

Canada, after being released as a prisoner of war.<sup>35</sup> He noted that the Americans were withdrawing forces from Sackets, reducing the naval force to only the *Jones*. Even the *Jones* was switching out her heavy carronades for the *Sylph*'s lighter guns. Owen passed this intelligence along to Croker adding he had no information about Lake Erie. On Lake Champlain he heard that the Americans would only keep the *Linnet* active, all the others to be laid up. On 27 February 1814 President Madison had ordered the laying up of all vessels of war, on the Great Lakes, not required for the revenue service.<sup>36</sup>

In April Sir Gordon Drummond had suggested that the transport vessel owned by the army could be purchased into the navy's service.<sup>37</sup> Owen informed Drummond that HMS *Montreal* had been given a spar deck, had its ports closed, and was now a transport vessel. He suggested that the squadron could provide enough transport space, that no additional shipping was necessary. Sir Gordon responded by laying up all the commissariat's vessels, except a gunboat, to be used as an express between York and Kingston and requested Owen supply the crew.<sup>38</sup>

In June Sir Edward, as by now Owen become, had the *Prince Regent* land its guns and serve as a troop ship for carrying the army from York and Niagara, to Kingston. The *Montreal* was so leaky that he regarded it unusable, until he had a report from the builder as to what might be done to fix the situation. The *Princess Charlotte* was so short of complement it could not sail. He was informed that the *St Lawrence*'s gun carriages on the lower deck were too short for the guns they carried, and needed to be replaced.<sup>39</sup>

Sir Edward found the dock yard and anchorage to be too crowded for the new ships building. In late March, he instructed John Harris, Master of HMS *St Lawrence* to survey the harbour once the ice broke up. Owen wanted to find places to put the ships but still have them protected by the fortress at Point Frederick, and the citadel on Point Henry.

### Transporting troops and seamen out of North America

With the American War over, and Europe relatively calm for the first time in over two decades, Britain desperately needed to cut its expenses. Lord Bathurst, Secretary of War and Colonies, ordered Drummond to not delay in sending home soldiers and sailors serving in Canada.<sup>40</sup> For those serving in western Upper Canada, the first leg of their trip home was via the Lake Ontario squadron, from Niagara to Kingston, where they transferred to smaller craft for the ride down the St Lawrence to Montreal. From Montreal the transportation service, for which Owen was

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35 Owen to Croker, 2 April 1815, LAC, ADM 1/2262, mfr. B2635, 126-50.

36 Burt, 388.

37 Owen to Drummond, 6 April 1815, LAC, RG 8, v. 734, mfr. C3244, 69-71.

38 Drummond to Owen, 18 April 1815, LAC, MSLB-Fo, RG 8, v. 1228, mfr. C3527, pp. 19-20.

39 Fisher to Owen (extract), 24 June 1815 and Owen to Drummond, 25 June 1815, LAC RG 8, v. 735, mfr. C3244, 33; & 34-6.

40 Bathurst to Drummond, 20 March 1815, LAC, RG 8, v. 678, mfr. C3231, 196-7.