

dence on the subject has been obtained solely from the papers concerning the disputes between the rival North-West Companies, and it is, therefore, necessary to give an abstract of the documents relating to their respective claims.

It has already been stated, that in 1798 the partners of the North-West Company disagreed, and a second company was formed. In 1799 the original North-West Company applied for a grant of land at the Sault Ste. Marie for a trading post, an application opposed by Messrs. Phyn Inglis & Co., the London agents for the X. Y. Company. The Duke of Portland, writing on the 13th March, 1800, to Lieut.-General Hunter, agreed with Messrs. Phyn, Inglis & Co., that the possession by the North-West Company of a tract of land on the Falls of the Strait of St. Mary would be highly injurious to others engaged in that (the fur) trade. His Grace adds: "I am strongly inclined to be of opinion that it must be very much for the benefit of the fur trade, that about four or five leagues, or perhaps the whole of the strait in question, should be forever retained in the hands of the Crown" (C. 363, pp. 4 to 6). In 1802, the disputes between the two companies were increasing in virulence. Messrs. McTavish, Frobisher & Co., on behalf of the North-West Company, applied in April of that year for the sole use of their improvements on the north side of the Sault Ste. Marie, "without giving sanction to a monopoly that might improperly affect the interests of others" (C. 363, p. 10). A quotation from their memorial will show what these improvements were. After setting out the efforts they had made to render the Indian trade free and independent of the American Government, by exploring and opening communications with the interior country through British territory, Messrs. McTavish, Frobisher & Co. continue:

"That in furtherance of the same view and contemplating the advantages of a free and unobstructed passage between the Lakes Huron and Superior, your memorialists, in the year 1797, caused a proper survey to be made on the British side of the Falls of St. Mary; the sixth part of the expense of which, amounting to about forty-five pounds, was defrayed by the house of Messrs. Forsyth, Richardson & Co.

"That in consequence of the report made of the said survey, your memorialists have since that period, actually cut a road forty-five feet wide across the carrying place, and opened a canal, upwards of three thousand feet in length, with a lock which raises the water nine feet, and have also erected thereon a saw-mill, storehouses and other necessary buildings for facilitating the navigation of said canal" (C. 363, pp. 8, 9).

They then give an account of the efforts they had made further to secure communication, by purchasing land from the Indians; by improvements at Kaministiquia, &c.; the great cost of the canal, increased by annual interest, and the charges for maintenance, salaries, &c., as the canal yielded no revenue but was merely intended for facilitating the transport between the lakes, &c., entitle them, they believe, to the sole use of all their improvements, but they represent further:

"That if Your Excellency should order the navigation of the aforesaid canal at the Falls of Saint Mary to be laid open, Your Excellency will be pleased to take