whether it was or was not to carry him before a justice to swear must certainly give a strange impression of the method of enlisting, ..."[62]

The agreeable fellows sent out as recruiters were given guidelines. Colonel Bouquet laid down some minimum requirements: 5 feet 4 inches tall, 35 years or younger, no Papists, no French deserters -- "They always have a fleur de lis in their heart or on their shoulder . . . ." "Your Recruits must be broad shouler'd, well limb'd, and without Infirmities, Ruptures, Scal'd heads or

---

61 H. A. Innis, Peter Pond (Toronto: Irwin & Gordon, 1930), 3.

62 Pownall to Loudoun 6 February 1758, WO 34, vol. 25, 151-152. The pay of a soldier was £12-3-4 per year, of which the man could not expect to get more than three-eights into his own hands. No allotments were made for family responsibilities. Pargellis, Loudoun, 281-284. See grants of land in documents among the Henry E. Huntington Library's "Canadiana": certificates dated 15 August 1768 and 14 June 1769. In the latter case, Peter Wharton Gregory, "Conductor of Artillery Stores" in 1760, was discharged from the service and entitled to 2060 acres. See also Colden to Lords of Trade 30 August 1760, NYCD, VII, 446.

sore legs, but every Way fit for Service."[63] Sometimes the minimums could be broken for men with previous service.

> Whatever man may have been rejected by Colonel Burton if as you say they were in the service last campaign you will send them hither and I shall not look on colour size or age provided they be able-bodied strong active men inured to hardships and that know the use of a gun.[64]

Some of the outstanding characteristics of these Eighteenth century armies are outlined in Chapter I, along with the strategical implications of those characteristics.[65] The forces were in essence very similar. On account of the atmosphere of coercion in which the rank and file dwelt and the favouritism and patronage infecting the officer corps,[66] it is surprising but true that a good deal of merit did find its way to the higher ranks, that duty seemed to come first with most of the company-level officers, sergeants and soldiers, and that the level of

---

63 Bouquet to Forbes 29 May 1758, Charles Morse Stotz, "Defense in the wilderness", Drums in the forest (Pittsburgh: The historical society of western Pennsylvania, 1958), 102.

64 Amherst to Hutchinson 11 May 1759, WO 34, vol. 27, 298-299.

65 See above, pages 5c-5f.

66 See favour-currying letters sent to the British Commander-in-Chief: LO 4369, 4771, 5049, AB 263. Montcalm's son was colonel of a cavalry regiment at age 17. H.-R. Casgrain, Wolfe and Montcalm (Toronto: Morang, 1912), 1-2. As the author of Advice to the officers of the British army (1782) put it: "You must take care never to advance an officer above one step at a time, however brilliant his merit, unless he be your relation: . . . As you probably did not rise to your present distinguished rank by your own merit, it cannot reasonably be expected that you should promote others on that score." (p.12)

discipline and courage was almost always high. The two armies had comparable headquarters structures, the same division of infantry and artillery functions (but no separate engineering or labour battalions), the same discipline, same weapons, and same fighting doctrine for a war of position and posts. They agreed absolutely on what were fit measures in war among civilized men, and what was beyond the pale of convention. To the extent that their homes and hopes of career were located on another continent, the personnel of both French and British permanent forces were equally indifferent to the fate of Canada or the new world. The only difference between them, that was important for the course of the war, was the disparity in numbers. In the 1760 showdown, British regulars attacking Canada outnumbered French professional soldiers defending by almost 6 to 1: 21,000 troops in the permanent-force component of Amherst's army, facing 3750 French regulars and Marines who recognized, according to the rules of the game they were prepared to play on any continent they were sent to, that in this round they were properly checkmated.

2. Colonial troops.

In providing manpower for the war, troops mustered into service by the colonial governments were equally as important as the permanent forces sent from Europe.

The "provincial" units formed by the British colonies were composed for the most part of men who volunteered, although there was some use of conscription.[67] In 1755 the combined strength of the colonies' forces was about 7000 officers and men. The 1756 decision to have 13,400 troops in the field called for New England and New York to provide 10,000 of that number. The same governments mustered 6000 soldiers at the outset of the 1757 campaign.[68]

For 1758, William Pitt stepped up the ante. The British Prime Minister wanted 51,000 soldiers in North America, half of them provincials.[69] He wrote to the Governors of the six northern colonies that England expected them to raise 20,000 among them (the potential military manpower in New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York and New Jersey was about 100,000[70]). The southern colonies were asked for as many men as

---

67 A class-oriented Virginia law of 1757 provided for conscription of vagrants and one in forty of the militia, property-holders excluded. Freeman, George Washington, II, 258. Another colony thought the draft "unconstitutional and not Strictly in the Power of the Legislature of this Colony in the Case of Offensive War." Reading to Abercromby 13 April 1758, AB 154.

68 1755: Watts to Cotterell 6 November 1755, Pargellis, Affairs, 148; Leckie, Wars of America, 46; Guy Frégault, Canada: the war of the conquest (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1969), 178. 1756: Hardy to Halifax 7 May 1756, Pargellis, Affairs, 172-173. 1757: Frégault, War, 148.

69 "Memorandum of troops for the year 1758", cited in G.L. Beer, British colonial policy, 1754-1765 (New York: Macmillan, 1907), 52-71.

70 Estimate in Americanus to Loudoun 8 Dec. 1757,LO 4971.

they could provide, with no quotas set.[71] The colonies did not do quite as well as the Prime Minister desired. The Massachusetts government gave a strong lead, reaching a unanimous decision in March to raise 7000 soldiers. Governor Pownall calculated if the other northern provinces followed suit and produced as many troops per capita as this, the total would be an army of 27,000. He asked for military rank for himself, to spur recruiting: then the "Best Gentlemen & Yeomen in [the] Country wou'd turn out & You wou'd see again such People as took Cape Breton [in 1745]."[72] Later the same month, New York went a little under its quota when it voted 2680 men.[73] Both these provinces, and most of the others, were somewhat short in actually providing for service the number of men they had undertaken to raise; the muster of provincials for 1758, "nearly ascertain'd" in the Commander-in-Chief's headquarters, came to 16,307 of 17,480 voted from the northern colonies, and 4979 of 5000 voted in the south.[74]

---

71 Pitt's circular letter, 30 December 1757, NYCD, VII, 339-341.

72 Pownall to [Abercromby], 12 March 1758, AB 37.

73 De Lancey to Pitt 17 March 1758, NYCD, VII, 343.

74 LO 5772. Abercromby to Haldimand 29 March 1758 shows that the Commander-in-Chief was still hoping for up to 25,000 provincials on that date. PAC, MG 21, G 2, vol. 6, 34-36.

Pitt made an identical request in 1759: 20,000 from the north, and as many as possible from the south.[75] Projections in March and April, however -- the months when most of the colonial governments were making up their minds -- were pessimistic. The northern army, based on Albany, could expect only 10,452 provincials to join it: just over half of what the Prime Minister wanted.[76]

The same plans, with similar shortfalls, were the case in 1760, which still meant that between 15,000 and 20,000 provincially-supplied troops formed almost half of the armed manpower that was active in the campaign which produced the British conquest of Canada -- or was it an American conquest?

(Other Americans besides those serving in military units were also directly involved in the war effort. Civilian carpenters, boat-builders and shipwrights were always needed at the frontier posts, where they frequently became prisoners of war and were treated by the French just like soldiers.[77] New York's Governor apologized in 1758 for getting legislative authorization for only 2680 troops, but sweetened the disappointment by noting that many more of his jurisdiction's citizens would be

---

75 Pitt to the Governor of Massachusetts Bay 9 December 1758, PAC, MG 18, L 4, packet 10, 11-16. Beer, 52-71.

76 The southern colonies planned to provide 4700 troops. Huck to Loudoun 17 April 1759, LO 6091.

77 Boston shipwrights recruited to work at Schenectady in 1758 made the supreme sacrifice that could be exacted from God-fearing Congregationalists in a time of national crisis and hurry, contracting ("if required") -- and without overtime pay --"to work on the Sabbath days. -- " AB 34.

advancing the good cause as privateers, bateaumen and impressed waggoners. Massachusetts in 1759 proposed filling up part of its quota with seamen for the lake navies.[78])

The administrative distinction between regular troops and provincials was that the British government did not pay the full cost of providing the latter. It did, however, support the war costs of the colonial governments quite handsomely. In 1756 Parliament voted a "Bounty and Encouragement" of £120,000 for the six northern colonies, to help with their military expenses of the previous year, which came to £ 170,000.[79] The southern colonies got £ 50,000. The Commander-in-Chief was given the political/diplomatic job of dividing the cash equitably.[80] These grants were repeated annually. While Britain kept the right to decide unilaterally just what proportion of the colonies' costs would be underwritten by the imperial government, London rightly figured that colonial legislatures would be more willing to undertake expenses if they thought some of their sacrifices would be refunded. The regular army's commissariat furnished arms, ammunition and tents for all troops

---

78 [Loudoun] to Col. Messerve 27 December 1757, LO 5119. De Lancey to Pitt 17 March 1758, NYCD, VII, 343. Amherst to Pownall 12 February 1759, WO 34, vol. 27, 247-248.

79 Beer, 52-71.

80 John Blair, President of the Council, [Virginia], to [Abercromby], [1758], AB 975.

raised; what the provincial governments were responsible for, and what parliamentary grants helped them afford, were the provincial soldiers' levying, clothing, and pay. In 1759 the grant to the north was lifted to £ 200,000.[81] With this gentle device, the home government encouraged the colonies to assume in wartime part of the defence costs, without resorting to tax.[82]

---

81 Beer, 52-71. Pitt to northern Governors 30 December 1757, NYCD, VII, 339-341.

82 As Gage recommended. Gage to Earl Albermarle [January 1756], Alden, General Gage in America, 34-35. Though no taxes were collected, financial matters did make some difficulties in relations between London and the colonies. When colonial governments were directed to collect arms for the forces, New York city fathers -- fearing a French descent from the ocean -- would not give theirs up (De Lancey to Abercromby 22 and 25 May 1758, AB 279); and Pownall argued that the British government must pay ([Pownall to Abercromby April 1758], AB 138). Many other matters connected with the war also put a strain on the British-American connection: quartering (Loudoun to Cumberland 29 August 1756, Pargellis, Affairs, 231; petitions of Albany citizens, 15 and 17 November 1757, LO 6824, 4851; Bouquet to Gov. Lyttelton 28 February 1758, AB 25; Loudoun to Pownall 15 Nov. 1757, LO 4838), military conscription of waggons and drivers (Loudoun to Cumberland 17 October 1757, Pargellis, Affairs, 401-402; Johnson to Sir Chas. Hardy 16 September 1755, NYCD, VI, 1014; Gage to Amherst 25 April 1759, WO 34, vol. 46A, 73; petition of Christian Coobber and 13 others, 15 Nov. 1757, LO 4841; Amherst to Gage 27 January 1760, WO 34, vol. 46A, 399-400; Gage to Amherst 27 April 1760, WO 34, vol. 46A, 235-238), recruiting abuses (Pownall to Loudoun 6 February 1758, WO 34, vol. 25, 151-152), and impressment of seamen (Capt. James Mackay to Col. Forbes 23 December 1757, LO 5088). Individual citizens, and some colonial governments, officially resisted and protested British initiatives under these heads. In addition, the British military command ran afoul of colonial governments in respect of quarantine laws (Loudoun to Pownall 15 November 1757, LO 4838), legislative manoeuvres that aimed for responsible government (messages of Gov. Denny to Pennsylvania Assembly, 3 and 22 April 1758, AB 105, 186), assertion of municipal jurisdiction over serving soldiers (S. Fraser to Gov. Fitch of Conneticut 20 May 1758, AB 273; Gage to De Lancey

Many restrictions and special arrangements about length of service, comparative ranks, assignment of duties, etc., made cooperation with the several provincial levies a difficult and distracting task for British army headquarters in North America. Nevertheless, in number the provincial troops were about half of the whole. How important overall were the American colonies' contributions of manpower to winning the war for the British?

One expert has said the British ought to have required from the colonials only a small number of elite rangers and transport hands, and otherwise left the war against Canada to professional soldiers with European training and discipline.[83] The governing opinion among British officialdom at the time was obviously contrary, although there were many bureaucratic tangles in composing a force out of troops supplied by a dozen different governments. A key question is, Did American colonials make good soldiers?

The records are contradictory on this point. After a confused melee which was a tactical set-back, General Forbes was nonetheless pleased enough -- in a limited way -- with the performance of his provincials (14 September 1758, en route to Fort Duquesne):

> I was extremely angry to find our people had not pursued and attacked [the French] rear in their retreat, . . . but as our troops were mostly provincials, I was obliged to attribute it to their ignorance, for to do justice I must commend the spirit of some of the provincials . . .[84]

---

83 Pargellis, Affairs, Introduction, pp. xv-xviii.

84 Forbes to unknown, Beer, 63.

In 1760 Colonel Massey called the civilian sutlers and bateaumen who were passing Fort Stanwix with stores for the forces on Lake Ontario the "finest fellows in America."[85] Colonel Prevost, guerilla fighter, thought so highly of American troops he wrote that 8000 to 10,000 of them mustered into a permanent organization could relieve the North American need for European troops not suited to the territory.[86] An anonymous strategist, "Americanus", gave Lord Loudoun similar advice for the overrunning of Canada. His recipe for conquest was to gather 40,000 American militia and let them enter Canada pell-mell,

> without any Regard off, or Visit to ye Enemy's Forts, and Fortresses, ravage ye Country, destroy their Settlements, . . . I Suppose the Provincials will be vastly more Serviceable to ye Comon Cause, in acting by Themselves than by being put out of their natural Bias, and subjected to the Rules of Regular Discipline; even supposing their natural Bravery and Intripidity not to be on a Levell with the Uropean Regular Troops[87]

-- which, however, he did not admit, citing the examples of Louisbourg, 1745 (siege warfare) and William Johnson's victory on Lake Champlain in the fall of 1755 (pitched battle).

Balancing these plaudits in the documents is a chorus of complaints about the provincials, ranging from the administrative

---

85 Massey to Amherst 21 June 1760, WO 34, vol. 53, 44.

86 Memoir of May 1757, Pargellis, Affairs, 377-339.

87 Americanus to Loudoun 8 December 1757, LO 4971.

difficulty they caused to accusations of utter uselessness. Braddock referred to the militia's "slothful and languid disposition"; Lord Howe to their "usual irregularity"; and Forbes had the same problem with the same result -- he never knew how many of them he had under his orders. Provincial officers, he wrote, were "so very little exact [concerning numbers] that 'tis impossible even to depend upon their reports, when they are pleased to make them, which does not always happen."[88] Many Britishers considered American colonial troops too volatile in spirit. Hardened regulars had a consistent morale that was beyond much elation by victory, or despair from setbacks; but provincials were over-sensitive to every lurch in the barometer of success.[89]

---

88 Leckie, The wars of America, 46. Howe to Loudoun 14 November 1757, LO 4830. Forbes to Abercromby 25 July 1758, AB 474.

89 Appy to Haldimand 1 November 1758, PAC, MG 21, G 2, vol. 68, 17. Pownall to Amherst 9 July 1759, WO 34, vol. 25, 555; the Governor was willing to spread false news -- "The belief of Quebec's being taken might give such a spring to your army especially ye provincials that I see no harm in its being believed just as you were going to set off on your operations". For many Americans, religious convictions made the war against Canada a crusade against anti-Christ and the Pope. This fanaticism strengthened their morale; but it could also backfire, as Loudoun wrote, "As Canada has been so much preached up to them, numbers of these Enthusiastical People might engage, [who] . . . when first brought out, will undertake any rash thing, but if they do not get forward they immediately languish to go home, and when ever they grow Sick their Hearts break and they Die. They say their time is come, and there is no help for it, and from that Principle never struggle to live." Loudoun to Cumberland 2 October 1756, Pargellis, Affairs, 237.

No doubt American provincials were not as bad as some British witnesses made them out to be. Rustic colonials were not always given their due. After 2000 Americans and 200 regulars took Fort Beauséjour in 1755, "it could not be discovered" from an official account in the London Gazette, "that there was a single New England Man concern'd in the Affair."[90] General Wolfe trusted neither the provincial governments' undertakings nor the behaviour of their troops. "You will hear it said in England," he wrote his father, "that Mr. Abercromby has an army of 7000 regulars & 20,000 provincials; of this last account you may deduct one half, & depend upon it that the remaining 10,000 are not good for much."[91] Such notes of pettiness and back-biting -- frequently mixing in British correspondence with low evaluation of the Americans -- make one discount much of the criticisms. It seems fair to think that provincials, whose army service was temporary, were not as well trained or disciplined as the permanent levies of the regular forces. Beyond that truism, there is no unanswerable reason for thinking hard of them. After all, there was desertion among the regulars as well as the provincials, and sometimes unsteadiness under fire as well.[92] Provincials had different

---

90 Benjamin Franklin to Sir Ed. Fawkener 27 July 1756, Pargellis, Affairs, 185.

91 Wolfe to his father 20 May 1758, MG 18, L 5, vol. 3, part 1, 501.

92 "I observed this little firing threw our Regulars in to some kind of a Consternation, . . . I am more than ever convinced that numbers of our People cannot hear a great deal of firing round them coolly. I mean when they hear and do not See: . . . " Eyre to Napier 10 July 1758, Pargellis, Affairs, 419.

ideas on some military matters than spit-and-polish regulars did, but they were not necessarily wrong. A case in point was reported in the New York Gazette in August 1755. An English officer, teaching musket manoeuvres to a squad at Albany, received criticism from a by-standing Yankee captain. The American officer said he had a different way of preparing his own men to cope with Canadians and Indians. "What is that?" asked the Britisher. "I teach them nothing but to load quickly and take good aim," the American said. The Englishman was horrified at the notion of the soldiers aiming, for if an enemy officer should appear, he would become the target of dozens of firearms. That was not war, he bristled, but murder![93]

Observers on both sides agreed that Canadian militia, man for man, were militarily superior to the English colonies' larger forces. Bougainville summarized Canada's militia laws:

> All the habitants fit to bear arms, from the age of fifteen to sixty, are enlisted and obliged to serve whenever the Governor General commands them. There are militia officers in each parish; . . . the same as their militiamen, they do not receive any pay, just provisions and an outfit; . . .[94]

To La Pause, the militia was Canadian society's fourth estate -- after the church, the military (Marine) and the merchants -- and the most interesting.[95] This fourth estate comprised the whole healthy adult male population of the colony, numbered in the first

---

93 Guy Frégault, La guerre de la conquête (Montreal: Fides, 1955), 89.

94 "Mémoire sur l'Etat de la Nouvelle-France" (1757), RAPQ 1923-4, 55.

95 RAPQ 1933-4, 208.

British census report (1760), as 16,412 militia from a population of 76,172.[96] In peacetime the network of militia officers formed the country's civil administration -- organizing militia manpower for such tasks as road-building and bridge-mending. In wartime they turned their hands to whatever was required. It was not a particularly military organization; community involvement and common interests, rather than discipline, was what held them together. In regular forces the Canadian militia's method of promotion is usually thought destructive of discipline: the smartest men moved up through the ranks, serving as ordinary soldier, sergeant and lieutenant before being made captain.[97] But the Canadian institution was obviously better, for military purposes, than the hit-and-miss free enterprise forces of the English colonies. The American governments could not be sure of delivering the required number of men if individuals would not volunteer. Canada had a more totalitarian system, which directed manpower to the government's ends. Governor De Lancey of New York said he could not compel his militia, and workmen could only be lured to the front with danger wages; in contrast, Montcalm easily decided in September 1758 to take out of Quebec

---

96 Amherst to Pitt 4 October 1760, Cognets, Amherst and Canada, 290.

97 Lieutenant's commission for Jaque Couder 22 February 1760, PAC, MG 24, L 3, vol. 46, pp. 29636-29638.

all tradesmen and labourers employed on luxury and private work, or projects unconnected with the war effort: "I shall employ all those men on the three frontiers . . . in works of urgency and of actual necessity."[98]

Good organization, in which the will or whim of individuals was not consulted, helped to make up for the Canadian militia's outstanding weakness, which was numbers. For a country settled over 150 years, La Pause thought, Canada ought to have more people. The fault lay with government. If during the last thirty years the King had sent 400 settlers every year, supporting them initially with cash, tools and farm animals, "today Canada would have more than two million souls and the country would be inhabited as far as Detroit and would be in good condition to sustain itself without outside help."[99] But as it was, people were so preciously scarce in Canada that any considerable military activity of the militia seriously interferred with other pursuits. A militiaman captured by the British reported that in 1757 every man in the Montreal district was called up for the push against Fort William Henry: ". . . they pressed every man without distinction under the age of 60 not

---

98 Montcalm's thoughts on the Lake Ontario situation [September 1758], NYCD, X, 871-872.

99 "La population et culture des terres", RAPQ 1933-4, 211-214. These 2 million represent at least a fourfold exaggeration.

infirm to go upon this expedition; . . ."[100] In response to recurrent crises, the levée-en-masse was used in the three following years as well. But when the citizen-army was mustered in full or near-full strength, agriculture and the western fur trade had to be given up. As the Canadian economy could not afford to give up the furs, and both people and army had to eat, it was a wasting situation.

Trying to keep the country going while defending it, the authorities in Canada did not call out the whole militia whenever they could avoid it. Therefore Amherst's census of over 16,000 militia is not a useful measure for any long-term strategical purpose. A paper Bougainville wrote to preview Canada's 1759 "situation in men, means and positions" counted upon militia strength of five or six thousand. He was trying to promote additional French reinforcements. Lévis, with less reason to misrepresent the facts, privately calculated in his journal that between 10,000 and 12,000 Canadians could come out and bear arms.[101] That was probably the maximum that ever acted at any one time. After Quebec had been surrendered -- cutting a part of Canadian population away from French control -- and the situation was

---

100 Examination of Jacques de Vaudry 3 August 1757, PAC, MG 12, B, War Office 1, vol. 1, 307-308. Doreil to Belle-Isle 31 August 1758, RAPQ 1944-5, 156-157 and NYCD, X, 818-822.

