

**Thomas Jefferson to George Washington, June 5, 1791,
with Copy, Partly Illegible, from the Works of Thomas
Jefferson in Twelve Volumes. Federal Edition. Collected
and Edited by Paul Leicester Ford.**

TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES D. S. MSS.

Bennington June 5. 1791.

Sir, —In my last letter from Philadelphia, I mentioned that Mr. Madison & myself were about to take a trip up the North river as far as circumstances should permit. The levelness of the roads led us quite on to Lake George, where taking boat we went through that, and about 25 miles into Lake Champlain. Returning then to Saratoga, we concluded to cross over thro' Vermont to Connecticut river and go down that instead of the North river which we had already seen, and we are so far on that rout. In the course of our journey we have had opportunities of visiting Stillwater, Saratoga, Forts Wm. Henry & George, Ticonderoga, Crown point, & the scene of Genl. Starke's victory.

I have availed myself of such opportunities as occurred to enquire into the grounds of the report that something disagreeable had taken place in the vicinities of the British posts. It seems to have been the following incident. They had held a small post at a block house on the North Hero, an island on the Vermont side of Lake Champlain, & something further South than their principal post at the Point au fer. The *Maria* hitherto stationed at the latter, for Custom-house purposes, was sent to the Block-house, & there exercised her usual visits on boats passing to & from Canada. This being an exercise of power further within our jurisdiction became the subject of notice & clamour with our citizens in that quarter. The vessel has been since recalled to the Point au fer, & being unfit for service, a new one is to be built to perform her functions. This she has usually done at the Point

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au fer with a good deal of vigour, bringing all vessels to at that place, & some times under such circumstances of wind & weather as to have occasioned the loss of two vessels & cargoes.

These circumstances produce strong sensations in that quarter, & not friendly to the character of our government. The establishment of a custom-house at Albany, nearly opposite to Point au fer, has given the British considerable alarm. A groundless story of 200 Americans seen in arms near Point au fer, has been the cause, or the pretext of their reinforcing that place a few days ago with a company of men from St. John's. It is said here they have called in their guard from the Blockhouse, but the information is not direct enough to command entire belief.

On enquiring into the dispositions in Canada on the subject of the projected form of government there, we learn that they are divided into two parties; the English who desire something like an English constitution but so modelled as to oblige the French to chuse a certain proportion of English representatives, & the French who wish a continuance of the French laws, moderated by some engraftments from the English code. The judge of their Common pleas heads the former party, & Smith the chief justice secretly guides the latter.

We encounter the green Mountains to-morrow, with cavalry in part disabled, so as to render our progress a little uncertain. I presume however I shall be in Philadelphia in a fortnight.