

John Melish declared his conviction from enquiries made during his visit in 1810, "that if 5000 men were sent into Upper Canada with a proclamation of independence, the great mass of the people would join the American Government." Dr. Tiffany and Barnabas Bidwell, formerly Attorney General of Massachusetts, and a representative in Congress, who had become a defaulter and tied to the Newcastle District, near the Bay of Quinte, where he was engaged in teaching a private school, wrote secretly to their political friends in a similar strain.

These statements were eagerly quoted, and no doubt believed by the leaders of the war party in Congress. Henry Clay assured the people that "the conquest of Canada is in your power. I trust. I shall not be deemed presumptuous when I state that I verily believe that the militia of Kentucky are alone competent to place Montreal and Upper Canada at your feet."

On the 6th of March 1812, Calhoun expressed equal confidence. "So far from being unprepared, Sir," he exclaimed, "I believe that four weeks from the time the declaration of war is heard on our frontier, the whole of Upper Canada and a part of Lower Canada will be in our possession."

Jefferson wrote about the same time that, "The acquisition of Canada this year, as far as the neighborhood of Quebec, would be a mere matter of marching and would give us experience for the attack of Halifax, the next, and the final expulsion of England from the American continent."

Mr. "Eustis, the Secretary of War, was, if possible, still more optimistic, "We can take Canada without soldiers," he declared, "we have only to send officers into the province and the people disaffected to their own Government will rally round our standard." General William Widgery, a representative in Congress from Massachusetts, gained momentary notoriety by his statement: "I will engage to take Canada by contract. I will raise a company and take it in six weeks." Another speaker declared that "Niagara Falls could be resisted with as much success as the American people when roused into action." After the declaration of war had been promulgated, Clay, the speaker of the House of Representatives, and the real leader of the war party, solemnly declared that he would never consent to any treaty of peace "which did not provide for the cession of Canada.

The correspondence of General Brock with the Governor General shows that in many respects these expectations were well founded, and that he was far from being hopeful of offering a successful defence without strong reinforcements.

"The late increase of ammunition and every species of stores," he wrote on the 2nd December, 1811, "the substitution of a strong regiment and the appointment of a military person to the Government have tended to infuse other sentiments among the most reflecting part of the community, and during my visit to Niagara last week I received most satisfactory professions of a determination on the part of the principal inhabitants to exert every means in their power for the defence of their property and to support the government. They look with confidence to you for aid. Although perfectly aware of the number of improper characters who have obtained possessions and whose principles diffuse a spirit of insubordination very adverse to all military institutions, I believe the majority will prove faithful. It is best to act with the utmost liberality and as if no mistrust existed. Unless the inhabitants give a faithful aid it will be utterly impossible to preserve the province, with the limited number of military."