101 Bougainville's paper in RAPQ 1923-4, 8-10. Lévis journal, April 1759, in Casgrain, Manuscrits . . . de Lévis, I, 175.

desperate, La Pause was planning to muster 8500 militia for the campaign of 1760.[102]

The Canadian militia was an able and versatile body of men. "That country," wrote Brigadier Bourlamaque, "possesses a much greater number of naturally brave men than other countries, from whom, when reduced to obedience, great advantage can be derived in war."[103] Montcalm also testified to their toughness. On one occasion he attached a squad of regulars to a Marine/Canadian/Indian wintertime raiding party. "We are not accustomed to such marches," he remarked.

> To be six weeks on the march and to sleep, in a manner, continually on snow or ice, reduced to bread and pork, and often to drag or carry fifteen days' provisions, will give you some idea of fatigue unknown in Europe[104]

but habitually taken in stride by the colonials.

When Doreil had been in Canada for three months, he wrote back to France, "Nothing, Sir, equals the bravery of the Canadians and the contempt they have for the English of this new world. This is very fortunate, especially in the critical circumstances in which we find ourselves."[105] "In the woods, behind trees, no troops are comparable to the natives of this country," Bougainville allowed.[106] Another French observer admired the militia

---

102 Memoir of November 1759, RAPQ 1933-4, 136.
103 Memoir on Canada (1762), NYCD, X, 1144.
104 Montcalm to Count d'Argenson 24 April 1757, NYCD, X, 549.
105 Doreil to Belle-Isle 19 August 1755, RAPQ 1944-5, 33.
106 BJ, p. 333. See also Johnstone Memoirs, III, 16.

expedition that made a secret attack behind enemy lines, burned Fort Bull and destroyed a mountain of materiel: "Men well commanded can dare anything, especially in Canada, where the inhabitants are just right for this sort of an expedition."[107] Complaining about indiscipline in the American militia, Governor Colden of New York seemed to share the sentiment he attributed to Canadians -- "The French in America seem to have a most daring opinion of their superiority in conduct, and contempt of ours, . . . "[108] The conclusion Cumberland boiled out of all the reports from North America was that Canadian militia were "many Degrees above ours: . . ."[109]

They might be tough and brave, but they were amateurs nonetheless. Canadian militia sometimes appeared on campaign very ill-found. They were wasteful of equipment, careless of their health, and "It is not proven", Bougainville wrote, "that they respect their own militia officers."[110] A detachment that was made up overnight in response to a September 1758 emergency was "in very bad shape, almost naked, badly armed, many sick, no bateaux. Until they change the method of militia command they

---

107 Mémoire du Canada (c. 1770), RAPQ 1924-5, 121.

108 Colden to Halifax 3 August 1754, Pargellis, Affairs, 19-21.

109 Cumberland to Loudoun 2 December 1756, Ibid., 254.

110 Bougainville, "Milices du Canada", RAPQ 1923-4, 29-31.

will never get any good out of it."[111] They were ignorant of drill: "a troop which knows neither order nor discipline nor even the simplest manoeuvre, led by officers who are not more knowledgeable . . . . "[112]

Another result of little or no training was that Canadian militia morale was too flexible.[113] Developing contingency plans for 1760, La Pause wanted to make use of the militia, but he wondered: "Can one dispose the militia and make them act with zeal in such [dolorous] circumstances?"[114] He referred to the Canadians'

> restless spirit [l'humeur remuante] which counted the enemy's strength and numbers for nothing, as long as they knew the English to be far beyond the frontiers, but which cannot be reassured -- even by the best dispositions -- when the enemy is about to be seen much nearer.[115]

In 1760, Montreal's last defence on the west was entrusted to a force of four hundred militia under the Chevalier de La Corne. When the British army came down the Saint Lawrence

---

111 BJ 12 September 1758, pp. 277-278.

112 La Pause, Continuation of 1759 campaign; entry for 10 August 1759, RAPQ 1033-4, 116.

113 La Pause, "Journal de l'Entrée de la Campagne 1760", RAPQ 1932-3, 384.

114 Memoir of November 1759, RAPQ 1933-4, 137.

115 La Pause, Continuation of 1759 campaign; entry for 11 September 1759, RAPQ 1933-4, 133.

River, this unit neither accomplished nor attempted anything. It was "prostrated" by desertion.[116]

As the war progressed, misunderstandings and suspicions -- similar to those that reigned between regulars and colonials on the British side -- became more and more the style for relations between the French regular army and colonial troops. "The air one breathes here is contagious," wrote Bougainville, "and I fear lest a long sojourn . . . makes us acquire the vices of a people to whom we communicate no virtues."[117] Colonial Canadians frequently reciprocated this disdain. Headquarters finally adopted the policy of dividing the militia into three groups: good, poor and bad. Montcalm recommended to higher authorities in France that the worthiest two grades should be incorporated into the shrinking regular and Marine units, leaving all the efficient officers in the whole militia to try and make something better out of the worst of their men.[118] The dispatches of spring 1759 carried instructions that this plan should indeed be followed and part of the unsteadiness of French formations on the Plains of Abraham may be traced to its effects.[119]

---

116 Vaudreuil to Lévis 2 September 1760, MG 18, K 8, vol. 5, 128. Lévis journal 14-19 August 1760, Ibid., vol. 12, 250.

117 Bougainville to his brother 17 September 1757, BJ, p. 332.

118 Bougainville's ideas: BJ, p. 272; RAPQ 1923-4, 29-31. Montcalm's: NYCD, X, 875-877.

119 C. P. Stacey, Quebec, 1759 (Toronto: Macmillan, 1959), 146-147.

One conclusion from our comparison of the French and British permanent forces applies to the colonial soldiers as well. Again, the British side had greater manpower. There is no doubt that both American and Canadian provincials made extremely important contributions to the respective war efforts, because they formed at least 50% of the soldiers involved and sometimes possessed special skills the European armies both lacked and needed. The Canadian militia were a more vital factor than American colonials were, because the French command -- starved for replacements and reinforcements for the regulars and Marines -- had to depend more and more upon them. Finally, the same tension and imperfect sympathy between European and colonial troops is noticed on both sides. European superciliousness and colonial sensitivity did not produce a meld conducive to the most effective co-operation of military units drawn from apparently distinct communities.

3. Wastage.

Recruiting men wherever they could be found and making them available in North America, was one aspect of the manpower problem. The other big task that affected the end result -- how many men would meet the enemy -- was combating certain influences that always tended to reduce the number of serviceable troops. Steady wastage among the soldiers is best illustrated by the figures for the French permanent forces -- Troupes de Terre and Troupes de la Marine. The number of men who served in

these units were:

1755	Marines already in Canada	about 800
	regulars arrived from Europe	2250
1756	regulars and Marines arrived from Europe	2325
1757	from Europe	1930
1758	from Europe	329
1759	from Europe	550
1760	from Europe	0
	TOTAL	8184

Of approximately 8184 soldiers who served in Canada with the French permanent forces, only about 3750 were there in the fall of 1760, at the conquest. Over six campaigns, 4434 men had been lost to service, from all causes. Average wastage for a campaign was therefore 739 men. As the paper establishment of all permanent units was 6830, the case was that over ten per cent of strength had to be re-provided each year, to keep up.[120]

This yearly wastage of ten per cent was probably very similar to what the British experienced too. What caused it? There were four chief tendencies operating in North America to bring about shrinkage in all units of the armies: ill health, battle casualties, taking of prisoners, and desertion.

---

120 These figures are approximate. See some details in pp. 441-452 above. Total establishment of French regulars is given in Doreil to [Belle-Isle] 30 April 1758, RAPQ 1944-5, 124.

A. Health

The first health problem was to get soldiers over from Europe to America intact. The French had a sad experience in this regard. Some vessels of the 1756 fleet brought a plague with them. A month after arriving in Canada 300 of the passengers were still in hospital; thirty-two soldiers and fifty-four sailors died there -- "a sickness coming, they say, from the antiquity of the ship and the captain's lack of maintenance and provision for ventilation, an unusual sickness in its symptoms and its effects. Several people who have been attacked and cured have remained out of their head."[121] The next year was worse. When the 2nd and 3rd battalions of the Berry regiment -- 800 men -- disembarked at the end of July, over 200 went right into hospital, "the greater part in critical condition [à toute extremité] with malign fevers and a lot of scurvy."[122] In August the merchantman ROBUSTE arrived; ironically named, for she was a floating ward of contagion. Twelve men were dead, and another 110 -- practically the whole contingent of Foreign Legion troops that had boarded her -- were at death's door. "The sickness had been carried on LE ROBUSTE by

---

121 BJ 10 July 1756, p. 8. See also Doreil to [Belle-Isle] 20 June 1756, RAPQ 1944-5, 81-82.

122 Doreil to [Belle-Isle] 15 August 1757, RAPQ 1944-5, 103.

soldiers contaminated with scabies."[123] Thankfully, in 1758 Doreil was able to report that the ship-sickness, though almost as widespread as the two preceding years, was not so malign.[124]

The British also lost troops in transit. Although during the War of the conquest the problem was not as serious as it had been in the 1740's,[125] British soldiers did sometimes arrive sickly. The army of about 7000 men that sailed to take Louisbourg in 1757 is an example. The ships straggled into Halifax during the second week of July.

> The Fogg We met with for a long Time had greatly distressed the Ships, & separated many of them; from being as Healthy as most that ever sailed from England, We had between Nine Hundred & a Thousand Men put ashore to the Hospital Five Hundred of which will be left behind Sick, besides Two Hundred dead, since We first Sailed.[126]

Sickness in the ships had three causes: dirty or ill troops to start with, crowding and delay. One or two men with a contagious disease could infect the whole group before it arrived in North America. The rule for loading was to embark

---

123 MM. Gradis to M. Le Proux de la Rivière 15 November 1757, RAPQ 1957-9, 52.

124 Doreil to [Belle-Isle] 30 July 1758, RAPQ 1944-5, 147-9.

125 Recruits for Shirley's regiment were "impress'd Men & the Sweeping of the Savoy . . . generally above one third part of 'em die in the Passage, . . ." Shirley to Pelham 25 February 1746, Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery, Huntington Miscellaneous 9704.

126 Vice-Admiral Holburne to Holdernesse 4 August 1757, Pargellis, Affairs, 388. Fortescue, British army, II, 310.

one soldier for every one and a half tons of a ship's measured burden. This ensured that the men were closely snuggled up together in the sleeping space. Typical orders to combat epidemic were: "Berths are to be cleaned and bedding brought up on deck to air daily if the weather permits. Smoking between decks is forbidden . . . . During the daytime as many men as possible are to be on deck."[127]

Healthy men could sustain unhygenic shipboard conditions a good length of time, but once a germ started to spread there was no possible quarantine. Soon all were sick. Unfortunately, the voyage to Canada often had considerable delays. After the troops were embarked they might sit in a French port for two weeks or more, awaiting favourable winds.[128] Going upriver to Quebec, contrary winds were (are) encountered nine months out of twelve, and the river current always sets down. Vessels were sometimes windbound between Ile du Bic (Rimouski) and Quebec for four, five or six weeks at a time.[129] It was this particular circumstance which caused the French to have more trouble with shipboard sickness than did the British, who in most weathers could run freely and

---

127 Orders for C.O. British 51st Regiment, embarking Ireland for Minorca 1770. Colonel H. C. Wylly, History of the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry, I (London: Lund Humphries [1930]), 104. David Syrett, "Living conditions on the Navy Board's transports during the American war, 1775-1783", The Mariner's Mirror, vol. 55 (1969), 88.

128 Doreil to Minister of War 28 April 1755, MG 4, A 1, vol. 3404.

129 William March, "Observations on . . . attacking of Canada" 20 November 1757, LO 4168.

steadily into Halifax, Boston or New York. Some of the worst outbreaks on British ships, in fact, were diseases contracted from the French. Several ships suffered while returning to England after the fall of Quebec. NEPTUNE, flagship, lost 160 men dead, and landed 133 sick in Britain. The main killer was probably typhus, caught from French prisoners. It was so virulent that the first man to step on board in England -- to help dock the ship, since she was so short of crewmen -- was struck down immediately and died within five days. The LOWESTOFT, which had perfect health during the whole summer campaign, had 50 sick, of whom six died, after taking convalescents from hospital at Quebec. The DUBLIN buried nineteen at sea, and landed 90 sick.[130]

Contagion that got a good hold on men at sea could not be fully contained on land. In October 1757, epidemic in the Quebec hospital's army ward was carrying off three or four men every day.[131] The hospitals were particularly dangerous places, but some of the quarters that serviceable troops were given to live in were almost as bad. "The casemates in the fort," reported a British officer from Oswego,

---

130 Christopher Lloyd and Jack L. S. Coulter, Medicine and the navy 1200-1900, III (London: Livingstone, 1961), 118-119.

131 Doreil to [Belle-Isle] 22 October 1957, RAPQ 1944-5, 112-113.

> are in miserable condition from the great number of sick they have had in them I have therefore ordered the regiment to encamp til such times as they are well cleaned, smoked and aired; and whilst the weather is good I think they are better encamped than in the fort.[132]

A companion killer to typhus was smallpox. Again there was some transmission of the disease from one army to the other. The earliest mention of smallpox is on the French side. Starting from Baye des Puants (Lake Michigan) in 1756, the Canadian partisan Lieutenant Joseph Marin de La Malgue led five hundred Indians from the upper country eastward towards the battle area. Very few, however, would proceed beyond Presqu'ile, "having heard it said that there was smallpox at all our forts. The Indians fear nothing so much as this disease; . . . "[133] In 1757 a group of American provincials were taken prisoner by the Indians in the Fort William Henry "massacre". Afterwards ransomed by the French, they spent some time in a prisoner of war camp in Canada, and were then sent by ship to Halifax to be exchanged. Smallpox -- no doubt contracted among the French -- broke out in the ship. When recruiting parties of the 40th and 45th regiments were picked up at Halifax, the disease had an entry to those units too.[134] In January 1758 it was so bad in New York city

---

132 Lt.-Col. A. Murray (55th regiment) to Amherst 4 October 1760, WO 34, vol. 19, 34-35.

133 BJ 11 July 1756, p. 8.

that the colonial legislature met in the suburbs to avoid it.[135]

The disease affected strategical planning with regard to manpower levels, assignment of troops, and relations between military and colonial authorities. In 1758 the Massachusetts Assembly wished to send their people to Fort Edward instead of Albany, the rendezvous appointed for them: "as they hear small pox is there, they are to a strong superstitious degree afraied of it, . . . "[136]

After the epidemics, the next greatest hazard to the troops' health was deficiency in diet. Scurvy was a serious crippler and very often fatal. Everybody had an idea what to do about it. Some were only half right -- for instance, the diagnosis Brigadier Gage offered to explain why men were dying at Oswego: "That the scurvy is of the same kind as that which attacks sailors at sea has been long discovered, & no doubt proceeds from the -- moist air that surrounds you."[137] Actually, the cause of scurvy on board ship was not the sea air, but rather lack of fresh food and too great reliance on salted provisions.

---

134 John Cosnan to Col. Forbes 7 November 1757, LO 4783. See also LO 4756, 4897, 4898.

135 De Lancey to Lords of Trade 5 January 1758, NYCD, VII, 341.

136 Pownall to [Abercromby] 12 March 1758, AB 37.

137 Gage to Haldimand 11 February 1760, MG 21, G 2, vol. 2-1, 41-42.

In North America fresh meat was much harder to come by than in well-settled, well-farmed Europe. It was especially hard to provide at frontier posts, where the dietary aspect of service resembled being at sea. In both cases, men who were far removed from regular sources of food supply faced the same prospect of debilitation and death. When salt pork and salt beef became the chief sustenance for any prolonged period, the scurvy descended.

What could be done about it? One idea was to get back to civilization. This occurred to soldiers marooned in the forest more often than it did to headquarters who put them there. When scurvy was rampant at Carillon and St.-Frédéric in 1759-1760 -- the first winter these posts had been in British hands -- Amherst wrote,

> I certainly shall not relieve the whole garrisons and I should be very sorry to move any of the men till a fair prospect of good weather offers. I dont think any of the officers capable of making the scurvy an excuse to get [away] from the frontiers but I cant help recollecting the strange effect the scurvy had on Frazier's regiment when at fort Stanwix etc. It was violent and had this odd effect that it made them all afraid as I heard afterwards of being kept in garrison there the whole campaign. . . .138

Numerous dietary experiments were carried on to combat the scurvy at ill-supplied posts. One of the most detailed and

---

138 Amherst to Gage 4 February 1760, WO 34, vol. 46A, 413-414.

drastic was at Niagara during 1759-1760, where the commandant reduced rations as the disease spread, very nearly to the point of starvation.[139] Another pragmatic physician was the first storekeeper at Presqu'ile (1753), who--forbidden to issue bread, wine or brandy to anyone except officers -- saw with reluctance "that we were reduced to letting the sick suffer and die with nothing but medicine to help them."[140] In contravention of orders, the storesman picked out twenty-two of the soldiers who were down with scurvy and nurtured them slyly

---

139 Of 700 men in the garrison that winter, 150 died from deficiency diseases before spring arrived. See the correspondence between the Commanding Officer Niagara (Lieutenant-Colonel Will Eyre) and the Commander-in-Chief in WO 34, vol. 21, 33-128; vol. 23, 33-82.

140 Quoted from Voyage au Canada de 1751 à 1761 by J.C.B., in Severance, An old frontier of France, II, 29-30. H.-R. Casgrain identified J.C.B. as Jean-Baptiste Bonnafoux de Caminel, but Aegidius Fauteux denies it: Fauteux, Les chevaliers de Saint-Louis en Canada (Montreal: Editions des Dix, 1949), 188.

with small portions of bread, wine, brandy and fresh game instead of salt meat, while other patients continued to eat regular fare. "I had the satisfaction of seeing my patients improve daily, and at the end of a fortnight they were quite convalescent. Four or five of the others were buried each day."[141]

In both armies, the officially prescribed balancer for salt pork and beef on the menu was vegetables, usually peas. While the vegetables held out, most men could sustain a salt meat diet safely. But scurvy marched when the pea-barrel emptied. By the end of March 1760, over 20% of the troops left to winter at Oswego and Oswego Falls were dead from scurvy, and at the nearby Onondaga post,

> Captain Dunbar . . . writes word that the scurvy begins to make its appearance amongst his men & particularly affects the drafts. In short it has affected all the troops who have not had the benefit of vegetables [Gage's regiment] lost a good many men this winter the smallpox got amongst them and scarcely a man has recovered that has been attacked owing the doctor says to the scurvy being in their blood: . . .[142]

To avoid being overwhelmed through lack of vegetables in the winter -- when, usually, no more could be sent to them -- isolated frontier garrisons put in their own gardens. Fort Duquesne received its consignment of seeds before the armament

---

141 Quoted in Stotz, "Defense in the wilderness", Drums in the forest, 107.

142 Gage to Amherst 23 March 1760, WO 34, vol. 46A, 195-198. See also same to same 27 April 1760, Ibid., 235-238.

was complete. By 1760 Fort Edward had a regular farm -- thirty acres sown equally to Indian corn, peas and oats -- and Oswego was starting a garden following a scurvy winter.[143] When both transported and home-grown varieties failed, men could still grub in frozen earth. Newly captured Fort Saint-Frédéric was desperately scratching for roots in March 1760, "attributing the recovery of their sick entirely to them & fearing they will relapse when the roots are exhausted. The stories related of the wonderful effects of the turnip equal any of the miracles at Abbé Paris' tomb."[144]

When no vegetables of any description could be obtained, standard substitutes were spruce beer and cider. These items could hold off scurvy, but as they were not on the approved list of provisions, the men had to pay extra for them, and sometimes had to make them themselves.[145]

Gage, whose thinking in this pre-lime juice era was sufficiently muddled that he both attributed the disease to "moist air" like at sea, and saw a link between scurvy and lack of vegetables, also recommended cider as another good vegetable-substitute. He had been reading about Admiral Lord Anson's voyage around the world in the 1740's, and picked up

---

143 Duquesne to Contrecoeur 8 September 1754, Grenier, Papiers Contrecoeur, 253. Gage to Amherst 9 March 1760, WO 34, vol. 46A, 190-191. Robert Leake to Haldimand 20 February 1760, MG 21, G 2, vol. 68, 51.

144 Gage to Amherst 2 March 1760, WO 34, vol. 46A, 184-185. Abbé Paris was a Jansenist theologian who died in

this idea from navy experience.[146] He sent one hundred barrels of cider upcountry for Onondaga, Oswego and Niagara in the scurvy crisis of the 1760 spring.[147]

Many other commodities were also tried: the not-yet-illustrious lime juice, sugar of the West Indian variety and also from the maple tree, vinegar, wine, onions, sassafras beer and fish (all the interior posts being located on waterways).[148] In this fumbling manner, soldiers of the 1750's somewhat alleviated the dread scurvy.

There were assorted other dangers to health which troops in the fight for Canada faced. Some men in Bradstreet's 1758 expedition to Fort Frontenac lost the skin off their feet from wading in Wood Creek water, and "The very extraordinary sickness, which afterwards prevailed among our troops, was probably . . . owing to the bad quality of the waters they drank and cook'd with." The British army prescribed rum and ginger to be carried in provisions, to prevent "bad water from throwing the Men into Fluxes." One officer had to beg

---

1727. His grave, in the cemetery of Saint-Médard near Paris, became such a centre of "fanatical pilgrimage and wonder-working" that the authorities ordered the graveyard closed. The Encyclopaedia Britannica, 11th edition (Cambridge: University press, 1911), XX, 803. Voltaire regretted that Eighteenth century enlightenment "has not been able to prevent . . . the crazy behaviour of the Paris populace around the tomb at Saint-Médard". The age of Louis XIV and other selected writings (New York: Twayne, 1963), 169.

