

River to their establishment, which is within ninety miles of the Missouri river, at a point called the Mandan villages. This river takes its rise in the Rocky mountains in about the forty-third degree of latitude; and observes a course north and north-east towards Hudson's Bay until it arrives at the Mandan villages, a distance of nearly 1200 miles, when it turns short to the south, without any apparent cause, and joins the Mississippi; the water running to the Hudson's Bay at that point, approaching within one mile, and no hill or high ground to separate them, of any magnitude. Yet, notwithstanding the many advantages which the Hudson's Bay Company possessed over the North West Company, the earl of Selkirk, the patron of the former, and a man of uncommon enterprise, was exceedingly desirous to obtain the privilege of supplying his establishments upon the Red River by ascending the Mississippi to the St. Peters, thence to its source in Stone Lake, then, by a short portage, through open woods and a level country, to his stations; or, taking the route by the Missouri to the Mandan villages, thence, by a portage of ninety miles, to his place of destination. The exports of this company, for a short time past, have been very little less than that of the North West Company.

The committee, from carefully examining all the facts connected with the subject referred to them, are well persuaded that the situation of the United States is such as to enable it to possess all the benefits derived from this trade, which, in the hands of others, amount to millions; many of whose trading establishments east of the Rocky mountains are within the acknowledged limits of the republic, as fixed by the convention of London of the 20th of October, 1818; and, it is believed, that no power, with the exception of Spain, has any just claim to territory west of them, or on the Pacific. The dependence for subsistence of many of those establishments, is upon the buffalo beef hunted by the Assiniboin Indians, who inhabit the country between the river of that name and the Missouri; their hunting ground is far within our boundary. To succeed in procuring to the people of the United States all the wealth flowing from this source, it is only necessary to occupy with a small trading guard the most north-eastern point upon the Missouri river, and confine the foreigners to their own territory, at the same time occupying, with a similar guard, the mouth of Columbia. The great profit derived from this trade by the Canadian companies, when we know the distance and obstructions in their rivers, and in the various streams they ascend in carrying it on, the advance of price consequent upon it becomes rather a matter of amazement than otherwise, and inclines us to examine our own rivers with a view to the same object. Instead, however, of those formidable obstructions, we find a smooth and deep river running through a boundless extent of the most fertile soil on this continent, containing within its limits all those valuable furs which have greatly enriched others; a certain, safe, and easy navigation, with a portage of only two hundred miles, uniting it with another river equally smooth, deep, and certain, running to the great Western