

lumbia] and its dependencies; and are adroitly proceeding to fortify themselves in their usurpation, by securing all the strong points of the country.

"Nor is it likely the latter [the American traders] will ever be able to maintain any footing in the land, until the question of territorial right is adjusted between the two countries. The sooner that takes place, the better. It is a question too serious to national pride, if not to national interest, to be slurred over; and every year is adding to the difficulties which environ it.

"The resources of the country \* \* in the hands of America, enjoying a direct trade with the East Indies, would be brought into quickening activity, and might soon realize the dream of Mr. Astor, in giving rise to a flourishing commercial empire."—*Rocky Mountains*, vol. 2.

The plans of Great Britain in respect to this country are shadowed forth by Sir Alexander Mackenzie as follows:

"But, whatever course may be taken from the Atlantic, the Columbia is the line of communication from the Pacific ocean pointed out by nature, as it is the only navigable river in the whole extent of Vancouver's minute survey of that coast. Its banks, also, form the first level country in all the southern extent of continental coast from Cook's entry, and, consequently, the most northern situation fit for colonization, and suitable for the residence of a civilized people. By opening this intercourse between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, and forming regular establishments through the interior, and at both extremes, as well as along the coasts and islands, the entire command of the fur trade of North America might be obtained from latitude 48 degrees north to the pole—except that portion of it which the Russians have in the Pacific. To this may be added the fishery in both seas, and the markets of the four quarters of the globe. Such would be the field for commercial enterprise; and incalculable would be the produce of it, when supported by the operations of that credit and capital which Great Britain so pre-eminently possesses."—*Travels*, vol. 2.

To which the same writer adds, that the effect of the development of those plans would be the complete exclusion of Americans from the country, and the most important political as well as commercial advantages to the United Kingdom.

The committee will have occasion to submit to the House additional information on these points, when they dispose of that part of their instructions which refers to the statistical condition and political value of the country of Oregon. It is sufficient for the immediate purpose to have demonstrated that the plan of the British to put an end to American enterprise in the valley of the Columbia has succeeded.

Still, this object has been accomplished under the shelter of a convention, which provides that the country of Oregon, together with its harbors, bays, and creeks, and the navigation of all rivers within the same, shall, for the time being, be free and open to the vessels, citizens, and subjects of the two powers; and which thus professes to give equal present advantages to the people of each nation, and to prejudge the ultimate rights of neither. But the practical effect of the convention is the reverse, in that nearly all the present advantages are enjoyed by England, and the ultimate rights of the United States are seriously endangered.

This arises from the peculiar organization of the Hudson's Bay Company, which now in fact rules over the whole country, and has exclusive possession of its trade—just as completely as the East India Company in Hindostan at the period of its early conquests there, when it was a close corporation, and independent of the control of the King's ministers. Individual traders, and ordinary commercial companies, cannot stand against it. They cannot compete in resources with this great empire-corporation. Besides which, a powerful incorporated company like this, having exclusive privileges of trade by charter, and those privileges conveying *territory* as appurtenant to trade—a monster and an anomaly in its nature as it is,—such a company is in itself, to all intents and purposes, a territorial government. It has all the civil and all the military machinery of government. Nay, more. The acts of Parliament already referred to give to the courts of