145 There is a recipe for making spruce beer in Jean M. Murray, The Newfoundland journal of Aaron Thomas (Don Mills: Longmans, 1968), 59-62. See also MG 21, G 2, vol. 18, 1-2; and Doughty, Knox historical journal, I, 71.

off duty "so bad of the Piles that I cannot sit in a Chair for a quarter of an hour together." An entire squad of Canadian militia was laid low by bad pork and flour.[149]

The weather was often a key factor and according to Eighteenth century terminology, soldiers might well be thrown into worse than "fluxes". When snow fell at Fort Edward one October 24th, the doctor reported "many of the men complain of pains in their breasts which by continuing in the cold will throw them into consumption. . . . "[150] At newly-captured Forts Saint-Frédéric and Carillon (February 1760), great numbers were affected by scurvy, "& above 100 of the Triniskillin regiment unfit for service by being froze, in the late intense cold weather."[151] General Murray buried seven hundred of the troops left with him to hold Quebec over

---

146 Alden, General Gage in America, 39-40. Two narratives of Anson's 1740-1744 voyage were published before 1750. Encyclopaedia Brittanica (Chicago: William Benton, 1965), I, 1027.

147 Gage to Haldimand and Amherst 31 March 1760, MG 21, G 2, vol. 2-1, 53; and WO 34, vol. 46A, 205-208.

148 Amherst correspondence April-May 1760, WO 34, vol. 21, 61-68; vol. 23, 41-44; MG 21, G 2, vol. 1, 62. Leake to Haldimand 20 February 1760, Ibid., vol. 68, 51.

149 "Extraordinary sickness": An impartial account, 11. Rum and ginger: Loudoun to Cumberland 17 October 1757, Pargellis, Affairs, 401. Piles: Canedy, 197. Bad pork: BJ 17 July 1756, pp. 12-13.

150 Webb to Abercromby 24 October 1757, LO 4696.

151 Gage to Haldimand 11 February 1760, MG 21, G 2, vol. 2-1, 41-42.

the 1759-1760 winter.

> We were totally unprepared for such a climate, . . . The troops were crowded into vacant houses as well as possible numbers fell sick and the scurvy made a dreadful havoc among us. The duty became extremely hard for after being up all night on guard the men were obliged to go near six miles through the snow to cut [wood] and then to drag it home on sledges. . . . The fatigues of the winter were so great that the living almost envied the dead. Liquors were extremely scarce and when the men could procure them they generally drank to excess. It was no uncommon thing in the morning to find several men frozen to death from the above cause. . . . [152]

Lack of hygiene was sometimes important. At badly-planned Fort William Henry in 1756, where the whole encampment was a scattered graveyard, abbatoir and regimental latrine, men died at the rate of thirty per week.[153] Finally, enemy threats could force more hurry and heavy work upon men than they had the capacity to sustain in good health. This was part of the trouble with the personnel who made the raid on Fort Frontenac (1758). Brigadier Stanwix reported their state three weeks after the men had returned from the most energetic forced-march of the war; numbers were "dead & dying daily for by all accounts that enterprise was performed with so much expedition & fatigue that few

---

152. James Miller, "Memoirs of an invalid", PAC, MG 18, L 4, packet 54. See also Lloyd and Coulter, Medicine and the navy, III, 118-119; Frégault, War, 276; and on snow blindness, note 141 above.

153 Fortescue, History of the British army, II, 303.

could well bear it."[154]

At the worst of times, indeed, it seemed that malingering was the only health problem commanders did not have to grapple with! So many real hazards existed that the invention of imaginary ones was superfluous.

B. Battle casualties

The poor troops! If the passage, the diet, the weather or one of the plagues did not get get them, then of course the enemy might. The number of soldiers killed and wounded in action against the enemy was not as great as the casualties of ordinary ill-health, but it was still considerable. Battles in the Lake Ontario zone that put the most men out of action occurred in 1756 and 1759. In 1756 British losses in killed alone were seventy at the capture of Fort Bull, sixty defending a supply convoy in June, and 150 at the fall of Oswego. French casualties were about twelve killed (and 33 wounded.[155] In the fighting around Niagara in July 1759, probably 250 British and French troops were rendered hors de combat.[156] Other major engagements of the war that violently cut down the number of troops available for service in all theatres were Dieskau's 1755 repulse in the Lake Champlain area (about 100 French killed, 125 wounded); the capture of Fort William

---

154 To Abercromby 29 September 1758, WO 34, vol. 45, 32-33.

155 Léry journal, RAPQ 1926-7, 388, 392, 401-403. BJ, p.6.

156 NYCD, VII, 403. MG 21, G 2, vol. 68, 32-33.

Henry (400 British killed); the British repulse at Carillon (about 1930 British, 350 French deaths); the siege of Quebec (British over 270 killed, 830 wounded; French total casualties that summer more than 700); and the battle of Ste. Foy (1104 British, 833 French killed and wounded).[157]

The peripheral or preparatory skirmishing of the campaigns, in which these events were climactic, usually produced only a few casualties, although there were two or three occasions on the scale of the New Jersey provincials' disaster of 1757 -- when the French took 160 prisoners and eighty American soldiers were killed.[158]

Both French and British had hospital organizations that were meant to control diseases, repair wounds and return invalids to the firing line. In 1755, the French regular army medical service in Canada was headed by a surgeon-major and four aide-majors, all five physicians. The disposition of these scarce personnel during a campaign season took into account the fact that there already were civilian and Marine doctors in the colony's three main towns. Regular army doctors were stationed at distant outposts where Troupes de Terre were in garrison, or sent with the eight-tent mobile hospital that accompanied the principal army.[159] A permanent scheme evolved by 1757. At Quebec and Montreal, the Hôtel-Dieu had an army ward. Ursuline nuns provided hospital services for both soldiers and

---

157 MG 4, A 1, vol. 3405, pièce 132. Fortescue, British army, II, 312, 337, 373, 389. Stacey, Quebec, 79, 152. G.F.G. Stanley, Canada's soldiers (Toronto: Macmillan, 1954), 94.

158 See above, Chapter V, pp. 355-356.

159 RAPQ 1944-5, 68. MG 4, A 1, vol. 3417, pièce 137, 3-4 has Montcalm's high praise for this service.

civilians at Trois-Rivières. The military's mobile hospital had been fixed at Carillon, which was the lynch-pin and advanced fortress of French strategy in the war's most active theatre throughout 1756-1759.[160]

The British system was better developed and better staffed. As with the French, the British surgeon-general was not a member of headquarters staff. He headed up in person the chief hospital, the one at Albany. In addition, this institution had two surgeon-mates, one apothecary and two apothecary-mates. Another six personnel with the same rates were detailed to accompany the Lake Champlain force. Until Louisbourg collapsed in 1758, the French had medical facilities in Nova Scotia; so did the British -- a fixed hospital at Halifax with a staff of four, plus eight medical people assigned to the army. The official plan for 1758 provided a hospital ship for the Halifax-New York route. Five medical personnel were assigned to accompany the southern army invading the Ohio valley, and during the winter a small temporary hospital was operating in New York city.[161]

The medical men tried hard to save their patients. They attempted research as well as cures. In June 1756 an experimental autopsy was held in the general hospital at Quebec on two

---

160 Doreil to [Belle-Isle] 22 October 1757 and 25 October 1758, RAPQ 1944-5, 112-113, 165.

161 "Disposition of the officers of the hospital for the campaign 1758", 10 December 1757, LO 6851. See also Loudoun to Cumberland 3 June 1757, Pargellis, Affairs, 344.

soldiers who had just died from ship-borne plague. Present were Lévis, the commanding officers of La Sarre and Royal Roussillon regiments, and all available army and Marine doctors. The bishop was also there, but it is not clear whether his presence at the inquest was due to a mustering of the community's best trained intellects, or if his function was to check the shift of the soul. When the bodies were opened, the spleen was found swollen and gangrened; there was also "a congestion of blood and a swelling in the head, along with the beginning of pus-formation in the brain, etc. This knowledge of the seat of the disease has been the salvation of [other] invalids."[162] The French were willing to learn wherever they might. Bougainville admired some of the Indians' practice of medicine, noting that sick people were made to sweat, their diet was controlled, and use was made of vomit-inducers, laxatives and enemas.

> To judge from their success, they are as good physicians as ours are . . . I do not believe that Indians doctors are as skilled, however, in surgery. They do re-set dislocated bones. They set fractures, making use of bandages, but, less adroit than we, the patient sometimes remains crippled. They have no knowledge at

---

[162] Doreil to [Belle-Isle] 20 June 1756, RAPQ 1944-5, 81-82.

all of the terrible -- but unhappily necessary -- art of amputation.[163]

The military hospitals were busy, unpleasant places. At the end (late October) of both the 1757 and 1758 campaigns, the total number of French troops in the various hospitals was 500. Doreil's practiced judgment let him predict on both occasions that while most of these sick men would be released, enough new cases of disease and accident would come in during the winter that the army could count on having lost, by spring, a full one-half of the number that were hospitalized in the autumn. His dire prophesies usually came true.[164] In the Albany hospital in September-October 1758, there was a steady total of 450 patients. The average weekly turnover was forty to fifty. Since the last major engagement that year was in early July, the 250 soldiers committed to hospital between 27 August and 14 October were down from natural causes, not from enemy action. Fifteen per cent of those who left hospital were

---

163 "Mémoir sur l'état de la Nouvelle-France" (1757), RAPQ 1923-4, 69-70. Today, some of the Eighteenth-century's medical improvisations seem ingenious indeed. When the Duc D'Anville was contemplating suicide in Halifax harbour in 1746, the scowl around his lips was the scowl of a general, but the teeth -- one of them -- was a pig's. It had been wired into his mouth to replace one of his own; apparently a common and effective practice. "Duke's tooth was pig's", Toronto Globe and Mail, 22 November 1967, p. 5.

164 Doreil's late autumn reports to the Minister of War, 25 October 1755, 1 November 1756, 22 October 1757 and 25 October 1758, RAPQ 1944-5, 51, 92-93, 112-113, 165.

corpses.[165] At the same time of the year in 1760, the hospital at Oswego had a worse record, burying half of those whose names left the roll of patients.[166]

When there was a major action with the enemy, the facilities were inadequate and wounded spread everywhere. A Quebec nun wrote that at the time of the battle of Ste. Foy,

> It was then, more than ever, that our convent became a hospital . . . how depict the horrors we have had to see and hear . . . the cries of the dying and the lamentations of the onlookers . . . After having dressed more than five hundred patients, there still remained others unprovided for. Our barns and sheds were full of the wounded. We had in our infirmary seventy-two officers, of whom thirty-three died. The amputation of legs and arms was going on everywhere.[167]

Even in quiet times away from violence a hospital scene could be horrible. "The number of sick left here were greater than you at your departure imagined," Dr. Richard Huck wrote Amherst,

> and their condition in general worse than I expected. Their diseases are of such a nature as to require the utmost care to prevent infection . . . In spite of all my care to keep them clean there are so many fluxes that the air is constantly replete with putrid effluvia from such as are unable to stir out of bed which makes the recovering men gain their health very slowly Indeed they generally arrive to a certain pitch at which

---

165 Returns signed by Dr. Napier, 2 and 9 September and 14 October 1758, AB 599, 634, 762.

166 Return for the week of 30 August to 6 September 1760, WO 34, vol. 19, 27-28.

167 Quoted from Glimpses of the Monastery: Scenes from the History of the Ursulines of Quebec . . . 1639-1839, in A. R. M. Lower, Canadians in the Making, (Toronto: Longmans, Green, 1958), 88.

> they stand some time and then relapse into their former disease or contract a new one I have had such as were pretty well and almost fit to be discharged fall sick again and die in two or three days illness with two [sic] many marks of malignity about them. 168

Men resting on rotten bedding in cesspool wards would have been better off discharged.[169] Many soldiers survived the worst the enemy could do, but were done in by hospital. "This Day there was two men Died out of Hospital that ware wounded," wrote an American trooper in his journal. "It was very hot all Day, . . . we went in to see them that ware a Live,and of all the Smells that ever I Smelt there never was non that ever smelt as bad."[170]

C. Prisoners

A third diminisher of manpower was the enemy's occasional success in capturing large blocs of prisoners. (Intermittent raids back and forth between opposing lines frequently resulted in one, two or three prisoners being taken, but such paltry numbers were just a nuisance). When two or three hundred men were taken -- or more -- the loss was an important strategical consideration. Whole crowds of troops came into the enemy's hands when big forces were surrounded, or when fortified positions

---

168 Dr. Richard Huck to Amherst 8 September 1760, WO 34, vol. 19, 23-26.

169 Ibid. A. Murray to Amherst 4 October 1760, WO 34, vol. 19, 33-36.

170 Frost journal for 1760, PAC, MG 18, N 35.

were besieged and given up. When Oswego surrendered in 1756, for example, 1650 men surrendered with it. This garrison comprised 1300 European soldiers and sailors, 300 provincials, and 50 carpenters who were "some of the prime hands at that business in America."[171] The French seized 2331 enemy soldiers in the fall of Fort William Henry, plus another 300 who were illegally taken off by the Indians and, ransomed by the Canadian regime, became prisoners of war at Quebec.[172] Taking Fort Frontenac in 1758, Colonel John Bradstreet captured 144 French troops. When the Niagara garrison surrendered in 1759, 607 officers and men were sent prisoners to New York, as well as "17 officers & 150 men more of a body of 1200 that had come from the Detroit Presquile & Vanango to raise the siege and which were completely routed on the day preceding the surrender, . . ."[173] This western front total of 784, added to the 2200-man Quebec garrison taken prisoner in the fall, meant that fully 2900 men, fifteen or twenty per cent of Canada's dwindling supply of

---

171 Shirley to John Cleveland 14 February 1757, PAC, MG 12, A, Admiralty 1, vol. 3818, bundle 7. Léry journal, RAPQ 1926-7, 401-403.

172 Shaw to Loudoun 24 November 1757, LO 4897, 4898. G. F. G. Stanley, New France: the last phase (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1968), 162.

173 Amherst to Pownall 5 August 1758, WO 34, vol. 27, 325.

military manpower, were lost in those two actions alone.[174]

These great dents in the armies' manpower resources were often compensated for by agreed-upon exchange of prisoners. This was a humane policy, but the protagonists preferred it mainly for other reasons. Repatriation mutually eased the shortage of men, and evaded the problem of guarding potentially dangerous concentrations of captives. When no trade could be arranged prisoners were often sent back to their own side anyway, on the understanding they would not be employed militarily unless some quid pro quo were obtained. This was a wise move which meant they did not have even to be fed by their captors; such polite parole arrangements were usually followed through with integrity.

At first, prisoners given parole or offered for exchange were sent to Europe. Braddock's orders in 1754, for example, were, "With regard to any prisoners, that shall be made by the Forces under your command . . . you should cause all such prisoners to be sent to Old France."[175] For several years, commanders in North America evaded all the problems which prisoners presented

---

174 C. P. Stacey, Quebec, 1759, 158. G. Lanctot, A History of Canada, III, 174. Probably the greater part of Quebec's 2200-man garrison were militia who were paroled in Canada rather than shipped to Europe as prisoners. French forces at the end of August 1759 were, approximately: regulars 3800; Marines 2000; militia 10-12,000.

175 The King to Braddock 25 November 1754, NYCD, VI, 920-922.

by shipping them wholesale across the ocean.[176] The procedure evolved, however, for these exchanges to be made in the war theatre itself. Whereas the French indiscriminately sent all 1650 of the men taken at Oswego over to England (though they never got any in return),[177] in the following year a North American deal was made. Montcalm extracted from the commanding officer of Fort William Henry -- surrendered August 1757 -- a capitulation that the 2331 British soldiers would not fight again for eighteen months, or until exchanged for an equal number of French prisoners. Then, not taking them into custody, he permitted them to march southward. A week later he wrote to General Webb, proposing mutual repatriation of both sides'

---

176 For example, Nathaniel Hubbell and 22 Oswego bateaumen taken in July 1756, left Quebec July 1757, traded overseas and arrived back in Boston in November. WO 34, vol. 46A, 401-402. Frequently, perhaps usually, prisoners were dumped in Europe with nobody to process or care about them. In 1757 a New Jersey captain wrote to the British Secretary at War from Portsmouth, enclosing a list of American soldiers who had been taken prisoner by French Indians "on Lake George & other of ye frontiers of America having no officer nor nobody to look after them desired me to report them to your Lordship they are most perished for the want of clothing they beg your Lordship's kind assistance, . . ." Samuel Hunt to Lord Barrington 15 November 1757, PAC, MG 12, B, War Office 1, vol. 1, 332. A letter from Plymouth the following spring tells of a New York officer who lost his arm on Lake Champlain, spent 7 months a prisoner -- part of the time in France -- and was put ashore in England destitute, without money or friends. Robert McGinnis to unknown 19 March 1758, Ibid., 287-288.

177 Mémoire à M. de Crémilles (from La Pause?) 7 October 1760, RAPQ 1933-4, 189. Eight hundred of the Oswego prisoners were sent in the fall of 1756, the remainder the year following. MG 4, A 1, vol. 3417, pièce 239.

prisoners. The method suggested was shipping men to Louisbourg and Halifax by sea, for "The communication between Carillon and your frontier is always too much infested by our Indian parties on both sides, to be safe." [178]

(Actually, the troops that were sent into the American colonies from Fort William Henry fought again another day much sooner than Montcalm expected when he let them go. The British, citing the serious atrocity of the French Indians getting out of hand and massacring several dozen surrendered soldiers, did not keep their part of the capitulation.[179])

Despite this apparent breach of faith on one or both sides, arrangements for exchange of prisoners worked fine the next year. At Fort Frontenac 144 French troops came under British control. They were permitted to go to Montreal, and an equal number of British prisoners in Canada proceeded to the English colonies that fall in exchange. In September 1759 Amherst and Vaudreuil agreed that if the war did not quiet down enough for them to trade prisoners on the continent before

---

178 Montcalm to Webb 14 August 1757, NYCD, X, 619. See also Stanley, New France: the last phase, 162.

179 Mémoire à M. de Crémilles 7 October 1760, RAPQ 1933-4, 187-189. Stanley (New France: the last phase, p. 162) seems to be wrong on this point, when he says that Montcalm forced 2331 enemy soldiers out of the war for 18 months. He tried to.

October 15th, they would each send the men they were holding to the enemy mother-country in Europe.[180] Late or not, 211 French soldiers and civilians -- mostly from the Niagara garrison -- were sent north along the Lake Champlain line in November, and got to Montreal in time for Christmas.[181] The French troops rounded up by the British at Quebec that same year were exchanged promptly and began to arrive at ports in France -- since the British fleet was going that way -- within two months of the Plains of Abraham battle.[182] When Governor Vaudreuil capitulated for all of Canada in September 1760, he insisted against Lévis' protests upon including the regular soldiers in the capitulation. The British would return them to France, but they undertook not to serve again in the war.

While the recovery, through exchange, of soldiers taken by the enemy was the general rule, there were exceptions

---

180 Amherst to unknown 10 September 1759, WO 34, vol. 10, 459.

181 List of prisoners, WO 34, vol. 8, 7.

182 Doreil to Belle-Isle 15 November 1759, RAPQ 1944-5, 170. See various items of correspondence concerning their arrival in MG 1, B, vol. 110, ff. 318, 564, 567; vol. 112, ff. 269, 328, 551. The Chevalier de Johnstone survived a very rough 7-week crossing that ended in shipwreck near La Rochelle. "I reached the land by means of a ladder and planks, which they had placed on the Quay, the 5th December, 1760, and after having kissed the ground with good heart, I entered into a naval hotel, where I found an abundance of excellent oysters and white wine, fully determined not to put myself again in the power of Neptune." Memoirs, II, 189.

and delays in its application. Not all captives were treated the same. The experiences of men taken prisoner varied according to whether the prisoner were an officer or an enlisted man, European or colonial, and whether he was taken by the Indians or by white men.

It was best to be a European officer taken by whites. As someone said, the Eighteenth century was the era of the "guerre en dentelles" -- war in a dickey front -- for the officers.[183] British officers held by the French, and vice versa, were very lightly controlled. They usually had personal freedom except to leave town and entry -- through social peer-grouping that did not recognize national differences very sharply -- to the most interesting salons.[184] Common soldiers fared less elegantly and suffered confinement, discomfort and boredom unless, as often happened, they were set to work.[185]

Colonial troops of every rank were, on the average, a longer time before being repatriated than the Europeans were, and

---

183 RAPQ 1949-51. An editor wrote, "C'était l'époque de la guerre en dentelles."

184 E.g., Henry Pringle (MG 18, L 8, 80-90); Robert Stobo, real life model for the hero in Gilbert Parker's The seats of the mighty (Toronto: Copp. Clark, 1896), who was rescued from dungeon by a damsel, etc. One French officer held in England complained that he was forbidden the hunt, and had to return to quarters for a nine p.m. curfew. Crancé to Fumeron 1 January 1756, MG 4, A 1, vol. 3417, pièce 3, 9-10.

