

REPORT

Of the Committee, to whom was referred a resolution of the House of Representatives of the 19th of December last, directing an inquiry into the situation of the settlements on the Pacific Ocean, and the expediency of occupying the Columbia River; accompanied with a bill to authorize the occupation of the Columbia River, &c.

JANUARY 25, 1821.

Read, and, with the bill, committed to a committee of the whole House to-morrow.

The Committee to whom was referred the resolution of the 19th of December, 1820, to inquire into the situation of the settlements upon the Pacific Ocean, and the expediency of occupying the Columbia River,

REPORT:

That they have carefully examined the subject referred to them, and, from every consideration which they have been able to bestow upon it, believe, from the usage of all nations, previous and subsequent to the discovery of America, the title of the United States to a very large portion of the coast of the Pacific Ocean to be well founded; nor have they been able to ascertain that any other government than Spain has made claim to any part of it, from Cape Horn to the sixtieth degree of North latitude.

When this continent was first made known to Europe, by the bold and enterprising genius of Christopher Columbus, it seemed for a long time conceded that the Spanish monarchy, which alone could be prevailed upon to listen to his plans and propositions, was most entitled to the benefits resulting from the successful issue of his undertaking. Though Ferdinand and Isabella, who, at that time, filled the throne of that country, did not rest their title upon the tacit consent of other nations, or even upon their armies or fleet, which was, at that period, formidable and well provided; but, instructed by the example of the Portuguese, who had obtained a grant for all countries east of the Azores, from pole to pole, they obtained a similar grant from the Roman Pontiff, of all the territories they wished to occupy west of the same point, as the superstition of the times conferred on him a