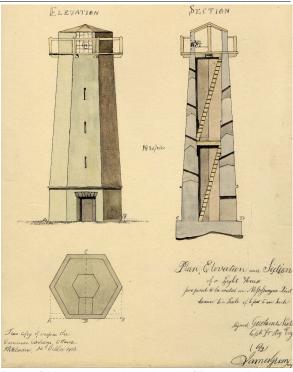
counterparts, known as Commissioners of Irish Lights. Neither model was applied in Upper Canada. However the establishment of a general fund for managing lights did have a precedent: the management of the lighthouses of the United States by the newly created federal government, which had this delegated specific responsibility to the secretary of the treasury who, over time, would delegate it to one of his auditors working in conjunction with the collectors of customs assigned to different sections of the US border. The central office handled contracts and the customs officials acted as local superintendents.¹⁰

The tonnage duties did not above Niagara and were not collected. On Lake Ontario, the



apply to Upper Canadian ports Plan of Mississauga Lighthouse (Toronto Public Library)

major gap between the proposed lights was that between York and Kingston. In September 1804, the collector of customs at Kingston wrote that he had been at Benjamin Fairfield's wharf about ten miles (sixteen kilometres) west of Kingston, where salt was busily being unloaded from an American thirty-two ton schooner. The master, Augustus Ford, pleaded that he had entered the cargo at Newcastle (the customs district centred on Presqu'Ile Point) and had paid the customs duties there, before making his delivery to Fairfield. Indeed, Ford noted that he had done this a number of times the previous season. Why? Not because Fairfield's wharf was in the Newcastle customs district. But Newcastle was virtually the only customs district on the British side of Lake Ontario where Ford could enter goods from the United States without being charged lighthouse tonnage duties. 11 Those who owned ships coming into Kingston protested that the government yacht Toronto was

¹⁰ Hague, Lighthouses, 40-4. In 1803 the control of most Irish lights was actually in the hands of the Irish Revenue or Customs Board. See also D. Alan Stevenson, The World's Lighthouses before 1820 (London: Oxford University Press, 1959), 64-71. United States, Statutes at Large, 1789, Chap. 9, "An Act for the establishment and support of Lighthouses, Beacons, Buoys, and Public Piers." The reference to the secretary of the treasury is Sec. 3 of the statute. For the evolution of the administration of this act see Dennis L. Noble, Lighthouses & Keepers: the U.S. Lighthouse Service and its legacy (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1997), esp. chap. 1.

¹¹ Jos. Anderson to John McGill, Kingston, 19 Sept. 1804, LAC, RG 16, A-1, v. 133. The salt would have been shipped from Oswego, downstream from the major source of salt in the region, the works at Salina, NY (now a suburb of Syracuse). To sail from Oswego to Bath via Presqu'Ile Point was considerably less convenient than via Kingston.