185 British authorities' rules for their prisoners of low degree are in MG 5, A 1, vol. 441, f. 284. WO 34, vol. 25, 107; vol. 29, 154; vol. 29, 170; vol. 30, 128, 151. John Barney

worse treated in the interim. Part of the reason was that regular army organizations handling these arrangements cared less about them;[186] secondly, they seemed more prone to scorn their captors and try escaping;[187] or they might be men capable of special services of which the enemy ought to be deprived for as long as possible.[188]

People taken by the Indians were even longer in captivity. This difference stemmed from differing European and North American ideas of the rules of war. To Europeans, prisoners were to be returned according to proper conventions. To American Indians, they should be kept as added strength for their captors. In nominal peacetime the Indians followed their natural bent and policies without much modification. Prisoners taken during "peacetime" disappeared for years, or for good.[189] In times of war Indians were willing to ransom and exchange the white prisoners they took, in compliance with allies' requests, but these releases took place with great reluctance and deliberation.[190]

---

et al to Loudoun 2 December 1757, LO 4934. Petition of Thomas Leech and James McLallon 21 November 1757, LO 4876.

186 WO 34, vol. 27, 417-420.

187 De Lancey to Amherst 6 September 1759, WO 34, vol. 29, 183-186.

188 For instance, Michel La Force (Alberts, Stobo, 23, 43, 107, 114, 183, 326); Captain Corivau (AB 426, 435); Abbé Le Loutre (RAPQ 1937-8, 163, 174); Colonel Peter Schuyler (LO 4692, AB 443, WO 34, vol. 10, 99-114).

189 WO 34, vol. 38, 231; vol. 39, 311. NYCD, VI, 834-837.

190 WO 34, vol. 9, 155; vol. 21, 61-68, 163-166; vol. 39, 247. John Smith's memoir, LO 4790. Report of five captives delivered to Johnson by the Oneidas, NYCD, VII, 382.

Recapitulating, what happened to prisoners? They were held for periods ranging from a few months to a lifetime. If long detained, they worked and lived a rather normal if exotic life, unless they were not trusted. If suspected of restiveness they were confined. They rarely escaped.[191] Sometimes ransom was involved, which the prisoners themselves might pay by work.[192] Repatriation was the usual fate, easing the manpower problem which commanders faced when larger numbers of their troops became prisoners of war. Repatriation was achieved by mutual, gentlemanly agreement in North America, or else through delivery on parole of the men involved, to the enemy's territory in Europe.

D. Desertion

Fourthly, there were some soldiers who voluntarily sought to remove themselves from the service they had signed up for. Deserters from British forces sometimes came to the Canadian

---

191 The man called Johnathan and Stephen Coffen (note 259) were exceptions to this rule. So was Robert Stobo who with Simon Stephens (captured near Fort William Henry 25 June 1758), fled Quebec 1 May 1759, evaded pursuit going down-river, and arrived in Prince Edward Island May 27th. PAC, MG 12, A, vol. 307. Jacob Schutz, a prisoner from Fort Bull (March 1756), escaped French custody in August 1758. AB 592.

192 Alexander McGinty, a prisoner held in peacetime at Sault St.-Louis across from Montreal, arranged his ransom by smuggling out a message to Robert Sanders the Albany merchant involved in illicit fur dealings with Canadians, who sent the money. Sanders' letter book, letters dated between 4 July and 18 September 1753, PAC, MG 18, C 6, 60-61, 74-76, 77.

lines, but more often they would attempt to get back from the front to the anonymity of the larger American centres, or -- if colonials -- home to some friendly understanding and perhaps public sympathy. Deserters from the French forces, however, had no choice. Since the society in Canada was so small and intimate, there was no chance of hiding out; they invariably went over to the enemy. They either reported themselves into the guard house as voluntary prisoners, or else slipped through the lines and took up residence, trying to appear unobtrusive while speaking the wrong language.

For the British, desertion was a constant problem throughout the war. Through his London agent, Lord Loudoun complained to Prime Minister Pitt in 1756 about the quality of troops he was given to command in North America. "Bad as Otway's Regiment was said to be, when it went to America, it is now become worse by Justice Fielding's Recruits sent after it, no sooner at their Posts, than they find their way to the Enimy, by Desertion, . . ." [193] "The Recruits that came up this Year were very bad," another British officer agreed. "A great many of them spoke French and were the people that Inveig'led

---

193 Abercromby (agent) to Pitt 25 November 1756, quoted in Charles F. Mullett, "James Abercromby and French encroachments in America", Canadian Historical Review, XXVI (1945), 57-58.

the men to desert, one dutch man in the [artillery] Train Carried off three men." [194] It is enchanting to find ideological convictions, fifth column and psychological warfare in the Eighteenth century, which Twentieth century folk often think of as being so simple as to lack our complexities. Explaining the serious desertion from Oswego before it fell, Loudoun did not solely stress his command's failure to properly reinforce and keep in touch with the place. The French in North America are stronger than you think, he told Cumberland when the Oswego shock had had a month to sink in. They had some Irish troops in their army, and they spread a Catholic propaganda.

> They Scattered Letters all round Oswego, this last Spring, promising great Rewards, to any Soldiers that would come over to them, which drew great numbers of the Irish Recruits, from the two Regiments there, which were mostly Roman Catholicks; and I will be far from venturing to assure You, that there are no Roman Catholicks in the other Regiments, though all possible care has been taken to prevent it, by Lieutenant Colonels Gage & Burton, and I find, most of the deserters from them, are Irish. [195]

Probably the greatest desertion of the war took place in 1758 from among the provincial troops on the British side, after the surprising and bloody repulse at Carillon. [196]

---

[194] Information from (Captain?) Vicars 4 January 1757, Pargellis, Affairs, 288-290.

[195] Loudoun to Cumberland 29 August 1756, Ibid., 232.

In the 1759 campaign's opening stages desertion was once again serious. The British 46th regiment en route from Schenectady to Fort Stanwix "waded several creeks and worked the battoes up with the soldiers as the batteaumen deserted us the first days march."[197] In April 1760 Gage wrote Amherst that the men of his regiment were deserting four and five at a time.[198]

The French were not much bothered with desertion until 1757. In that year several shiploads of unreliable foreign legion came over. By autumn some of these men had arrived voluntarily within British lines, were applying to join the British forces, and were undertaking to inveigle more of their comrades to follow suit.[199] Montcalm subsequently complained to France of the higher rate of desertion and other crimes among the 1757 recruits.[200]

During 1758 and 1759 morale in the French forces dropped, and desertion increased. Amherst wrote Gage in March 1759 about what was apparently a crowd of

---

196 Abercromby correspondence August 1758, AB 511, 542, 547, 948; WO 34, vol. 45, 341-344. Cruikshanks to Christie 19 July 1758, AB 456, 497(1).

197 Massey to Amherst 20 September 1759, WO 34, vol. 53, 8.

198 Gage to Amherst 20 April 1760, WO 34, vol. 46A, 222-223.

199 Coujard and Segaud to Loudoun [November 1757], LO 4099.

200 Montcalm to Moras 19 February 1758, NYCD, X, 686-688.

men who had come over to the British side during the winter: "You will do very right in . . . clearing the upper parts of all the French deserters when the river will permit it."[201] British Quebec after mid-September 1759 became a bleeding sore in the corps of troops Lévis was trying to keep together. By May 1760 Murray reported that deserters from the French general's pick-up army came in daily.[202] Vaudreuil instructed Lévis not to take no as an answer from the militia-men of the Quebec region, even if they were afraid of British reprisals against their families or farms. Lévis was to "compel them to join him on pain of death." Nevertheless, impressed by British barn-burning threats, many Canadians left the army without permission and returned home during the course of the war's last summer.[203]

Why did soldiers desert? No doubt a major motivation was to avoid the labour and risk of the campaign. These men may be called the cowards and the prudent. Others had foresight:

---

201 Amherst to Gage 12 March 1759, WO 34, vol. 46A, 291-292.

202 Murray to Amherst 19 May 1760, PAC, MG 23, G II 1, vol. (1)1, pp. 26-30.

203 "Pain of death": Instructions dated 16 April 1760, NYCD, X, 1069-1071. On 6 September 1760 Lévis recorded that his militia and married soldiers had all run off. Casgrain, Manuscrits . . . de Lévis, I, 303-304. Murray "hunted our army with hunger and misery, ... offering good treatment to the Canadians who should return to their habitations there to live peaceably", Chevalier de Johnstone, Memoirs, III, 74-75.

"Two soldiers deserted from La Reine. It is feared that memory of the discomfort of last winter and the prospect of the next have caused this desertion."[204] A very clearly identifiable group of deserters was mercenary troops. The rate at which mercenaries ran off was higher than the rate among troops who shared the nationality of the government they were fighting for. In December 1757, five deserters from the French forces told the British that out of 150 troops stationed at St.-Frédéric, "Fifty of them are of Fischers men all germans & would be glad to Desert or give up the place."[205] Of the five, the interrogator noted, "The last four are Germans & are willing to list in Our Troops --"[206] Foreign legionnaires in the French forces went off to the American side of the line in such numbers that the British recruiters made a special target of them; "The orders about [not enlisting] deserters, only included Frenchmen, it was known that you had leave to enlist deserters of all other countries."[207]

The British army was similarly composite, and some of the components were similarly unreliable. Desertion was most steady and difficult to check among the men who belonged to

---

204 BJ 17 June 1758, p. 213.

205 Intelligence report 18 December 1757, LO 5034.

206 Ibid.

207 Gage to Haldimand 20 February 1759, PAC, MG 21, G 2, vol. 2-1, 17-18.

that captive nation within the British empire, the Irish.[208] Documents in the Public Archives of Canada show that New York troops were deserting in early 1760 at the rate of 2½% per month. A break-down by countries of origin showed that of 130 deserters, 31 were Irish. All other non-American-born combined -- English, Germans, Swiss and Scots -- accounted for only twenty-three deserters.[209] Loudoun shuffled the personnel of every regiment because of the problem posed by unwilling Irish.[210]

That takes care of all large groups. There were a few special cases; for one, American negro slaves. Slavery in Canada existed on a much smaller scale than in the more southerly English colonies.[211] The freedom road was already established in the 1750's, running north. An Albany merchant, acting as agent in a slave sale, explained why the proprietor

---

208 At the end of 1757 Vaudreuil sent across to France a company of 56 Irish deserters under their elected leader, to be incorporated in the French Army's Irish regiment. These men had all deserted from British forces in North America, had come to Canada and worked with great willingness all summer on the defences of Quebec. Minister of Marine to Paulmy and to Hocquart, 25 November 1757, MG 1, B, vol. 106, 212.

209 Returns for 1st, 2nd and 3rd "regiments", New Yorkers, April-June 1760, WO 34, vol. 30, 228, 232, 236.

210 Loudoun to Cumberland 29 August 1756, Pargellis, Affairs, 232.

211 Marcel Trudel, L'esclavage au Canada français (Quebec, 1960).

family wanted to sell this particular slave. "He has a wife & Child at Their house & has been once on the wing or Just Rady to go to Canada & they live in the Mohawks Country So that he may Easly get far from there to Canada. . . ."[212] When slaves or free Negroes were attached to the forces, they did not lose the propensity some of them had to seek a better country, a chance of freedom over certain servitude. Among a dozen or so deserters from the British who came into the French camp during the last weeks of August 1757, La Pause wrote, was "a fine-looking Negro".[213] Also in the same group were three slackers who had escaped from British military prison in downstate New York. Such men, undergoing punishment, had an excellent reason for separating themselves from the forces, if they could manage it. (Deserters usually tried to have a good, reasoned explanation in mind, in case they were caught. A standard excuse for absence from duty was being seized by an Indian while easing oneself behind the bushes. A French trooper ran from Carillon because his officer would not replace his uniform clothing stolen by an enemy raiding party. There was also the classic which probably is offered at least

---

212 Robert Sanders to Messrs Robert and Richard Ray 29 March 1753, PAC, MG 18, C 6, 46.

213 "Mémoire et observations sur mon voyage en Canada, 1755-9", 29 August 1757, RAPQ 1931-2, 71.

once in every war: "Philip Steers of the New York regiment was acquitted of desertion; he had sent his Indian stockings home to his mother at Schenectady to be mended, and had no other way of getting them except going after them."[214]

Finally, desertion statistics were swollen by those who did not really want to leave the forces, but merely pick up more than one enlistment bounty. After joining one unit they would disappear, and then join up somewhere else again. Two of thirty-four deserters from the 3rd regiment, New Yorkers in May-June 1760 were in this category.[215] An Albany court martial in the winter of 1759-1760 sentenced one apprehended deserter to death, and three others to 1000 lashes each, which sometimes amounted to the same thing. A fifth, however,

> being found guilty of desertion, is to receive 1000 lashes, but in consideration of John Keap's having joined Sir William Johnson and that it appears he was employed by him during the whole campaign and received two wounds in the service I hereby pardon John Keap in hopes that from this forgiveness he will never be guilty of desertion again.[216]

The apparent causes of desertion ran the full gamut from those who evaded service to avoid danger, to those who preferred actually fighting the enemy at the front rather than tamely performing the boring, perhaps heavy labour to which the unit of their first choice was consigned -- so they made a second choice, and became deserters without diminishing the army's manpower except on paper.

When possible, it was a point of wisdom for one side to increase desertion on the other. The French were successful in

---

214 LO 5132. Pargellis, Loudoun, 333.
215 WO 34, vol. 30, 236-237.
216 Court martial sentences, WO 34, vol. 46A, 155.

calling so many Catholics out of British ranks that whole units were reconstructed, Catholics being confined to back-up duties away from the front lines.[217] Bougainville wanted the French court to recruit a small company of Highland Scots and send them to Canada, where he thought they would be useful in pulling the same trick with the British army's Scots troops.[218] Vaudreuil reminded Lévis in April 1760 that there were quite a few Germans and renegade Frenchmen among British forces garrisoning Quebec; and "We ought to try all lawful means to increase our forces and weaken those of our enemies, . . ."[219] Lévis was to promulgate a proclamation offering the King's amnesty to all who would desert the British and come join the French army.

It was even more necessary for the armies to try and check desertion. One way was to surround untrustworthy troops with more loyal ones. Vaudreuil instructed his Indian parties patrolling no-man's land not only to watch the enemy and repel feelers, but also to apprehend French deserters, using any level of violence to do so. In February 1759, two deserting soldiers of the Berry regiment were caught by the Indians, who beheaded

---

217 Loudoun to Cumberland 29 August 1756, Pargellis, Affairs, 232.

218 Bougainville to the Minister of Marine 7 January 1759, RAPQ 1923-4, 40.

219 16 April 1760. NYCD, X, 1069-1071.

one of them and displayed the trophy in the French camp as a warning.[220] Official anti-desertion procedure was to lay heavy penalties upon men who were brought back. Punishment was public, to deter others. After two executions one officer wrote, "Your Honor will, I hope excuse my hanging instead of shooting them. It conveyed much more terror to others; . . . "[221] The Frenchman who escaped decapitation in the struggle of being arrested by Indians was more ceremonially done to death by the high command. "The example was absolutely necessary," said Vaudreuil.[222]

Just as the separate matters of sickness and casualties resolved themselves into a question of medical services for manpower-conserving headquarters, so too an extra strategical theme linked prisoners and deserters. On one hand there was loss of men, but on the other hand -- prisoners and deserters from one side facilitated the gaining of information on the other. They were live letters exchanged between opposing armies. The lucky recipients were anxious to break the code and read these letters. Prisoners and deserters both were questioned closely to see what could be learned from them.

A prisoner questioned by the French in September 1756, for example, said that he was Irish and had been in New York colony for ten years; that in late August Loudoun had been at

---

220 Vaudreuil to Berryer 28 March 1759, NYCD, X, 947.

221 Washington to Dinwiddie 3 August 1757, Freeman, George Washington, II, 259.

222 Vaudreuil to Berryer 28 March 1759, NYCD, X, 947.

Albany with two thousand troops; that these soldiers had been destined for Forts William Henry, Lydius, Sarasto and Oswego; but had all been immobilized in suspense at Albany on the news of Oswego's capture.[223] Again, a deserter from the La Reine regiment who left Carillon 28 December 1757, described quite accurately to his British interogator the state of the French fortress: 1) 350 regular troops were at Carillon, plus 20-30 Canadian workers; 2) the ravelins (outworks) were not yet half finished; 3) a recent foray by British raiders had done practically no damage: "The Rangers only burnt two Cords of wood having been in such a hurry that several of the fire Balls were found intire --"; 4) morale was low, and in November the whole garrison had mutined, "marcht out of the Fort in order to Come off, because they would not give them their half mounting [provisions], which [the commandant] was obliged to do."[224] He added details about the situation in Canada: where the eight regular regiments were quartered for the winter, and the fact that food was scarce. A year earlier Bougainville had commented on the wisdom of trying to keep such interesting information secret. The Quebec populace queued with ration cards for food; "It is a sight to keep away from," he wrote, "especially the English prisoners, who come every day to look on and who do

---

223 Méloizes journal 20 September 1756, RAPQ 1928-9, 20-21

224 "Examination of Jean Franche Bois", LO 5132.

not fail to draw their conclusions from it."[225]

The most reliable ones to ask for information were one's own people who had recently spent some time with the enemy. They came back through exchange, or less frequently as escapees; eager to talk, and sometimes they knew a great deal. Unexpectedly, enemy personnel were almost equally good sources for news. Exchanged prisoners might be more sincere, but the other side's people usually knew more. Nor were they reticent.[226] Name and rank were just the start of a long list of questions -- about fortifications, troop movements, supplies and reinforcements, whereabouts of senior officers, morale, rumours and expectations, etc. Usually something on all these topics was gotten from every man.

A French Marine who deserted from a scouting party was picked up by a party of Rogers' Rangers, and interrogated in British headquarters on Lake Champlain. On the famous July 8th, 1758, he told, there were 3000 French regulars at Carillon. Bourlamaque had been wounded. When he answered a query about total French casualties, the interrogator made a note that his reply was the same as another Frenchman recently questioned. The report continues,

---

225 BJ 22 November 1756, p. 72. See also examination of Joseph Perron (prisoner of war), 27 June 1758, WO 34, vol. 39, 95-98.

226 A contrary example -- a prisoner who was less reticent than he wanted to be -- occurred when New York's Governor dined with the captured commandant of Fort Niagara, who over port wine "said with some emotion [the French] would make a stand at St. John's . . . I observed Captain Bejur look at him as if he had imprudently made a discovery." De Lancey to Amherst 17 August 1759, WO 34, vol. 29, 167.

Q: What provisions did your party have, its force, and where were you bound

A: Provisions for nine days, about 400 men, it was going to Fort Miller. [227]

Could any disclosure be any more full and frank? "His report seemed to me to be very probable," wrote the questioner.

Since men would usually answer questions, the major problem for headquarters in establishing intelligence from prisoners and deserters, was in deciding what to believe. Who knew for sure what he was telling; who only thought he knew, or was particularly stupid or gullible? When one French deserter's news was being preferred over another's, the officer explained, "The latter seems to be a sensible man." In the contrasting situation, all the answers of another captive might be discounted fully, because "This fellow is very stupid & knows nothing." [228]

Thus two key strategical worries were posed when prisoners or deserters ended up in enemy hands. One problem was loss of men, the motive force of all operations. The other --

---

227 Pierre Etourel's interrogation, AB 592.

228 Andrew Oliver to Appy 29 October 1759: "The latter seems to be a sensible man and has been in most of the actions at the Southward from that of General Braddock to the action near Niagara this present campaign". WO 34, vol. 25, 627; my italics added. Stupid fellow: British intelligence report 18 December 1757, LO 5034.

its importance is hard to estimate, perhaps harder to over-estimate -- was leakage of information. Recent and reliable news gave the enemy the light needed to employ his own manpower intelligently.

- - - - -

Gathering and husbanding manpower resources was the outstanding strategical preoccupation of both commands during the war. A typical campaign pitted 6000 French troops and 10,000 Canadian militia against an Anglo-American army of about 45,000 composed equally of Europeans and colonial units. French inability to correct this numerical disparity explains why the conquest occurred. Strength in manpower was a powerful determinant of strategy for the obvious reason. Military operations are acts performed by men. The fewer the people, the less ambitious the projects they could be set to do.

For each side, the manpower question was a single one, not divisible by sectors. At any particular time, for example, the French leaders had a certain total number of men to use. These soldiers had been mustered for service, and had not yet become hospital, prisoner of war or desertion statistics. Where were they to be employed? and doing what? were the major questions of strategy that had to be answered. French scarcity in manpower meant they could seldom spare very many troops for the Lake Ontario theatre. For most of the war, other factors in the situation would

have permitted them to launch telling offensive action from from this region. But they could not move the men from vital positions elsewhere -- especially in the Lake Champlain area -- that defended Canada from invasion.

The difficulties in allocating men to this or that area are well illustrated by French decisions in the 1758 campaign, which will be described in the following chapter.

The British were not similarly constricted by the manpower factor. Except in 1757, ample personnel allowed them to undertake important projects with considerable numbers of men on every possible front. For example -- on 23 June 1758 Vaudreuil wrote instructions for Montcalm. French intelligence had identified three British projects for the up-coming campaign, and now a fourth had been reported. The Governor calculated, If the English have indeed sent troops to Lake St.-Sacrament they must be bluffing, since we know they mean to attack Louisbourg and Fort Duquesne, and build a fort at the Oneida carrying place.[229] Unfortunately, they were by no means bluffing. In addition to the other three projects they sent a detachment to destroy Fort Frontenac too, while the army that operated in the Lake St.-Sacrament/Lake Champlain area was

---

229 "Memoir to serve as instructions to the Marquis de Montcalm", NYCD, X, 783-786.

the largest force of them all. Some bluff! Trying to counter such a well-peopled foe everywhere he might act, the French found to be an exhausting treadmill task, and eventually impossible.

Doreil, the French paymaster, escaped from Canada in 1758, the year the collapse began. He kept in touch, and in November 1759 sent his views to the Minister of War from his new posting near Brest. The British had seized Quebec. To attempt dislodging them, Lévis had inherited fewer than 4000 permanent-force troops, including the Marines. "That is very few men," he wrote, "but they are blooded, and Canada is the country of Miracles."[230] But he previously remarked, "The English have actually more troops of foot in [North America] than Canada has people, old men, women and children included. What means are there to enable us to resist this multitude?"[231] When miracles and good management had done all they could, numbers counted for more and more. Unlike the French, the British were able to maintain their forces, and won the struggle through attrition.

