

JOURNAL OF A VOYAGE THROUGH THE

others, what reasonable cause can they assign to government for denying the navigation of the bay to Nelson's River; and, by its waters, a passage to and from the interior country, for the use of the adventurers, and for the sole purpose of transport, under the most severe and binding restrictions not to interfere with their trade on the coast, and the country between it and the actual establishments of the Canadian traders*.

By these waters that discharge themselves into Hudson's Bay at Port Nelson, it is proposed to carry on the trade to their source, at the head of the Saskatchewan River, which rises in the Rocky Mountains, not eight degrees of longitude from the Pacific Ocean. The Tacoutche or Columbia river flows also from the same mountains, and discharges itself likewise in the Pacific, in latitude 46. 20. Both of them are capable of receiving ships at their mouths, and are navigable throughout for boats.

The distance between these waters is only known from the report of the Indians. If, however, this communication should prove inaccessible, the route I pursued, though longer, in consequence of the great

* Independent of the prosecution of this great object, I conceive that the merchants from Canada are entitled to such an indulgence, (even if they should be considered as not possessing a rightful claim,) in order that they might be enabled to extend their trade beyond their present limits, and have it in their power to supply the natives with a larger quantity of useful articles; the enhanced value of which, and the present difficulty of transporting them, will be fully comprehended when I relate, that the tract of transport occupies an extent of from three to four thousand miles, through upwards of sixty large lakes, and numerous rivers; and that the means of transport are slight bark canoes. It must also be observed, that those waters are intercepted by more than two hundred rapids, along which the articles of merchandise are chiefly carried on men's backs, and over an hundred and thirty carrying-places, from twenty-five paces to thirteen miles in length, where the canoes and cargoes proceed by the same toilsome and perilous operations.