

R E P O R T.

THE SELECT COMMITTEE appointed to consider the State of those BRITISH POSSESSIONS in *North America* which are under the Administration of the HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY, or over which they possess a License to Trade, and who were empowered to Report their Observations, together with the MINUTES of EVIDENCE taken before them, to The House :—HAVE considered the Matters to them referred, and have agreed to the following REPORT :—

1. THE near approach of the period when the license of exclusive trade, granted in 1838 for 21 years, to the Hudson's Bay Company over that north-western portion of British America which goes by the name of the Indian Territory, must expire, would alone make it necessary that the condition of the whole of the vast regions which are under the administration of the Company should be carefully considered ; but there are other circumstances which, in the opinion of Your Committee, would have rendered such a course the duty of the Parliament and Government of this country.

2. Among these, Your Committee would specially enumerate,—the growing desire of our Canadian fellow-subjects that the means of extension and regular settlement should be afforded to them over a portion of this territory ; the necessity of providing suitably for the administration of the affairs of Vancouver's Island, and the present condition of the settlement which has been formed on the Red River.

3. Your Committee have received much valuable evidence on these and other subjects connected with the inquiry which has been entrusted to them, and especially have had the advantage of hearing the statements of Chief Justice Draper, who was commissioned by the Government of Canada to watch this inquiry. In addition to this, Your Committee have received the evidence taken before a Committee of the Legislative Assembly, appointed to investigate this subject, containing much valuable information in reference to the interests and feelings of that important Colony, which are entitled to the greatest weight on this occasion.

4. Your Committee have also had the opinion of the law officers of the Crown communicated to them on various points connected with the charter of the Hudson's Bay Company.

5. The territory over which the Company now exercise rights is of three descriptions :—

- 1st. The land held by charter, or Rupert's Land.
- 2d. The land held by license, or the Indian Territory.
- 3d. Vancouver's Island.

6. For the nature of the tenure by which these countries are severally connected with the Company, Your Committee would refer to the evidence they have received and the documents appended to their Report.

7. Among the various objects of imperial policy which it is important to attain, Your Committee consider that it is essential to meet the just and reasonable wishes of Canada to be enabled to annex to her territory such portion of the land in her neighbourhood as may be available to her for the purposes