---

230 ". . . . C'est bien peu mais elles sont aguerries et c'est le pais de Miracles." Doreil to Belle-Isle 15 November 1759, from Vannes, RAPQ 1944-5, 170-171.

231 Doreil to Massiac 31 August 1758, NYCD, X, 828-829.

CHAPTER VIII

SAMPLE, SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS

Previous chapters have analyzed the North American war situation in the 1750's and picked out the major considerations that guided the formation of French and British plans for the Lake Ontario theatre of operations. By and large, we have been thinking about everyday and humdrum things. The strategists whose thoughts we trace and whose assumptions we recover were not called upon to be great visionaries. Their strategies were not immense mental constructs composed of profound speculations and airy imaginings, feats of invention or of intuition, genius either way. They did not think up the best solutions, discovering something new. Instead, the planners were administrators and bookkeepers, toting up familiar old sums and recognizing ordinary but inescapable elements in the predicament they faced. Actuality guided their aspirations; hopes meant nothing and dreams less. Dull facts dominated the framing of strategy.

Our problem in reflecting about their war at a more-than-two-centuries remove is to avoid romanticizing it. Probing the leaders' reasoning reveals the secret clue to the strategies they planned. Invariably, they attempted the possible. In order to satisfy themselves what the possibilities were, military leaders of the 1750's marshalled and measured

certain factors of power, of which the most important -- which have been investigated in detail -- were resources in men and materiel, Indian alliances, lakepower, fortified positions and geography.

It was these factors, combined all together, which indicated to the two commands what they could hope to accomplish, and how. The factors were always intertwined, with many mutual dependencies and intricate connections among them. Plans that gained final approval were a jigsaw of considerations. This mix, and the two sides' characteristic way of balancing and budgeting the ingredients, can be illustrated by their thinking about the Lake Ontario theatre in any of the years when significant operations were carried on there -- for instance, the strategies pursued during the campaign of 1758.

1. Sample: 1758 campaign.

As the 1758 fighting season approached, there were definite plans for the Ontario area being worked up in both British and French headquarters. Lord Loudoun, Commander-in-Chief of Anglo-American forces, had several different, even contradictory, schemes presented for his consideration. They stressed that: 1) Montreal should be attacked from the south;[1] 2) the Canadian countryside should be overrun by 40,000 provincial levies;[2] 3) any diversion of attention

---

1 William March, "Observations on . . . attacking of Canada", 20 November 1757, LO 4168.

from Lake Champlain to the Ontario area would be futile;[3] and 4) a sudden raid on Fort Frontenac could achieve strategical surprise, the destruction of that post, and of the French Ontario navy.[4]

It was this final plan, urged by Lieutenant-Colonel John Bradstreet, his Deputy Quartermaster General, which Loudoun approved for carrying into effect the very first thing in the spring.

> As a diversion to the Enemy on the Western boundaries, might take off their attention to those places between [Albany] and the River St. Lawrence; And as nothing promises more Success than a descent upon the Fort and River of Cataraque, . . . by which, we . . . make Ourselves Masters of the Lake, and get possession of the Vessels taken at Oswego; by which means, all Provisions & Succours sent to Niagara and the Forts upon the Ohio, will be stopped, . . .[5]

-- for these reasons, Bradstreet was directed to prepare for the expedition eight hundred "Active able-bodied men; capable of enduring fatigue and the inclemency of the Weather."[6] Although hindered by lack of skilled boat-builders,[7] preparations

---

2 "Americanus" to Loudoun 8 December 1757, LO 4971.

3 C.M. [Monckton], "State of Canada in October 1757, with some thoughts on the manner of reducing it," MG 18, L 4, packet 57.

4 Bradstreet to Loudoun [4 January 1758], LO 6895. The germination of this plan in Bradstreet's mind can be traced in previous letters of his: to Sir Richard Lyttelton 5 September 1757, in which he projected carrying on down the Saint Lawrence River to Montreal (Gipson, VII, 236); and to Prime Minister Pitt. Pargellis, Affairs, 314, note 1. Pargellis, Lord Loudoun in North America, 343. See a similar idea in some anonymous "Hints for the operations in North America for 1757", Pargellis, Affairs, 316.

were well underway at Schenectady when, about March 1st, official dispatches from England arrived at New York.

Loudoun was recalled, and General James Abercromby was ordered to take his place to carry out not the strategy laid down by men on the spot, but the Prime Minister's idea of how to do it, generated in London. Bradstreet's attack on Fort Frontenac was no part of the revised program, which directed a massive (but cumbersome) levy of colonial manpower to cooperate with regular forces in operations confined to the Lake Champlain sector.[8] As the summer came on, therefore, the British were not planning any important moves for the region west of Albany.

However, the French had it in their mind to make war in the Lake Ontario theatre, and they were not similarly fouled by over-fussy interference from overseas. Ever since the demolition of Oswego they had meditated capitalizing upon that stroke by sending through Oswego a force large enough to devastate the Mohawk valley and even undertake a temporary

---

5 Loudoun to Bradstreet 31 January 1758, LO 5502. There were separate memoranda, same date, on financing the expedition (LO 5503) and on bateaux-building for it (LO 5505).

6 LO 5502.

7 Bradstreet to Loudoun 7 and 13 February 1758, LO 5552, 5575.

8 Pitt to (6) northern Governors 30 December 1757, NYCD, VII, 339-341. At least one temporary critic thoroughly scorned the new strategy, saying it threw away definite advantages and entailed dangerous delays. "If left to pursue his

occupation of the area. In the spring of 1757, however, lack of provisions necessitated a postponement of the operation.[9] Then projects on Lake Champlain monopolized French resources; that September Lévis was thinking about a general invasion with 2000 men,[10] but the idea was scaled down in November to a raid by three hundred upon one particular village.[11] Vaudreuil continued to ponder it all winter, and in mid-June 1758 he informed Montcalm that four hundred of the regulars would be needed to join four hundred Marines, eight hundred Canadians and an undetermined number of Indians in a descent upon the upper Mohawk River.[12]

From the outset, several members of French regular army headquarters were dubious about the wisdom of this plan. Montcalm feared so great a diversion to the west when immense dangers seemed to portend on Lake Champlain -- a diversion perhaps "sufficient to bring this Colony within an ace of

---

own devices, Loudoun must as necessarily have taken [Carillon] with small resistance in the beginning of June as Genl Abercromby was defeated before it on the 8th of July." Major James Robertson to Earl Morton 19 December 1758, Pargellis, Affairs, 429.

9 BJ 7 February 1757, p. 85. La Pause, "Relation des affaires du Canada depuis l'automne dernier . . . ", RAPQ 1932-3, 347-348.

10 Lévis to Mirepoix 4 September 1757, Casgrain, Collection des manuscrits du maréchal de Lévis, II, 153.

11 The destruction of German Flats by a party under Captain Picoté de Belestre. See his "Itinerary", NYCD, X, 674-680; [Montcalm] to Paulmy 4 November 1757, Ibid., 670; and pp. 26-29 and 314-315 above.

its ruin."[13] Doreil thought the notion that such a march could make firm allies of the Five Nations -- "who have always been perfidious" -- a very slender hope.[14] Bougainville was sure the British would hear rumours and take forestalling action.[15]

Points urged by its supporters in favour of the expedition were: 1) the Iroquois, persuaded of French protection and awed by French arms, would join the war on their side; 2) British re-occupation of the Fort Herkimer-Oswego gap would be averted; 3) enemy operations in the Lake Champlain theatre would be disrupted; 4) resources sent into Lake Ontario would be in good position to go on to the Ohio if need arose; 5) intelligence would be gained; and 6) with luck, fortified positions between Fort Herkimer and Schenectady could be destroyed.[16]

Plans went ahead despite the doubters. Lévis was appointed to command. The permanent force and militia troops

---

12 Montcalm journal 8-15 June 1758, Casgrain, VII, 365.

13 Memorandum of 23 June 1758, NYCD, X, 787.

14 Doreil to Belle-Isle 16 June 1758, and to Paulmy 30 July 1758, RAPQ 1944-5, 134, 144.

15 His "special observations" about 8 July 1758, BJ, p. 241. Also see the entry for 15 June 1758, pp. 211-212.

16 Among the supporters was Lévis, disagreeing with Montcalm's appreciation. See Lévis to Belle-Isle 26 June 1758, Casgrain, II, 186; Vaudreuil, "Memoir to serve as instruction to the Marquis de Montcalm . . . ", 23 June 1758, NYCD, X, 783-786; and a further observation from Vaudreuil, Ibid., 788.

who were selected for the operation went into camp together at Montreal. An engineer officer was added to the group, along with an artillery officer in charge of two small campaign guns, and Abbé Picquet the fighting priest of La Présentation -- each of these supernumeraries doubly as explosive and weighty as the previous one. The head of the Saint Lawrence River was appointed the rendezvous where Indians from the pays d'en haut would join.[17] Some stores would be waiting at Fort Frontenac; but there were no tents for the men, and since food was scarce, once the army arrived among the American settlements it was to forage for its nourishment as it moved, to "live off the country, in order to diminish the consumption of provisions."[18]

Just as the British had altered their first plans for the Ontario theatre (on receipt of new orders from home), so also at the end of June the French once more revised their plan for a descent towards Schenectady. The expedition had to be cancelled when the British/American army getting ready to invade in the Lake Champlain zone grew so hugely that the French could not spare men from there for a diversion. By 29 June the French had reports they dared not disregard, of 25,000 hostile troops massing at Fort George for the

---

17 Malartic journal 19 June 1758, NYCD, X, 843. BJ 22 June 1758, pp. 214-215. Léry journal, Roy, Inventaire des papiers de Léry, III, 5-6.

18 Lévis to Belle-Isle 26 June 1758, Casgrain, II, 186.

attack.[19] Montcalm had but 5000 men under his orders to counter them. That evening Vaudreuil called off the detachment for the west and redirected its strength to the southward. Fortunately, the British were four days behind the timetable they were believed to be following, and the contingent of regulars from Lévis' disbanded force was reintegrated in the main army just in time for the crucial battle at Carillon on 8 July -- a battle which was such a nip-and-tuck narrowly gained victory for the French that the extra four hundred men may have meant all the difference.

The warlike project was replaced by a gentlemanly embassy of seventy Canadian militia and four dozen Indians under the Chevalier de Longueuil. They were ordered, with eight canoes loaded with trade goods, to proceed to the principal village of the Onondaga and hold council there with the Five Nations, distributing presents and promulgating French wishes and propaganda.[20] This watered-down version of an invasion would not likely swing the Iroquois over to

---

19 Indian intelligence-gatherers performed their most invaluable service of the entire war when they brought in some American Ranger scouts who revealed convincing details of a great build-up, and an assault on Carillon scheduled for 3 or 4 July. Abercromby to Amherst 18 July 1758, MG 18, L 4, packet 57, 30. La Pause, "Detail de commencement de la campagne 1758 . . . ", RAPQ 1933-4, 87; "Relation de ce qui s'est passé en Canada du commencement de la campagne au 8 juillet . . . ", RAPQ 1932-3, 351.

20 Léry's journal of this embassy, Roy, Léry, III, 7-8. "Memoire du Canada", RAPQ 1924-5, 141.

their side, French leaders recognized, but it might help encourage them to stay neutral.

This group left Lachine 10 July, stopped for several days at each of La Présentation and Fort Frontenac, and arrived in Oswego harbour at 8:30 a.m. 2 August. Among the first pieces of intelligence they picked up was the news that a great number of British troops had arrived at the Great (Oneida) Portage on July 26th and had begun to construct a fort there.[21] Longueuil -- wary of this enemy activity and mindful of divided Iroquois opinions -- decided to send messages inviting the Iroquois leaders to come meet with him at Oswego. Their great council on 6 August lasted from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. In a cadenced exchange of views and vows the Five Nations were invited to join the war and move to Canada. The Indians rejected this proposal and renewed their neutrality. The Canadian spokesmen warned them then to stick well to it. On adjournment the French gave out wine, provisions, clothing, muskets and ammunition. Before breaking camp the next day at dawn, Longueuil was warned by the Onondaga chief Le Nerf (Schiniala)

> that the English were meditating some coup; that they had assembled many people and barges at Fort Bull; that they were rebuilding it, and that it seemed to him that soon they would strike at one of [the French] forts; that common gossip said the target would be Frontenac.[22]

The news and the rumours were communicated to the commandant

---

21 Léry journal, Roy, Léry, III, 8-14.

22 "Mémoire du Canada", RAPQ 1924-5, 142.

of Frontenac when the party passed through there 7/8 August, and reported to Vaudreuil at Montreal on the 10th.[23] Thus did the first important French plan for the Ontario theatre since the Oswego campaign of 1756 fizzle out in the polite hypocrisy of words and gifts, complicated by warnings it was difficult to evaluate.

Meanwhile, as French representatives were overhearing, disaster on the Lake Champlain line had indeed turned the attention of the British back to the possibilities in the region of Lake Ontario. After Abercromby's army attacked the French entrenchments near Fort Carillon all day on 8 July and suffered 1944 killed, wounded and missing while gaining nothing, the Commander-in-Chief called together a council of war on the 13th to help him decide what to try next.[24] Seeing a hopeless situation where they were, the British high command decided to build up a force of 5600 men at the Oneida portage; while 2000 of these troops got started on construction of a fort, the remainder would be made available to Bradstreet for a belated renewal of the attempt against Fort Frontenac and the French fleet that had been cancelled in March.[25]

For the first two weeks after reaching this decision Abercromby was of the opinion that the rumoured French attack

---

23 Léry journal, Roy, Léry, III, 18-19. BJ 12 August 1758, pp. 262-263.

24 Abercromby to Stanwix 14 [July] 1758, WO 34, vol. 45, 323. Stanley, New France, 179. Present at the Council of war were Abercromby, Gage, Haviland, Grant, Haldimand, Bradstreet, Johnson, Massey and Eyre. AB 438.

from Oswego towards Schenectady was still to take place, and that the greatest service to be expected from Bradstreet's march was that it would meet with and impede the French force, resulting in a western stalemate.[26] On 25 July, however, the Commander-in-Chief got intelligence from Carillon that all of the most enterprising officers of the Marines were present there. He therefore concluded, accurately, that the French had called off the march via Oswego, and now began to think that Bradstreet's group might actually succeed in its stated objective of levelling Fort Frontenac.[27]

The leader certainly behaved as if he meant to. Finally unleashed on the only important operation of the war that produced strategical surprise, Bradstreet crisply bullied his forces along the road back to Oswego. He overcame difficult obstacles: an epidemic of desertion among the rank and file of American troops;[28] refusal of their high-ranking

---

25 AB 438. Abercromby to Amherst 18 July 1758, MG 18, L 4, packet 57, 31-34. An impartial account, 6.

26 Abercromby to Amherst 18 July 1758, WO 34, vol. 46B, 24. Other letters showing the same expectation are Forbes to Abercromby [3 August 1758], AB 501; Huck to Loudoun 10 September 1758, LO 5914; and James De Lancey to Abercromby 2 August 1758, WO 34, vol. 29, 19.

27 Abercromby to De Lancey 25 July and 10 August 1758, WO 34, vol. 30, 45, 49-52. Abercromby to Pownall 10 August 1758, WO 34, vol. 27, 183.

28 Unnerved by the horrible slaughter at Carillon. Testimony from deserters 2 August 1758, AB 497. Bradstreet to Abercromby 6 August 1758, AB 511. Abercromby to Stanwix 12 August 1758, WO 34, vol. 45, 341-344. Bradstreet wrote that "sickness, discontent, desertion, reluctance and want of

officers to cooperate with him;[29] arm-aching distance (for an army that moved with oars); uncertainty about the Iroquois' stance[30] -- and even some slight French resistance when the target fort was eventually laid under siege.

The force that pushed off from the Great Carrying Place in 130 bateaux and 100 whaleboats on 16 August consisted of 180 regulars, 60 rangers, 1270 bateaumen, 42 Indians, just under 2500 provincials, and eight guns with plenty of ammunition and projectiles.[31] Clogged streams on the first leg of the trip caused them no end of work, and two members of an advance party -- scalped by unknown agents -- reminded them how densely the close-leaning forest pressed in on all sides, and how sharply many of the Five Nations resented this muscled passage of the uninvited Anglo-Americans through

---

Spirit . . . prevaild throughout the whole of the provincial Troops order'd to serve this way, except the workers, . . . " To Abercromby 15 August 1758, AB 542.

29 "Col. Bradstreet seemed not a little Offended that the provincial Colonels would not go upon his Enterprize under his Command, . . . " on account of arguments over rank and precedence. Stanwix to Abercromby 20 August 1758, AB 547.

30 To hire the service of warriors on this expedition, Johnson offered ½ dollar per day, plus clothing for their families. Deposition of Colonel John Butler 27 October 1787, RAPQ 1924-5, 395. One hundred fifty of the Six Nations gathered at the Oneida portage on 11 August to hear the British inducements and explanations; but only 42 were persuaded to accompany them. An impartial account, 8-9.

31 Stanwix to Abercromby 20 August 1758, AB 547. Thomas Sowers to the Board of Ordnance 1 October 1758, PAC, Record Group 8, II, vol. 36.

Iroquois lands. After five laborious and harrowing days they reached Oswego, where a pile of empty boxes and packing crates dumbly testified to the recent presence of the Longueuil embassy, which had left the same site exactly two weeks previously.[32]

Meanwhile, Fort Frontenac was understrength and overconfident. The contemptible fortifications of that "miserable shanty" are described in Chapter III.[33] There were but fifty-three soldiers in garrison there, along with one hundred civilians and sailors and two dozen women and children.[34] But ever since the fall of Oswego the British had no base within two hundred miles from which to launch an attack upon it. The commandant, Captain Pierre-Jacques Payan de Noyan, routinely asked for reinforcements when he learned from Longueuil and others that his post had been mentioned in threatening dispatches. Vaudreuil, weighing all the data in his field of intelligence, decided the idea of a lightning strike over the convoluted topographical and diplomatic territory that was the south-eastern foyer to Lake Ontario was one of the silliest of that summer's rumours. Reinforcements

---

32 An impartial account, 13-22.

33 Doreil to Belle-Isle 31 August 1758, RAPQ 1944-5, 158. See pp. 191-198 above.

34 Abercromby to Vaudreuil 1 October 1758, WO 34, vol. 10, 429. An impartial account, 21. See also MG 24, L 3, vol. 46, pp. 29739-29741, with an inflated list of 81 soldiers.

for Frontenac would mean men subtracted from other important duties. Vaudreuil refused them, in line with principles of economy and concentration of force.[35]

The British army landed three miles from Fort Frontenac on 25 August, laid close siege the next day, and received its precipitate surrender the 27th.[36] Then a day was given over to a disciplined orgy of destruction. The walls were demolished and everything was set alight -- barracks, breast-work, storehouses, 3000 barrels of provisions,[37] seven unrigged vessels, plus their rigging in a 200-foot long boatshed on the dock, the dock itself, and the greater part of an immense booty of merchandise which the greedy raiders had no room to pack into their bateaux and two captured vessels for the return trip over the lake. They were back in Oswego on 30 August, and joined the workforce building the new fort at the

---

35 "Mémoire du Canada", RAPQ 1924-5, 142. G.F.G. Stanley says: "No commander would have done otherwise." New France: the last phase, 183.

36 Thomas Sowers to the Board of Ordnance 1 October 1758, PAC, Record Group 8, II, vol. 36. BJ 6-12 September 1758, pp. 275-279. Casualties were light. There were no British killed; about 30 were wounded. The French lost two soldiers. Huck to Loudoun 10 September 1758, LO 5914. Abercromby to Vaudreuil 1 October 1758, WO 34, vol. 10, 429.

37 Huck to Loudoun 10 September 1758, LO 5914. An impartial account says not three but ten thousand barrels, probably favouring Bradstreet by exaggerating the damage he did. Sowers to the Board of Ordnance 1 October 1758 says 800,000 livres worth of trade goods and "provisions of every species for 20,000 men for at least 6 months." PAC, Record Group 8, II, vol. 36.

Oneida portage on September 8th.[38]

The sudden, smart erasure of Fort Frontenac prompted the French into large-scale expenditure of energy from which they gained no strategic advantage and little satisfaction. Their first concerns -- while exchanging recriminations and naming scapegoats[39] -- were to reinforce the attacked post if not too late, bolster the security of La Présentation and the colony's settled portions, strengthen Niagara, and start all over again with the work of provisioning the west. These procedures occupied three months and necessitated the call-up of 3000 militia, which severely dislocated the Canadian harvest.[40] They were made suspenceful by a three-week time lag in finding out where Bradstreet had gone, and worries lest the British might be preparing a push on Lake Champlain after thus drawing French attention to the western theatre. It was decided to develop a shipyard -- lightly protected by a palisade -- at Pointe-au-Baril just upstream from La Présentation, and to get busy quickly constructing three ships to reestablish naval

---

38 An impartial account, 22 ff.

39 Vaudreuil blamed Noyan: to Massiac 2 September 1758, NYCD, X, 824. Regular officers tended to blame Vaudreuil: BJ 1 September 1758, p. 269; La Pause, "Mémoire et réflexions", RAPQ 1933-4, 153; Doreil to Belle-Isle 31 August 1758, RAPQ 1944-5, 158.

40 Vaudreuil to Massiac 2 September 1758, NYCD, X, 822-825.

supremacy on Lake Ontario.[41] A final decision about replacing Fort Frontenac was put off to 1759,[42] but several of its guns -- overlooked or only lightly damaged in Bradstreet's rushed rampage -- were marked for salvage and installation at whatever new site was chosen to be fortified.[43] In the meantime, the natural topographical defences of the upper Saint Lawrence would be Montreal's main western shield.

