

the coast, where, in time past, she had been, in common with the ships of some European powers, enjoying the friendship and confidence of the natives. This confidence had, by some means, been destroyed, and, whilst they induced many of the ship's company to go on shore, many of their own number went on board the ship, and suddenly attacking the crew, the whole were destroyed, as well as the vessel. This, though a great affliction to the survivors on the Columbia, did not dishearten them, as other vessels were expected soon to arrive, and, with these expectations, they continued their trade, which, becoming profitable, they were less inclined to abandon. But the operations of the war of 1812, which took place between the United States and Great Britain was destined to mar their prosperity. That government, it appears, dispatched a vessel of war, called the *Raccoon*, to destroy or possess Astoria, which, by the assistance of the Indians influenced by the North West and Hudson's Bay companies of fur traders, they were easily enabled to do; and have, from that period to the present time, continued to reside at it, as well as on the river above, though a messenger, or agent, was sent by the authority of the United States to receive, and did receive, that post from them, at the close of the late war.

From every reflection which the Committee have been able to bestow upon the facts connected with this subject, they are inclined to believe the Columbia, in a commercial point of view, a position of the utmost importance; the fisheries on that coast, its open sea, and its position in regard to China, which offers the best market for the vast quantities of furs taken in those regions, our increasing trade throughout that ocean, seems to demand immediate attention.

The fur of every country which has produced it has been ever esteemed one of its most valuable commodities, and has long held a rank among the most profitable articles of commerce; it was much sought for even in the days of Tatila, a Visigoth, who reigned in Italy about the year 522, at which time they drew their supplies from the Suethons, who inhabited that part of Europe called Sweden. The Welch set a high value on them as early as the time of Howel Dda, in 940, and, from its being first an article of dress, used only by the poorer class of the community, it, by gradually extending itself, came to be one of luxury, of the highest value, in which kings and princes vied with each other in their costly magnificence and display; their clothes were not only fashioned of them, but even their tents were lined with the finest varieties. Such was the display of the great Cham of Tartary, when he was visited in his tent by Morco Polo, about the year 1252. It had become so much in use, and so high in price, that Edward the 3d, in the year 1337, deemed it expedient to prohibit its use to any but those who could afford to spend an hundred pounds a year, without detriment to their property. At that day, having exhausted those parts of Europe which had supplied them, the price increasing with a growing demand, they were obliged to seek them elsewhere, and procured their supplies from the north of Asia. This, for a long time, poured into the adjoining parts of Europe immense sums, as it was in that direction