A final aspect of French reaction to the fall of Frontenac was a thorough-going review of strategy for the Lake Ontario theatre. It revealed less than unanimous thinking among top French leaders. Vaudreuil proposed to Montcalm a package that included: 1) another 1500 men to be drawn from the long-suffering and over-stretched civilian population; 2) an attack that autumn against the British at Oswego if they had dug in there, or at least strenuous harassment of the position; 3) large reinforcement convoys of 200 bateaux at a time to be punched through to Niagara; or 4) if Niagara were already taken, French forces to occupy Oswego and prevent communication between the uplake enemy force and its base in

---

41 La Pause, "Mémoire et observations", RAPQ 1931-2, 86. Bougainville memorandum, "Situation du Canada . . . ", RAPQ 1923-4, 10. Ruth MacKenzie, Leeds and Grenville: their first two hundred years (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1967), 4-5.

42 Bougainville to Crémille 8 November 1758, NYCD, X, 888. In the spring there were more pressing things to think about and the problem of a strong position in the upper river controlling the western approach to Montreal remained crucial and open. For a time it was thought La Présentation could be strengthened to serve the purpose. Then it was declared untenable because of commanding ground nearby. Retrenchments

the Mohawk valley. This was escalation that would force a quick confrontation, and showed a high degree of anxiety over the western situation, stressing the importance of that theatre in the total war effort.[44] Montcalm -- prudent, less optimistic, more preoccupied by dangers in the principal theatre of the Lake Champlain valley -- did not agree with the Governor on all these points, commenting: 2) Whatever army could be gathered should not attack Oswego until it had a base. It would take until mid-October to build one, and then the enemy would be too strongly entrenched to attack. Conclusion -- wait until spring. 3) It was risking too much to consign large convoys to Niagara, seeing that Bradstreet might be manning the warships seized at Frontenac and have them patrolling the lake. A better plan was frequent, small convoys. 4) Even the capture of Niagara would not move him to extreme measures, but to more caution. In that case he recommended doing what they were about to do anyway if it was merely a reestablished Oswego they had to deal with -- build a new post to replace Frontenac, and collect, first at La Présentation

---

were made on Ile aux Galops, and abandoned; finally on Ile Orakointon (Royale), four miles below La Présentation, Fort Lévis was begun in August-September 1759. Malcolm MacLeod, "Fight at the west gate, 1760", Ontario History, LVIII (1966), 173-175.

43 Malartic journal [re Major Pontleroy's inspection of Cataraqui] 17 September 1758, NYCD, X, 854. Montcalm to Bourlamaque 23 March 1759, Casgrain, V, 304. Lévis journal 22 August 1759, Ibid., I, 197. Pouchot, I, 240.

44 Vaudreuil's plan for Lake Ontario, to be shown to Montcalm, September 1758, NYCD, X, 868-870.

and then at the new post when it was ready, the gear and men for a deliberate spring offensive.[45]

While the French were assessing the post-Bradstreet situation and weighing the conflicting merits of prudence and of valour -- (fruitlessly, as it turned out, since the enemy had withdrawn back to the very edge of the theatre) -- several thousand British troops were hard at work at the frontier soldier's typical task. A fortification at the Oneida portage was an obvious project for the British ever since they had destroyed their installations there in the aftermath of the Oswego debacle, 1756.[46] Defensive thinking after their defeat at Carillon -- the need to have strong posts at major intersections to help guard against hostile incursions -- predominated in the mid-July decision to spare 5600 men to Brigadier-General John Stanwix to erect a fortress, and incidentally attack Frontenac. Work on the post -- named after the general -- was complicated by lack of manpower, tools and time and arguments over the design. In mid-October, when a smallish French reconnaissance party was wrongly reported as a serious invasion force, the resulting alarm put 3000 men in motion in the Mohawk valley and slowed down work on the new fort until the fake crisis cooled.[47] When

---

45 NYCD, X, 870-872.

46 See above, pp. 227-229.

47 Appy to Haldimand 7 and 9 October 1758, MG 21, G 2, vol. 68, 11, 493. Johnson to Abercromby 9 October

construction halted the first week of November, Fort Stanwix was a post with earthen walls supported by logwork, "so far completed as to receive & put under cover à l'abri d'insulte of small arms . . . [400] troops that are intended to garriosn it this ensuing winter."[48]

This brief narrative of plans, action and reactions in 1758 has shown the French and British commands responding to the strategical factors that faced them in the Lake Ontario theatre of operations. The fragmented topography and long length of the communication arc from British Albany to French Montreal via the lake made both sides downgrade the area's importance. The two original projects -- Bradstreet's march against Fort Frontenac and Lévis' devastation of the Mohawk valley -- were thought of as diversions to draw the enemy from the main theatre at Lake Champlain. They shared another principal aim: to attack and take the enemy's fortified positions in the region. The French plan had as its primary objective to lead or cow the Five Nations into a full alliance. When every other feature of the original plan had to be abandoned, they still sought this end, through pacific, gift-giving diplomacy. The British also wanted to impress the

---

1758, WO 34, vol. 39, 131. James Abercrombie to Haldimand 13 October 1758, MG 21, G 2, vol. 6, 62.

48 "Secure against infantry attack", [Abercromby to Amherst] 30 October 1758, WO 34, vol. 46B, 32. Its exterior circuit was somewhat less than the 1420 feet originally proposed by Colonel Montresor, which the people at the Great Carrying Place thought too grandiose and beyond their 1758 means. Captain Green's comments, July 1758, AB 442;

Indians, but their main aim in sending an army to Cataraqui was to destroy French naval superiority on Lake Ontario.

The factors which most potently influenced the shape of strategy in 1758 were materiel and manpower. For the sake of these items the French regular staff tended to disapprove of the plan first mooted; it would use up all too precious resources, for all too dubious ends. But Abercromby and his war council easily diverted 5600 troops from the other theatre because they had a large crowd of soldiers surplus to other requirements.

The campaign's operations produced a situation quite different from what it had been. In relation to the factors of power and strategy, the two sides' capacities had altered, with each factor influencing the others in a kaleidoscope of effects. The essential summary of the overall change was French debility and British increase of strength.

With relation to fortified positions, the French had lost Fort Frontenac to a "masterly coup"[49] whereas in building Fort Stanwix, the British had staked a claim in what had been no-man's land and made themselves a base from which to further intrigues vis-a-vis the Indians and hostilities against the French. The French entered the campaign with a tidy fleet of the only warships on Lake Ontario. The destruction of all these vessels was for French leaders the unkindest cut

---

Montresor's answer, August 1758, AB 492; Stanwix to Abercromby 20 July and 7 September 1758, AB 458; WO 34, vol. 45, 23-25.

49 Wolfe to Rickson 1 December 1758, MG 18, L 5, vol. 2.

of the summer,[50] and for the time being at least increased many-fold the difficulty and irregularity of supplying the posts to the west. Nevertheless, the British had not advanced to the margin of the lake, feeling themselves too extended to reestablish Oswego for a time yet. Their reticence, plus the rapides topography of the upper Saint Lawrence River, seemed to promise that Montreal's security against attack from the west would be continued through at any rate the opening phase of the next year's fighting. While the year's events had deprived the French of advantages in naval strength and fortified positions they previously held, they were still in a better position to retrieve their predominance in the theatre than were the British to wrest it from them.

However, it was increasingly unlikely that the French could find the materiel and manpower to exploit the opportunities. A large store of provisions, munitions and Indian trade goods was destroyed at Frontenac, restricting every kind of ambition for the future. At the campaign's outset manpower was their basic limiting factor: the projected filibustering march into the Mohawk valley was cancelled when the Lake Champlain forces were so many times outnumbered that calls to reinforce them could not be set aside. In the autumn, despite Lake Ontario's pressing needs, militia mobilized for there were diverted to the south to meet anticipated

---

50 Vaudreuil to Massiac 2 September 1758, NYCD, X, 824.

emergencies.[51] The militia, of course, was an inelastic source already overdrawn. Ominously, the assistance of manpower from Europe was beginning to fail. In the three previous years the number of troop arrivals from France had fluctuated between 1900 and 2400 -- but in 1758 only 330 safely hurdled the blockaded ocean-crossing to land in Canada. This was less than half of what was needed to merely make up wastage. Question: how to rebuild forts and ships, move supplies, fight geography, with fewer men than before?

The British had copious supplies, and much less worry over personnel. While maintaining a watch on Carillon with 9000 troops to Montcalm's 6500, Abercromby had blithely detached another 5000-plus into Stanwix's care.[52] Monumental desertion still left Stanwix with sufficient strength to perform two labour-intensive projects.[53] The men on Bradstreet's expedition had been pushed so hard that by mid-September "numbers" were

> dead & dying daily for by all accounts that enterprise was performed with so much expedition & fatigue that few could well bear it . . . so that of the 5600 men you ordered for these services [in July] only 2750 remain fit for duty the 20th [September].[54]

A fifty per cent loss in two months, and all from non-enemy

---

51 Malartic journal 18 September 1758, NYCD, X, 854. "Journal d'un voyage de Québec à Carillon, par J.G.C. de Léry . . . en 7Bre et 8Bre 1758", Roy, Léry, III, 20. La Pause, "Mémoire et observations," RAPQ 1931-2, 86-87.

52 Frégault, 221-222. Gipson, VII, 218, 231-238.

53 Taking down Fort Frontenac and putting up Fort Stanwix.

54 Stanwix to Abercromby 29 September 1758, WO 34, vol.45, 32.

causes! But the populous American colonies produced recruits and draftees as readily as they swallowed deserters. The British forces were as full as ever when the 1759 campaign opened; the French could not recuperate so.

Finally, and again to Canada's disadvantage, the campaign had greatly unsettled the trend of Indian politics and native/white negotiations. The French, with greater-than-ever need to fill the ranks with Indian manpower, had lost in Frontenac great stocks of the merchandise necessary to keep alliances firm, not to mention munitions to fight and food to feed. The reality of their surprise and defeat, on territory where their sway was previously so sound, could not be fully clouded by propaganda. Doreil feared "that the Indians, who usually take the side of the stronger or more fortunate party, will abandon us in order to range themselves alongside the English"[55] who were able to supply them. By the spring of 1759 several signs indicated growing Indian attachment to the British cause. Some of the leaders of the La Présentation people sent a message to Sir William Johnson that they, in conjunction with other domiciled people in Canada, were through fighting for the French.[56] The Iroquois began responding to British requests that they turn over prisoners they were

---

55 Doreil to Belle-Isle 31 August 1758, RAPQ 1944-5, 159.

56 NYCD, VII, 393.

holding.[57] When Johnson called together a conference of Six Nations leaders at his house in April 1759, he heard from one of their spokesmen:

> Brother, as we have understood . . . that the English have reason to hope & expect, from the Operations of this year the French will be brought so low as that they will not hereafter be able to disturb or hurt either you or us, We do sincerely wish for the Event, . . . the Resolutions we have now entered into will engage us in the same cause with you . . .[58]

2. Summary & conclusions.

There are four concluding remarks to be made about the factors of power and strategy which have been isolated and discussed. First -- as is clearly revealed by the narrative of the 1758 Ontario campaign just above -- the factors were intricately intertwined. Secondly, they were decidedly concrete. Thirdly, without being dogmatic about it, it is possible to assign an order of relative importance to them. Fourthly, when additional factors are considered for adding to the list they become, on investigation, very much the same

---

57 Gage to Amherst 17 March 1759, WO 34, vol. 46A, 39. See also NYCD, VII, 382.

58 The Six Nations to Johnson 16 April 1759, NYCD, VII, 386-387.

set of considerations, viewed from a different angle.

The factors were all inter-connected. For instance, the geography of communication routes affected every other aspect of the war effort. Climate, and the punishing fatigue of distance, took a toll of men. Frost killed Canadian crops in 1757. The Anglo-Americans' stubborn use of the roller-coaster stream below Oswego Falls amounted to betting men and materiel against time, distance and topography. Geography determined the location of forts. The near-absence of settlement on the shores of Lake Ontario destroyed what strategic potential fighting fleets might have had.

There is practically no end to the number of meaningful combinations. The day's standard military wisdom decreed that forts should be built and how they could be attacked. Of course, besides being expected and therefore proper, forts were also useful. They sheltered navies and along with trade, urged Indian nations into alliance. Indian recruiting was encouraged by disposition of troops and distribution of gifts. Forts, navies, armies and Indian diplomacy all created demands for supplies. When characteristic strategic trends were well developed, the French considered various schemes whereby they might wage war successfully without much manpower. The substitutes they thought of were more plentiful artillery fire, extra fortifications

systematized into defence in depth, and additional levies of Indian troops. The British depended upon copious quantities of men and supplies of all types, applied with dogged perseverance, to outweigh all the other factors.

These items that gave guidelines for the strategists' schemes -- how very concrete and quantifiable they were. Geography, ships, forts -- they have fabric, solidity. Materiel and manpower lend themselves automatically to inventory and listing. A strong element of the unwieldy and the uncertain, it is true, was involved in handling relations with Indian peoples. Nevertheless, the military result in which planners were chiefly interested could not have been more straightforward and down-to-earth: the numbers of Indian troops forthcoming to aid the armies, without whose help the functions that Indians did best would be the worse performed or left alone.

It is not easy, and perhaps not really too useful, to try and put the factors of power into order of priority. Naval strength on Lake Ontario was probably the least essential factor. Sailing vessels were the most efficient carriers and both sides laid great stress upon their acquisition; nevertheless, naval strength never influenced by one iota the outcome of the Ontario campaigns of 1756 and 1758-1760. The alliance of Indian nations and recruitment of their men assisted greatly in gathering intelligence about the enemy and disrupting his preparations and equanimity behind the lines.

Indian friendship with white governments emerged through a complex tradition of diplomacy in which, however, one of the strongest persuaders was the use or threat of force. Not only, then, were Indian alliances a factor of power, helping create the means to achieve plans shaped with this factor in mind, but they were also a product and barometer of that power. The way they fluctuated in response to changes in the other factors made Indian alliances less rather than more important, because less dependable. Fortified positions, although they were almost always the focus and target of operations, were for the most part flimsy constructions. They were more difficult to reach than breach -- which is to say, a less basic consideration in plotting strategy than geography was.

Geography was very important because it was permanent, and cheap. It cost Versailles nothing to have the western approach to Montreal resemble nothing so much as a tumble down stairs. The army attacking Canada on that line could never remove topographical obstacles as it could French forts and ships. Ineluctable, the dimensions and molding of the country, with its time-tables, climate and degree of development, had to be a) learned, and b) accepted. The enemy's forces could be pushed back, but geography never flagged; the efforts necessary to push the army ahead into contact with the foe had constantly to be renewed.

Considering the actual events and course of the war, the resource factors emerge as the key ones. Every Canadian war seems to be a problem in manpower, at the end if not the beginning. The War of the conquest certainly was. French permanent-force units -- regulars and Marines -- plus that part of the Canadian militia that could be spared from other work, provided a force of a certain size. Whatever emergency came it could not be expanded, although successful Indian diplomacy could give it very useful auxiliaries. From 1757 on the force could not even be maintained, as Mother-country policy and British Atlantic seapower stopped the flow of reinforcements, while disease, desertion and the fortunes of war continued to whittle it down. Meanwhile, this aspect of the strategical equation was simplified for Britain's Commander-in-Chief in North America by the welcome fact that from British possessions on two continents, large and increasing numbers of men continually came forward. Similarly, while the flow of vital supplies to Canada was choked and stopped, Anglo-American forces were rich in provisions, munitions and every type of necessary gear. There is practically nothing that cannot be done by sufficient men who are equipped with the tools needed to do it. Specifically, the advantages which Canada's defenders had in the Lake Ontario region in the war's early years -- advantages of geography, fortified positions, lakepower and Indian friendship -- were undermined and overcome by British superiority in manpower and supply.

More factors than these six could have been listed. If the analysis were more minute, the items next added would have been intelligence, techniques, morale and leadership. Note that these things are all non-material. They overlap in many ways with the physical factors that have been detailed, and perhaps amount to more or less the same list looked at in a theoretical rather than practical way.

Military intelligence -- that is, information -- was a major consideration in many of the factors isolated. The geography of the western front, especially all-important facts about the routes, was a body of knowledge which headquarters had to know in order to plan wisely. The British in particular, feeling its lack, were at pains to collect this type of intelligence. On one side or the other astral navigators from the navy, Jesuit professors of hydrography, and buckskinned frontiersmen who knew how to draw maps, were all pressed into use. The main value of mustering Indian troops was in order to gather information about the enemy. Intelligence was also intimately related to personnel problems, being a principal advantage in taking prisoners, and a subsidiary gain when one's own people were recovered. A failure of intelligence was a prime cause of the French western debacle of 1758.

Good techniques for transport and fighting in the wilderness were a sine qua non of success. Every springtime, the soldiers told off for western duty were forced to trade their

birthright of winter leisure for a mess of portage. There were poor, better, and best ways to handle the movement of gear by the ton and men by the hundred up and down those fractured streams. There had to be organization, technique. Navigational disasters have been cited as a torque exerted on strategy by topography; from other angles it was a question of how much materiel could be risked in boats and cargoes going to the bottom; or, again, a question of technique -- whether the transport chore would be put into the hands of men who permitted accidents to happen, or who knew how to avoid them. The French made better time in military movements, partly because of superior skill born of experience. Perhaps technique is not so much an abstract question of method as a physical one of having men who know the method. The style of big engagements was Vaubanesque siegecraft -- techniques rendered unavoidable by the combatants' reliance on fortified positions. In the effort to reestablish Canada's western defences at the end of the 1758 campaign, successful improvisation in employing half-wrecked Frontenac cannon again suggests the advantage of technique, this time in a matter bearing upon supply.

Morale entered personnel calculations because of the dents in the order of battle brought about by the handmaiden of poor morale, desertion. Breakdown of supply arrangements could hurt morale; so could buildup of Indian irregular strength on

the other side, and jealousies between European and colonial units that were supposed to cooperate. Securely-fortified positions were a boost to the morale of men manning them; winter, with scurvy, boredom and scarcity, was not.

Command, or leadership, is the non-physical factor that makes all other factors coalesce into combinations of strength and endurance. Had it been studied in detail, the result would probably have been a finding that each side made good use of the advantages inherent in its share of the common situation. On the debit side, divergence between civilian and military authorities in British America, and London's too great interference in planning, would have been balanced against serious disagreement at the highest level in Canada between two military authorities who should have been pulling together, and too little help from France.

To a great extent these non-physical items have been included and calculated in the analytical scheme which Chapters II - VII propound. Beyond those aspects that have been covered, their impact upon the choice of strategy was too slight to justify their insertion in a list of major factors. A further indication of the primacy of the concrete over the abstract in the formulation of plans is revealed by Chapter I. There the two sides' most consistent and characteristic principles of strategy are discussed. In the ideas they shared, one sees the triumph of the obvious, of European military custom, and -- in

their generally agreed tendency to think the Lake Ontario area the least important of theatres -- the unshakeable grip which geography held on theory. Among their divergent attitudes there was one policy difference that was fundamentally psychic and a matter of will, not force. The unremitting initiative of the British showed that their highest command was determined to fight a victorious war in North America. The French government's conception was quite different. They were not determined but merely willing: to fight or not to fight; to win or even lose -- provided that the cost stayed down and no greater proportion of national resources was diverted from European ambitions. The two armies' differing objectives, however, once again reflected respective degrees of physical strength. The most important divergence of principle also arose from concrete factors, for while French economy of force was predicated upon interior lines of communication and encouraged by scarcity, the British squandered their means because they had so many.

- - - - -

French strategy for the Lake Ontario theatre of operations remained quite static throughout six years of war. The end of the conflict found them defensive-minded as they had been at the outset. Only the hope had gone. On the Anglo-Americans' side there was process, development. After unhappy experiences in 1755 and 1756 they went through

a period of decided pessimism about the Ontario area. However, the overall policy of relentless, enveloping offensive -- which was adopted under William Pitt's direction from 1758 on -- encouraged attempts to be made even in zones where the combination of power-factors seemed definitely to favour the enemy. The revised objective given to the British command in North America was to round up and destroy French armed forces in Canada, and every way to get at them was a good way. Tentatively in 1758, and with confidence thereafter, the British returned to Lake Ontario. They smashed fleets and forts, seized control, and even dispatched the greatest of their final invasion armies through this formerly least promising of approaches. In this theatre more than the others one sees the British side -- tempted by growing consciousness of superiority -- lurching out of the customary Eighteenth century rut of moderate ambitions, and coming finally to adopt projects of unlimited conquest.

The two army commands in North America operated on a ladder of decision-makers one rung below the top. War aims and the policies of greatest scope were set in Europe. Nevertheless, the leaders on this continent had a great deal to plan concerning how, where and under what conditions their men would meet the enemy. Certain sets of ideas and -- more effectually -- certain definite features in the evolving situation, moulded their decisions on

these strategical matters.

Among interpreters of strategy there is a classic debate between champions of the tangible and of the intangible. While some students proclaim the biggest battalions always win, others celebrate the efficacy of will. In the War of the Conquest the impact of abstract factors like personality and the will to win were not great. From surviving documents, the French appear to have been the more thoughtful. Nevertheless, they lost. What was definite and down-to-earth, concrete and quantifiable, counted most in the shaping of plans. Generals of the 1750's could not conjure up gains and victories out of theory or brilliant conceptions; rather, these had to be systematically achieved, or their opposites postponed, by fit manipulation of given materials. Of two rival empires, the one that was the more dependent upon support from overseas had the more fragile system of supply. The trick was not to learn the recipe but to obtain the ingredients. The war in the Lake Ontario region, and overall, was a matching of muscle, not a trial of wills. The French colony was not outwitted, but outweighed.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Primary sources

A. Unpublished.

Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery, San Marino, California, U.S.A.:

Abercromby papers, Boxes 1-16.

BR 673, James Abercromby letter book

Huntington Miscellaneous 1482-1559, 9699-9723, 15407-15460.

Loudoun papers, Boxes 101-131.

Public Archives of Canada, Ottawa:

Manuscript Group 1, Série B, volumes 101-112, official dispatches to Canada, 1754-1760.

--------, Série C 11 A, volumes 100-105, official correspondence from Canada, 1754-1760.

--------, Série C 11 E, volumes 4, 8, 10-16, various papers concerning Acadia and Canada's frontiers, 1750-1770.

Manuscript Group 2, Série B 1, volumes 57-101, Marine Department deliberations, 1755-1760.

--------, Série B 2, Marine Department dispatches, 1755-1760.

--------, Série 3JJ, volume 259, liasse 29.

Manuscript Group 3, Série K, carton 3455, Vaudreuil-Bourlamaque letters, 1759.

Manuscript Group 4, B, Service historique de l'Armée, Série A 1, volumes 3398-3399, 3404-3405, 3417, 3457, 3459, 3498-3499, 3501-3502, 3507, 3509-3510, 3540, 3568-3574, 3598-3601, 3631, letters and papers on various matters of military administration, 1755-1761.

Manuscript Group 5, A (1), volumes 438-442, diplomatic correspondence, 1755-1760.

--------, B (1), volume 10, documents on foreign affairs, and Canadian narratives, 1750's.

--------, B (2), volume 41, memoranda, 1755-1760.

--------, B (4), volume 6, Vaudreuil letter, 1755.

Manuscript Group 12, A, Admiralty 1, volumes 307, 1487-1488, 2045-2052, 3818, letters of Moore, Broadley, Loring, Shirley, Dinwiddie, Pownall, etc., concerning Lake Ontario, 1755-1760.

--------, A, Admiralty 2, volumes 704-705.

--------, A, Admiralty Supplementary, 11, letters of Captain Housman Broadley.

--------, B, War Office 1, volumes 1-6, 9, Secretary-at-War's in letters, 1755-1760.

--------, B, War Office 34, volumes 10, 14-16, 19-21, 23, 25, 27, 29-30, 38-39, 45-46B, 53, papers of General Amherst, 1755-1761.

--------, E, Audit Office 1, bundle 2531, declared accounts, 1756-1767.

Manuscript Group 18, A, 3, Voltaire letter, 1762.

--------, A, 7, dispatches of Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, 1755.

--------, C, 5, memoire on Canadian posts, 1750.

--------, C, 6, Sanders letterbook, Albany, 1742-1758.

--------, C, 13, Mémoire sur le pays d'en haut, 1763.

--------, D, 4, Arthur Dobbs collection, 1689-1775.

--------, H, 25, Robinson collection, 1532-1899.

--------, H, 26, Sicotte collection, 1716-1819.

--------, J, 7, papers of Clinton, Shirley, etc., 1750's.

--------, J, 11, Courville mémoires, 1754, 1760.

--------, K, 7, Montcalm papers, 1754-1759.

--------, K, 8, Lévis papers, 1746-1778.

--------, K, 9, Bourlamaque papers, 1756-1764.

--------, L, 1, Colville papers.

--------, L, 2, Murray papers.

--------, L, 4, papers of William Amherst.

--------, L, 5, Wolfe papers.

--------, L, 6, Captain Thomas Bell, journals, 1758-1759.

--------, L, 8, Captain Henry Pringle letterbook, 1757-1761.

--------, L, 9, papers of Captain Henry Paar.

--------, N, 4, British colonies, 1700-1758.

--------, N, 8, Massachusetts, 1710-1760.

--------, N, 13, papers of Daniel Liénard de Beaujeu.

--------, N, 15, letters to Earl of Halifax, 1752-1760.

--------, N, 20, papers of René-Hippolyte La Force.

--------, N, 21, Williamson notebook and journal.

--------, N, 34, Newcastle-Legge correspondence, 1758.

--------, N, 35, Frost diary, 1760.

--------, O, 5, campaign songs, 1759.

Manuscript Group 21, C, 7, Rev. J. Tucker letter, 1755.

--------, D, 5, papers of Abercromby and others.

--------, D, 6, reports on the American colonies, 1721-1762.

--------, G, 2, volumes 1, 2-1, 9, 10, 18, 22, 26, 27, 36, 37, 68, 98, 117, 225-2, 226-229, papers of Frederick Haldimand.

Manuscript Group 24, L, 3, volumes 3, 46, Baby collection.

--------, L, 8, Viger collection.

Manuscript Group 30, H, 5, notes on Fort Lévis.

Record Group 8, II, volume 36, Thomas Sowers' report of attack on Fort Frontenac, 1758.

Université de Montréal:

Collection Baby, A3, G2, H1 boîte 62, M boîte 80, N boîte 65, 80, P1 boîte 83, P2 boîte 84, Q1 boîte 93, various church papers, records of Indian affairs, La Présentation personnel, Lake Ontario navy, desertion, Canadian militia, etc., 1752-1762.

B. Published.

Adams, Randolph G., British headquarters maps and sketches, Ann Arbor, William L. Clements Library, 1928.

Anburey, Thomas, With Burgoyne from Quebec, Toronto, Macmillan, 1963.

Bartram, John, Travels in Pennsylvania and Canada, Ann Arbor, University microfilms, 1966.

Bass, Benjamin, "A journal of the expedition against Fort Frontenac in 1758", New York History, vol. 16 (1935), 449-452.

[Bradstreet], An impartial account of Lieut. Col. Bradstreet's expedition to fort Frontenac, Toronto, Rous & Mann, 1940.

Carmichael, Sir James, editor, Précis of the wars in Canada, from 1775 to the Treaty of Ghent in 1814: with political and military reflections. By the late Major-General Sir James Carmichael-Smyth, London, 1862.

Casgrain, L'Abbe H.-R., editor, Collection des manuscrits du maréchal de Lévis, 12 volumes, Quebec, Demers, 1889-1895.

Clausewitz, Carl von, Principles of war (edited by Hans W. Gatzke), Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, Military services publishing Company, 1945.

Colden, Cadwallader, History of the Five Nations of Canada, London, 1747.

Collection de manuscrits contenant lettres, mémoires et autres documents historiques relatifs à l'histoire de la Nouvelle-France, recueillis aux archives de la province de Québec ou copiés a l'étranger, 4 volumes, Quebec, Côte, 1883-1885.

Collections of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, volume 18, Madison, the Society, 1908.

The documentary history of the state of New York, 4 volumes, Albany, 1849-1851.

Doughty, A. G., editor, An historical journal of the campaigns in North America for the years 1757, 1758, 1759, and 1760, by Captain John Knox, 3 volumes, Toronto, The Champlain Society, 1914-1916.

Doughty, Arthur G., The siege of Quebec and the Battle of the Plains of Abraham, 6 volumes, Quebec, Dussault et Proulx, 1901.

Dwight, Timothy, Travels in New England & New York, volume 3, Cambridge, Mass., The Belknap Press, 1969.

Edits, Ordonnances Royaux, Déclarations et Arrêts du conseil d'Etat du Roi, concernant le Canada, volume 1, Quebec, Desbarats, 1803; volumes 2 and 3, Quebec, Fréchette, 1855-6.

Entick, John, The general history of the late War: containing it's rise, progress, and event, in Europe, Asia, Africa, and America, 5 volumes, London, 1763-1764.

Franquet, [Louis], Voyages et Mémoires sur le Canada en 1752-1753, Toronto, Canadiana House, 1968.

Gipson, L. H., Lewis Evans, Philadelphia, The Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 1939.

Grant, Francis, "Journal from New York to Canada, 1767", New York History, volume 13 (April-July 1932), 188-189.

Grenier, Fernand, editor, Papiers Contrecoeur et autres documents concernant le conflit anglo-français sur l'Ohio de 1745 à 1756, Quebec, les Presses Universitaires Laval, 1952.

Grose, Francis [supposed author], Advice to the officers of the British army, London, Johnathan Cape, 1946 [1st pub. 1782].

Hamilton, Edward P., Adventures in the wilderness, the American journals of Louis Antoine de Bougainville, 1756-1760, Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 1964.

Hervey, William, Journals of the Honourable William Hervey in North America and Europe, from 1755 to 1814, Bury St. Edmunds, Paul and Mathew, 1906.

Hosack, David, Memoir of De Witt Clinton, New York, Seymour, 1829

Howison, John, Sketches of Upper Canada domestic, local, and characteristic, London, G. & W.B. Whittaker, 1821.

Innis, H. A., editor, Select documents in Canadian economic history, 1497-1783, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1929.

Inventaire des Insinuations du conseil souverain de la Nouvelle-France, Beauceville, L'Eclaireur, 1921.

Jacobs, Wilbur R., editor, The Appalachian Indian frontier: the Edmund Atkin report and plan of 1755, Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 1967.

Memoirs of the Chevalier de Johnstone (translated by Charles Winchester), 3 volumes, Aberdeen, D. Wyllie, 1871.

Johnson, William, The Papers of Sir William Johnson, 14 volumes, Albany, The University of the State of New York, 1921-1965.

Jomini, Baron de, The Art of War, Philadelphia, J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1868.

Kerkkonen, Martti, Peter Kalm's North American Journey, Helsinki, Turun . . . Osokeyhtiö, 1959.

Kimball, Gertrude S., editor, Correspondence of William Pitt when Secretary of State with Colonial Governors and Military and Naval Commissioners in America, 2 volumes, New York, Macmillan, 1906.

Leacock, Stephen, editor, Lahontan's Voyages, Ottawa, Graphic Publishers Limited, 1932.

Lanctot, Gustave, editor, The Oakes Collection: New Documents by Lahontan concerning Canada and Newfoundland, Ottawa, King's Printer, 1940.

Luvaas, Jay, Frederick the Great on the art of war, New York, The free press, 1966.

MacKirdy, K.A., Moir, J.S., and Zoltvany, Y.F., Changing perspectives in Canadian history, Don Mills, Dent, 1967.

Mante, Thomas, The History of the Late War in North America, London, Strahan, 1772.

Marsden, Reverend Joshua, The narrative of a mission to Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, & the Somers islands, New York, Johnson, 1966.

Mitchell, John, The Contest in America between Great Britain & France, [London: J. Millar, 1757].

Munro, William Bennett, editor, Documents relating to the siegneurial tenure in Canada, 1598-1854, Toronto, Champlain Society, 1908.

Murray, Jean M., editor, The Newfoundland Journal of Aaron Thomas (Able seaman in HMS BOSTON, 1790's), Don Mills, Longmans, 1968.

Nish, Cameron, editor, The French Regime, Scarborough, Ontario, Prentice-Hall, 1965.

O'Callaghan, E. B., editor, Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the state of New York, 15 volumes, Albany, Weed, Parsons and Company, 1853-1887.

Ontario, Archives, Report of the Bureau of Archives for the Province of Ontario for 1904 and 1916.

Phillips, Thomas R., editor, Roots of Strategy (writings of Sun Tzu, Vegetius, Saxe, Frederick the Great, and Napoleon), Harrisburg, Military service publishing company, 1940.

Pouchot, M., Memoir upon the late war in North America, 2 volumes, Roxbury, Mass., Woodward, 1886.

Preston, R.A., and Lamontagne, L., Royal Fort Frontenac, Toronto, 1958.

Rapport de l'Archiviste de la province de Québec, 1920-1, pp. 11-50, Nicholas-Gaspard Boucault, "Etat présent du Canada", 1754.

--------, 1923-4, pp. 8-70, 204-393, Bougainville memoirs and journals.

--------, 1924-5, pp. 96-195, "Mémoire du Canada" (about 1770).

--------, 1924-5, pp. 201-228, letters from various French Chambers of Commerce, re Canada, 1760-1762.

--------, 1924-5, pp. 393-396, declaration of Colonel John Butler, 1787.

--------, 1926-7, pp. 334-405, Léry journals for 1749, 1754-5, 1756.

--------, 1927-8, pp. 323-354, Chevalier de Raymond, "Mémoire sur les postes du Canada", 1754.

--------, 1927-8, pp. 355-430, Léry journal 1754-5.

--------, 1928-9, pp. 5-86, Méloizes journals for 1756 and 1759.

--------, 1928-9, pp. 211-226, Du Plessis journal, 1756.

--------, 1928-9, pp. 227-246, Léry journals and letters, 1756-7.

--------, 1929-30, pp. 47-59, Briand correspondence, 1741-1763.

--------, 1930-1, pp. 353-453, Répertoire des engagements pour l'ouest, 1746-1752.

--------, 1931-2, pp. 3-126, La Pause papers.

--------, 1931-2, pp. 243-365, Engagements pour l'ouest, 1753-1758.

--------, 1932-3, pp. 245-276, Engagements pour l'ouest, 1758-1763.

--------, 1932-3, pp. 307-391, La Pause, various relations, projects, plans, memoirs and journals.

--------, 1933-4, pp. 147-160, 207-232, more La Pause papers.

--------, 1935-6, pp. 275-410, L'Isle-Dieu papers, 1742-1753.

--------, 1936-7, pp. 331-459, L'Isle-Dieu papers, 1753-1758.

--------, 1937-8, pp. 4-20, "Relation du siège de Québec".

--------, 1937-8, pp. 147-253, L'Isle-Dieu papers, 1755-1774.

--------, 1938-9, pp. 1-9, Vézon journal, 1759-1760.

--------, 1944-5, pp. 3-32, Doreil letters, 1755-1759.

--------, 1944-5, pp. 276-306, Gradis papers, 1757-1768.

--------, 1948-9, pp. 297-340, Church and state papers, 1759-1786.

--------, 1949-51, pp. 1-32, D'Aubigny correspondence, 1755-1759.

--------, 1949-51, pp. 261-527, Etat provisoire des officiers de Milice de 1641 à 1760.

--------, 1951-3, pp. 5-164, Cahier des témoignages de liberté au mariage, 1757-1762.

--------, 1951-3, pp. 415-446, "Les archives d'Espagne et Le Canada".

--------, 1957-9, pp. 3-52, Gradis letters, 1757.

--------, 1959-60, pp. 1-22, Dossier Charles-François Pichot de Querdisien Trémais.

--------, 1963, pp. 203-207, Jehan-Eric Labignette, "Recherches en Suisse sur François Bigot dernier Intendant du Canada".

--------, 1965, pp. 71-86, Sieur de la Boulaye, "Mémoir sur les colonies française d'Amérique", 1737.

--------, 1970, pp. 27-82, "Un negoçiant de Québec à l'époque de la conquête: Jacques Perrault l'aîné".

Rothrock, George A., A Manual of siegecraft and fortification (by Vauban), Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1968.

Roy, Pierre-Georges, editor, Inventaire des papiers de Léry, 3 volumes, Quebec, 1939-1940.

--------, Inventaire des Procès-verbaux des grands voyers conservés aux archives de la province de Québec, 6 volumes, Beauceville, L'"Eclaireur", 1923-1932.

Voltaire, The age of Louis XIV and other selected writings, New York, Twayne, 1963.

Webster, J. C., editor, Journal of Jeffrey Amherst 1756-1763, Toronto, 1931.

Wraxall, Peter, An abridgement of the Indian affairs (1678-1751), Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1915.

II. Secondary sources

A. Reference works.

Encyclopaedia Britannica, 23 volumes, Chicago, William Benton, 1967.

Fauteux, Aegidius, Les Chevaliers de Saint-Louis en Canada, Montreal, Les éditions des Dix, 1940.

Hodge, Frederick Webb, editor, Handbook of American Indians North of Mexico, 2 volumes, New York, Pageant Books, 1959.

Jenness, Diamond, The Indians of Canada, Ottawa, Queen's printer, 1955.

Larousse du XXe Siècle, 6 volumes, Paris, Librairie Larousse, 1932.

Nouvelle Biographie Générale, Copenhague, Rosenkilde et Bagger, 1967.

Tanguay, L'Abbé Cyprien, Dictionnaire généalogique des familles canadiennes dupuis la fondation de la colonie jusqu'à nos jours, 7 volumes, Quebec, E. Sénecal, 1871-1890.

Thompson, John H., Geography of New York State, Syracuse, Syracuse University Press, 1966.

The Times Atlas of the World, volume 5, London, The Times, 1957.

Trudel, Marcel, Atlas historique du Canada français des origines à 1867, Quebec, Presses universitaires Laval, 1961.

B. General works.

Corbett, Julian, England in the seven years' war: a study in combined strategy, 2 volumes, London, 1907.

Dorn, Walter L., Competition for empire 1740-63, New York, Harper, 1940.

Dussieux, Louis-Etienne, Le Canada sous la domination française d'après les archives de la marine et de la guerre, Paris, J. Lecoffre, 1862.

Fortescue, J. W., A History of the British Army, 2 volumes, London, Macmillan, 1899-1903.

Frégault, Guy, La guerre de la Conquête, Montreal, Fides, 1955.

--------, Canada: the war of the Conquest (translated by Margaret M. Cameron), Toronto, Oxford University Press, 1969.

Gipson, Lawrence Henry, The British empire before the American revolution, volumes 4-8, New York, Knopf, 1939-1954.

Glazebrook, G. P. de T., A history of transportation in Canada, Toronto, Ryerson, 1938.

Gordon, L.L., Military origins, London, Kaye & Ward, 1971.

Heater, D.B., Order and rebellion: a history of Europe in the Eighteenth century, London, Harrap, 1964.

Innis, Harold A., The fur trade in Canada, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1930.

Lanctot, Gustave, A history of Canada, 3 volumes, Toronto, Clarke, Irwin, 1963-1965.

Lindsay, J. O., editor, The New Cambridge Modern History, volume 7: The old regime 1713-1763, Cambridge, University press, 1957.

Morgan, Lewis Henry, League of the Iroquois, New York, Corinth books, 1962.

Mowat, R. B., The age of reason, London, George G. Harrap, 1934.

Parkman, Francis, A half century of conflict, Toronto, Morang, 1899.

--------, Montcalm and Wolfe, 2 volumes, Boston, Little, Brown, 1927.

Rutledge, J. L., Century of conflict: the struggle between the French and British in colonial America, New York, Doubleday, 1956.

Shortt, Adam, editor, Canada & its provinces, 23 volumes, Toronto, Glasgow, Brook, 1914-1917.

Spaulding, O. L., Junior, Warfare, New York, Harcourt, Brace, 1925.

Stacey, Colonel C. P., Introduction to the study of military history for Canadian students, Ottawa, Queen's Printer, 1953.

--------, The military problems of Canada: a survey of defence policies and strategic conditions past and present, Toronto, Ryerson Press, 1940.

Stanley, George F. G., Canada's soldiers 1604-1954, Toronto, Macmillan, 1954.

--------, New France: the last phase, 1744-1765, Toronto, McClelland & Stewart, 1968.

Trudel, Marcel, Introduction to New France, Toronto, Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1968.

--------, L'Eglise canadienne sous le régime militaire, 2 volumes, Montreal, 1949.

Waddington, Richard, La guerre de sept ans: histoire diplomatique et militaire, Paris, Firmin Didot, 1899-1919.

Wrong, George M., The fall of Canada, Oxford, Clarendon, 1914.

Wylie, J. C., Military strategy: a general theory of power control, New Brunswick, New Jersey, Rutgers University press, 1967.

Zook, David H., and Higham, Robin, A short history of warfare, New York, Twayne, 1966.

C. Special studies.

Arranged chronologically according to publication date, to show the development of interest in different aspects of the subject.

Stone, W. L., The life and times of Sir William Johnson, 2 volumes, Albany, Munsell, 1865.

Casgrain, H.-R., Montcalm et Levis, 2 volumes, Quebec, Demers, 1891.

Gosselin, L'Abbé Auguste, "Le fondateur de la Présentation", Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada, vol. 12 (1894), series I, pp. 3-28.

Kerallain, René de, Les Français au Canada: la jeunesse de Bougainville et la guerre de Sept ans, Paris, 1896.

Sulte, Benjamin, Histoire de la Milice Canadienne-Française, Montreal, Desbarats, 1897.

Roy, J.-Edmund, Histoire de la Seigneurie de Lauzon, 5 volumes, Levis, Mercier, "en vente chez l'Auteur," 1897-1904.

Hall, Hubert, "Chatham's colonial policy", American Historical Review, volume 5 (1899), 659-675.

Beauchamp, W., History of the New York Iroquois, Albany, 1905.

Whitford, Noble E., History of the canal system of the State of New York, Albany, Brandow printing company, 1906.

Reid, W. Max, The Story of Old Fort Johnson, New York, Putnam's, 1906.

Beer, George Louis, British Colonial policy 1754-1765, New York, Macmillan, 1907.

Wrong, G. M., A Canadian Manor and its seigneurs, Toronto, 1908.

Chagny, André, François Picquet, "le Canadien", Montreal, Beauchemin, 1913.

Alvord, Clarence Walworth, The Mississippi Valley in British Politics, 2 volumes, Cleveland, The Arthur H. Clark Co., 1917.

Severance, F. H., An Old Frontier of France, 2 volumes, New York, Dodd, Mead, 1917.

Wood, George A., "Céloron de Blainville and French expansion in the Ohio valley", Mississippi Valley Historical Review, vol. 9 (1922-1923), pp. 302-319.

Halevy, Daniel, Vauban Builder of Fortresses, London, Geoffrey Bles, 1924.

Macdonald, George F., "Commodore Alexander Grant (1734-1813)," Ontario Historical Society, Papers and Records, vol. 22 (1925), pp. 167-181.

Lanctot, Gustave, "Les Troupes de la Nouvelle France", Canadian Historical Association Report (1926), pp. 40-60.

Reid, Marjorie G., "Pitt's Decision to keep Canada in 1761", Canadian Historical Association Report (1926), pp. 21-32.

Liddell Hart, B.H., Great Captains unveiled, Freeport, New York, Books for libraries press, 1967 [1st pub. 1928].

Pound, A., Johnson of the Mohawks, New York, Macmillan, 1930.

Wylly, Colonel H. G., History of the King's own Yorkshire Light Infantry, vol. 1, London, Lund Humphries, [1930].

Long, J. C., Lord Jeffrey Amherst, New York, Macmillan, 1933.

Pargellis, Stanley McCrory, Lord Loudoun in North America, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1933.

Lyon, E. Wilson, "Proposals to Transfer the French Population of Canada to Louisiana", Canadian Historical Review, vol. 16 (1935), pp. 296-300.

Pease, T. C., Anglo-French Boundary Disputes in the West, Springfield, Illinois State Historical Library, 1936.

Blomfield, Reginald, Sebastien le Prestre de Vauban 1633-1707, London, Methuen, 1938.

Green, E., "Corvettes of New France", Ontario Historical Society Papers, vol. 35 (1938), 29-38.

Gipson, L. H., Lewis Evans, Philadelphia, The Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 1939.

Lunn, Jean, "The Illegal Fur Trade out of New France, 1713-60", Canadian Historical Association Report (1939), pp. 61-76.

Burt, A. L., "The Frontier in the History of New France", Canadian Historical Association Report (1940), pp. 93-99.

Savelle, Max, The diplomatic history of the Canadian boundary 1749-63, Toronto, Ryerson, 1940.

Caldwell, Norman Work, The French in the Mississippi Valley, 1740-50, Urbana, University of Illinois press, 1941.

Adair, E. R., "The Evolution of Montreal under the French Régime" Canadian Historical Association Report (1942), pp. 20-41.

Charland, Thomas M., Histoire de Saint-François-du-Lac, Ottawa, 1942.

Lunn, Jean, "Economic development in New France, 1713-60", Ph.D. thesis, McGill University, 1943.

Stanley, George F. G., "The Canadian Militia during the Ancien Régime" Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research, vol. 22 (1943-4), pp. 157-168.

Dailey, W. P. M., Sir William Johnson, Baronet" Chronicles of Oklahoma, vol. 22 (1944), pp. 164-176.

Frégault, Guy, La civilisation de la Nouvelle-France (1713-1744), Montreal, Société des Editions Pascal, 1944.

Hale, Richard Walden, Jr., The Royal Americans, Ann Arbor, The William L. Clements Library, 1944.

Mullett, Charles F., "James Abercromby and French encroachments in America" Canadian Historical Review, vol. 26 (1945), pp. 48-59.

McOuat, Donald Fraser, "Military Policy and Organization in New France" Master of Arts thesis, McGill University, 1947.

Alden, John Richard, General Gage in America, Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, 1948.

Earle, Edward Mead, Makers of modern strategy, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1948.

Freeman, Douglas Southall, George Washington, vol. 2, London, Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1948.

Frégault, Guy, François Bigot, administrateur français, 2 volumes, Montreal, Les Etudes de l'Institut d'Histoire de l'Amérique française, 1948.

Kimble, George Herbert Finley, Canadian military geography, Ottawa, King's Printer, 1949.

Jacobs, Wilbur R., Diplomacy & Indian Gifts: Anglo-French Rivalry Along the Ohio and north-west Frontier, 1748-1763, London, Oxford University Press, 1950.

Reid, Allana G., "Intercolonial Trade during the French Regime", Canadian Historical Review, vol. 32 (1951), pp. 236-51.

Frégault, Guy, Le Grand Marquis: Pierre de Rigaud de Vaudreuil et la Louisiane, Montreal, Fides, 1952.

Reid, Allana G., "General Trade Between Quebec and France during the French Regime", Canadian Historical Review, vol. 34, (1953), pp. 18-32.

Trudel, Marcel, L'Affaire Jumonville, Quebec, PUL, 1953.

Sherrard, O. A., Lord Chatham: Pitt and the Seven Years' War, London, The Bodley Head, 1955.

Manucy, Albert, Artillery through the ages, Washington, United States Government printing office, 1949.

Sosin, Jack M., "The French Settlements in British Policy for the North American Interior 1760-1774", Canadian Historical Review, vol. 34 (1958), pp. 185-208.

James, Alfred Procter, "Decision at the forks", in Drums in the forest, Pittsburgh, The Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania, 1958, pp. 3-56.

Stotz, Charles Morse, "Defence in the wilderness", in Drums in the forest, Pittsburgh, The Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania, 1958, pp. 59-197.

Snider, C. J. H., Tarry Breeks & Velvet Garters, Toronto, Ryerson, 1958.

Whitworth, Rex, Field Marshal Lord Ligonier, Oxford, Clarendon press, 1958.

Lloyd, Christopher, The capture of Quebec, London, B. T. Batsford, 1959.

Hunter, William A., Forts on the Pennsylvania frontier, 1753-1758, Harrisburg: The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 1960.

Reilly, Robin, The rest to fortune (life of James Wolfe), London, Cassell, 1960.

Schutz, John A., William Shirley, Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1961.

Lloyd, Christopher and Coulter, Jack L. S., Medicine and the navy, volume 3, Edinburgh, Livingstone, 1961.

LeBlanc, Robert George, "The Acadian Migrations", M.A. thesis, University of Minnesota, 1961.

Eccles, W. J., "The history of New France according to Francis Parkman", William and Mary Quarterly, volume 18 (1961), 163-175.

Beloff, Max, The age of absolutism, 1660-1815, London, Hutchinson University library, 1962.

Cognets, Louis de, Junior, Amherst and Canada, Princeton, Louis de Cognets, Jr., 1962.

Hamilton, Edward P., The French and Indian wars, New York, Doubleday, 1962.

Williams, Basil, The Whig supremacy, 1714-1760, Oxford, Clarendon, 1962.

Wyld, Lionel D., Low bridge! Folklore and the Erie canal, Syracuse, Syracuse University Press, 1962.

Cowie, Leonard W., Eighteenth-century Europe, London, Bell, 1963.

Graves, Robert and Liddell Hart, B.H., T. E. Lawrence to his biographers, Garden City, New York, Coubleday, 1963.

Eccles, W. J., Canada under Louis XIV 1663-1701, Toronto, McClelland and Stewart, 1964.

Alberts, R. C., The most extraordinary adventures of Major Robert Stobo, Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1965.

Dendy, John, "The strategic importance of Kingston: a study of the role played by the British base at Kingston, Ontario in the defence of Canada, 1778-1854", M.A. thesis, Carleton University, 1965.

Eccles, Henry E., Military concepts and philosophy, New Brunswick, New Jersey, Rutgers University Press, 1965.

Howard, Michael, editor, The theory and practice of war: essays presented to Captain B. H. Liddell Hart, London, Cassell, 1965.

O'Meara, W., Guns at the forks, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, Prentice-Hall, 1965.

Leach, Douglas Edward, The northern colonial frontier 1607-1763, New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966.

MacLeod, Malcolm, "Fight at the west gate, 1760", Ontario History, volume 58 (1966), 172-194.

Saum, Lewis O., The fur trader and the Indian, Seattle, University of Washington Press, 1966.

Archambault, Gilles, "La question des vivres au Canada au cours de l'hiver 1757-1758", Revue d'Histoire de l'Amérique française, volume 21 (1967), 16-50.

Bosher, J. F., "Government and private interests in New France", Canadian Public Administration, volume 10 (1967), 244-257.

Canedy, Charles Roscoe, III, "An entrepreneurial history of the New York frontier, 1739-1776", Ph.D. thesis, Case Western Reserve University, 1967.

Filion, Maurice, "La crise de la Marine française d'après le Mémoire de Maurepas de 1745 sur la marine et le commerce", Revue d'Histoire de l'Amérique française, volume 21, (1967), 230-242.

Hamilton, Edward P., The French army in America, Ottawa, Museum Restoration Service, 1967.

Keener, Commander Bruce, "The principles of war: a thesis for change", United States Naval Institute Proceedings (November 1967), 26-36.

Kennett, Lee, The French armies in the seven years' war, Durham, North Carolina, Duke University Press, 1967.

Leonard, R. A., A short guide to Clausewitz on war, London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1967.

McKenzie, Ruth, Leeds and Grenville: their first two hundred years, Toronto, McClelland and Stewart, 1967.

Séguin, Robert-Lionel, "L'"apprentissage" de la chirurgie en Nouvelle-France", Revue d'Histoire de l'Amérique française, volume 20, number 4 (Mars 1967), 593-599.

Hitsman, J. Mackay, Safeguarding Canada 1763-1871, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1968.

Leckie, Robert, The wars of America, New York, Harper & Row, 1968.

Lloyd, Christopher, The British seaman, London, Collins, 1968.

MacLeod, Malcolm, "Ceremony on sighting the banks of Newfoundland, and upon entering the Canadian 'pays d'en haut'", The Mariner's Mirror, volume 54 (1968), 298-300.

Snyder, Charles M., Oswego: from buckskin to bustles, Port Washington, New York, Ira J. Friedman, 1968.

Vaugeois, Denis, "François Bigot, son exil et sa mort", Revue d'Histoire de l'Amérique française, volume 21 (1968), 731-748.

Eccles, W. J., The Canadian frontier 1534-1760, New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1969.

Crowhurst, R. P., "The Admiralty and the convoy system in the seven years' war", The Mariner's Mirror, volume 57 (1971), 163-173.

Eccles, W. J., "The social, economic, and political significance of the military establishment in New France", Canadian Historical Review, volume 52 (1971), 1-22.

Hamilton, Milton W., "Sir William Johnson: a biography", written about 1970, not published in 1971.

MacLeod, Malcolm, "Letter from another world, 1757", The Nova Scotia Historical Quarterly, volume 3 (1973), 197-213.

APPENDIX 1

THE SPEED OF COMMUNICATIONS

1. British

MESSAGE ORIGINATED	FROM	TO	MESSAGE RECEIVED	DAYS IN TRANSIT	SOURCE
ATLANTIC SEABOARD					
15 Nov 57	Halifax	New York	5 Dec	20	LO 4799
12 Apr 58	Boston	New York	16 Apr	4	WO 34/27/149
6 July 58	L. George	Louisbourg	27 July	21	PAC, MG 18,L 5, vol. 3, part 1, 505
26 July 58	L'bourg	Boston	21 Aug	26	WO 34/27/187
26 July 58	L'bourg	New York	20 Aug	25	AB 550
13 Sept 59	Quebec	Boston	12 Oct	29	WO 34/25/617
28 Apr 60	Quebec	New York	29 May	31	WO 34/29/285
9 May 60	Quebec	Schenectady	21 June	43	WO 34/84/341
SEABOARD - ALBANY					
26 Dec 57	Albany	New York	1 Jan 58	5	LO 5111
21 Aug 58	Boston	L. George	28 Aug	7(commented upon as slower than usual)	WO 34/27/187
28 Apr 59	New York	Albany	3 May	5	Doughty, Knox Journal, III,21.
25 Sept 59	L.Champlain	New York	1 Oct	6	WO 34/29/207

MESSAGE ORIGINATED	FROM	TO	MESSAGE RECEIVED	DAYS IN TRANSIT	SOURCE
ALBANY - LAKE ONTARIO					
14 Aug 56	Oswego	Albany	20 Aug	6	Pargellis, Affairs, 227
27 Aug 58	F.Frontenac	New York	11 Sept	15	WO 34/27/193
25 July 59	Niagara	Albany	2 Aug	8	WO 34/46A/83
31 Dec 59	New York	Oswego	23 Jan 60	23	PAC, MG 21, G2, vol. 1, 36
14 Jan 60	New York	Oswego	13 Feb	30	Ibid., 38
20 Feb 60	Albany	Oswego	5 Mar	14	Ibid., vol. 68, 51
25 Feb 60	New York	Oswego	12 Mar	16	Ibid., vol. 1, 41
30 Mar 60	New York	Oswego	17 Apr	18	Ibid., p. 44
31 Mar 60	Albany	Oswego	13 Apr	13	Ibid., vol.2-1, p. 53
6 Apr 60	Albany	Oswego	17 Apr	11	Ibid., 55
22 Apr 60	Albany	Oswego	26 Apr	4	Ibid., 60
5 May 60	Albany	Oswego	14 May	9	Ibid., 62
9 May 60	Albany	Oswego	2 June	24	Ibid., vol. 1, 47
13 May 60	Albany	Oswego	22 May	9	Ibid., 49
20 May 60	Albany	Oswego	11 June	22	Ibid., 53
26 May 60	Albany	Oswego	1 June	6	PAC, MG 21, G 2, vol. 1, 61
28 May 60	Albany	Oswego	11 June	14	Ibid., 64
2 June 60	Albany	Oswego	23 June	21	Ibid., 80

MESSAGE ORIGINATED	FROM	TO	MESSAGE RECEIVED	DAYS IN TRANSIT	SOURCE
5 June 60	Albany	Oswego	9 June	4	Ibid., 83
11 June 60	Albany	Oswego	16 June	5	Ibid., 87
LAKE CHAMPLAIN - LAKE ONTARIO					
13 July 59	L.George	Oswego	22 July	9	PAC, MG 21, G 2, vol. 1, p. 17
17 July 59	L.George	Oswego	23 July	6	Ibid., 20
28 July 59	L.George	Oswego	6 Aug	8	Ibid., 24
21 Aug 59	L.George	Oswego	30 Aug	9	Ibid., 32
11 Sept 59	Oswego	L.Champlain	18 Sept	7	Gipson, Empire, VII, 358
2 Oct 59	L.Champlain	Oswego	11 Oct	9	WO 34/39/225
31 Oct 59	Fort St.-Frédéric (Crown Point)	Oswego	20 Nov	20	PAC, MG 21, G 2, vol. 1, 34

2. French.

QUEBEC - MONTREAL					
19 May 58	Quebec	Montreal	23 May	4	NYCD, X, 891
29 Aug 58	Montreal	Quebec	31 Aug	2	Ibid., 818
13 Sept 59	Quebec	Montreal	15 Sept	2	PAC, MG 18, K 8, vol. 12, 147 ff.

MESSAGE ORIGINATED	FROM	TO	MESSAGE RECEIVED	DAYS IN TRANSIT	SOURCE
MONTREAL - LAKE ONTARIO					
21 June 57	Niagara	Montreal	29 June	8	BJ, 119
20 Aug 58	Niagara	F.Frontenac	22 Aug	2	BJ, 275-279
27 Aug 58	F.Frontenac	Montreal	30 Aug	3	NYCD, X, 852
27 Aug 58	F.Frontenac	Quebec	3 Sept	7	NYCD, X, 818
1 Sept 58	Niagara	Montreal	12 Sept	11	NYCD, X, 854
25 July 59	Niagara	Quebec	9 Aug	15	PAC, MG 18, K 8, vol. 1, 558;RAPQ 1933-4, 115
18 Sept 59	Quebec	La Présentation	30 Sept	12	WO 34/46A/109
LAKE CHAMPLAIN - LAKE ONTARIO					
14 Aug 56	Oswego	Carillon	27 Aug	13	RAPQ 1928-9, 12
26 Nov 56	Montreal	Carillon	1 Dec	5	BJ, 73
2 July 57	Niagara	Carillon	22 July	20	BJ, 137
22 Aug 58	F.Frontenac	Carillon	1 Sept	10	BJ, 266
27 Aug 58	F.Frontenac	Carillon	6 Sept	10	Casgrain, Lévis, I, 148
6 Sept 58	Carillon	Montreal	9 Sept	3	BJ, 276

SOURCES: See the list of abbreviations on page viii.

APPENDIX 2

SHIPPING BOUND FOR CANADA, 1758

In order fully to understand Canada's supply problem and the impact of seapower upon it, it would be necessary to have a complete list of vessels dispatched from France to Canada, and of arrivals, with tonnages and ladings. The following is the tentative beginning of such a list for one year only.

DATE ON OR ABOUT	NUMBER OF SHIPS	PARTICULARS	SOURCES (see abbreviations below)
1. Arrivals at Quebec			
1758 19 May	10	AMIABLE MARIE BRAVE CHARMANTE MANON PROVIDENCE PRUDENT Left Bordeaux 7 March with flour, salt pork and beef; government-owned or chartered	BJ 22 May Daine Lotbinière Malartic 22 May
		AIGLE CHEVAL MARIN TASON Left Bordeaux 7 March with munitions and merchandise; private vessels (Gradis)	
		LA SIRENNE Naval frigate	
		LICORNE A British prize, with flour	

DATE ON OR ABOUT	NUMBER OF SHIPS	PARTICULARS	SOURCES
22 May	2	from Louisbourg, with provisions	Malartic 25 May
23 May	2	SOLEIL Left Bordeaux 7 March BABILLARD Left Bordeaux about 17 March	BJ 26 May Malartic 26 May
30 May	1	LE ZELINDOR	BJ 2 June Malartic 2 June
31 May	1?	brigantine from Louisbourg	BJ 2 June
1 June	3	LA JUDITH and two prizes	BJ 3 June Malartic 3 June
16-20 June	6	royal flyboat LE RHINOCEROS 2 merchantmen and 1 privateer: left Bordeaux 2 May; half munitions and half trade goods 2 merchantmen from Bayonne with Indian corn	BJ 16 & 20 June Doreil 16 June Malartic 16 June Bigot 14 June
20 June	1	frigate LE VALEUR from Bordeaux	Malartic 20 June
10-15 July	10	a naval frigate 2 merchantmen from Dunkerque 2 merchantmen from Brest with flour and gunpowder 2 from La Rochelle with provisions a French privateer with an English prize (cargo of merchandise) a vessel that left Louisbourg 18 June	Bigot 10 July

APPENDIX 2

DATE ON OR ABOUT	NUMBER OF SHIPS	PARTICULARS	SOURCES
30 July	1	BIZARRE via Louisbourg with provisions and munitions	BJ 26 June Doreil 30 July
10 Aug	2?	Spanish merchantman	Malartic 13 Aug
17 Aug	1	report of arrival at Bic	Malartic 17 Aug
18 Aug	1	from Marseilles	Malartic 21 Aug
21 Aug	3	King's ship OUTARDE merchantman DON-ROYAL; left Rochefort 28 June a small vessel from Port Toulouse with Louisbourg news	Bigot 21 Aug Malartic 24 Aug
30 Aug	1	Spanish vessel loaded at Bordeaux	BJ 31 Aug
5-10 Sept	4	PRINCE DE CONDE From La Rochelle ST. DOMINIQUE and two others (one from St. Barnabé)	BJ 12 Sept Malartic 11 & 15 Sept
sometime	3	LA VICTOIRE, St. Malo privateer HARDI, 150-ton merchantman Sailed to return to France in November	BJ 11 Nov Doreil 15 Nov
		BELLIQUEUX (64 guns) Taken in November in the Bristol Channel by British vessel ANTELOPE (54 guns), while returning from Canada	Crowhurst, p. 169

TOTAL ARRIVALS

52 ships (36 merchantmen, 9 naval ships, 4 prizes and 3 privateers)

DATE ON OR ABOUT	NUMBER OF SHIPS	PARTICULARS	SOURCES
2. Non-arrivals			
30 May	1	LION D'OR Provision ship reported aground on an island below Quebec; they expected to save the cargo	BJ 30 May Malartic 30 May
3 June	1	FOUDROYANT Wrecked on Newfoundland carrying recruits and Indian gifts	BJ 3 June Malartic 3 June
June-July	4	Prizes taken by the Massachusetts warship KING GEORGE: including ASTREE, letter of marque, 350 tons, from Bordeaux with provisions and merchandise; 9 soldiers embarked, 40 crew FRIPONNE, 320 tons, carrying merchandise and provisions; 20 soldiers, 40 crew	Pownall 5-13 July
8 August	1	L'AIGLE King's ship (not to be confused with merchantman of same name that arrived Quebec 19 May); wrecked in the Strait of Belle-Isle; crew saved; hope for the ship and her cargo of food, munitions and uniforms	BJ [12 Oct] Montcalm 21 Oct. Bigot 5 Oct
sometime	3	a ship from Marseilles saw another being captured	Malartic 21 Aug
		GEDEON DEUX AMIS From La Rochelle, reported taken by a ship that arrived Quebec about 10 September	BJ 12 Sept

TOTAL NON-ARRIVALS

10 ships (seven because of enemy action; three shipwrecks)

These lists are no doubt incomplete. (They seem to tally quite well with a statement made in 1777 by someone formerly connected with Canada, who claimed that in 1758 forty-two ships had come from Europe with trade goods. (PAC, MG 1, C 11 E, vol. 11, 193-196). Adding together merchantmen, prizes and privateers, this appendix shows forty-three.)

The lists indicate that at least sixty-two vessels of all types were dispatched to Canada in 1758. On account of the risk of capture, the hopelessness of the war, or some other reason, shipping to Quebec fell off sharply during the next two years. Bougainville expected that about thirty ships would be sent in 1759 (Bougainville to Montcalm and Vaudreuil, spring 1759, RAPQ 1923-4, 5). In 1760 the aid sent to Canada consisted of five merchant ships escorted by the frigate MACHAULT (Stanley, New France: the last phase, 259).

SOURCES

BJ	Bougainville's journal (Edward P. Hamilton, editor, Adventure in the wilderness).
Bigot	Letters to Lévis, Casgrain, Lévis, IX, 27-39.
Crowhurst	R.P. Crowhurst, "The Admiralty and the convoy system in the Seven Year War", The Mariner's Mirror, LVII (May 1971), 163-173.
Daine	Daine to Belle-Isle, 19 May 1758, NYCD, X, 704-706.
Doreil	Letters to Belle-Isle, RAPQ 1944-5, 134-167.
Lotbinière	1758 narrative, NYCD, X, 891.
Malartic	Journal, NYCD, X, 841-854.