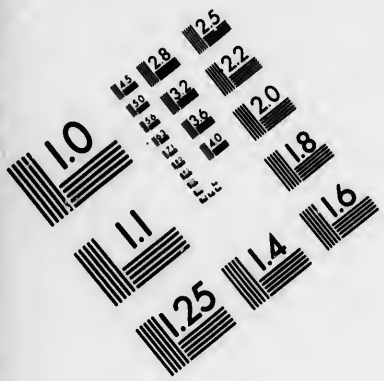

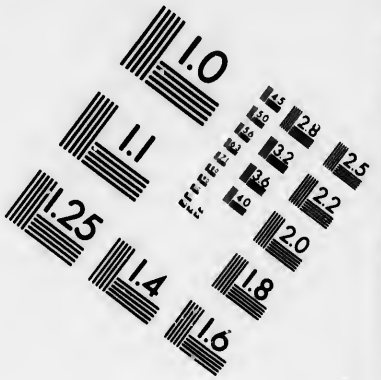

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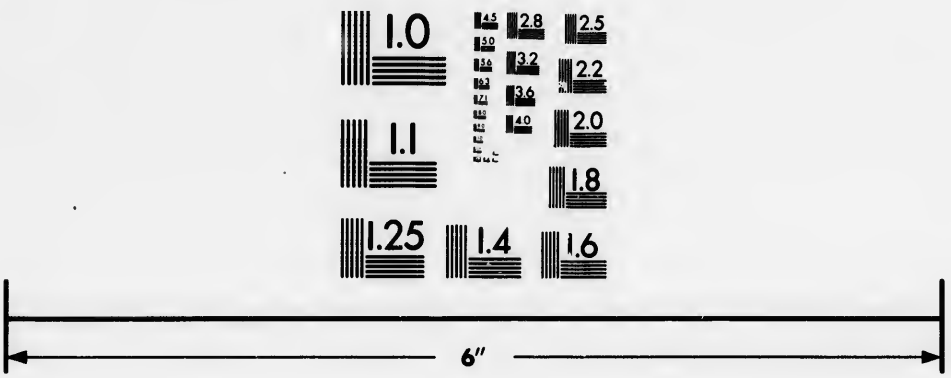

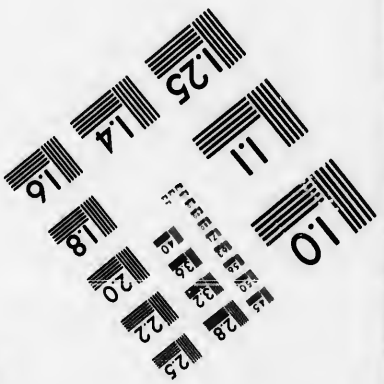

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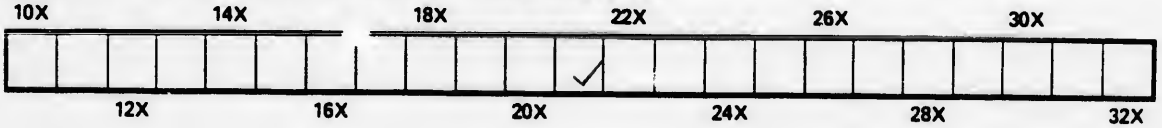

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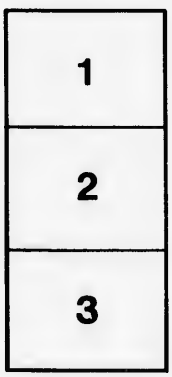

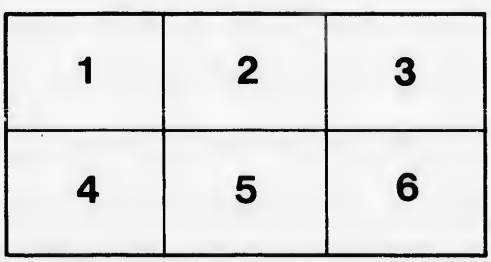

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Francis Baylies' Final Account

19th CONGRESS, 1st SESSION. [Rep. No. 35.] Ho. OF REPS.

c447

EXPLORATION OF THE NORTHWEST COAST.

Shethen
V.S. # 338

JANUARY 16, 1826.

Mr. BAYLIES, from the Select Committee to which the subject was referred, made the following

REPORT:

The Committee to whom "so much of the message of the President of the United States as respects the establishment of a Military Post at the mouth of the Columbia River, and the expediency of providing for the more perfect exploring of the Northwest Coast of America" was referred, Report:

That they have examined the subject referred to them by the above resolution, with the attention due to its intrinsic importance, as well as to the recommendation of the President of the United States, and have, as they trust, impartially estimated the advantages and disadvantages of the domain of the United States on the Pacific Ocean, particularly as to its climate, soil, trade, hunting, fishing, capability of defence, interior resources, &c.

In this examination they did not confine themselves to the region of the Columbia River, but (as far as they had the means) they extended it to the territory which is bounded on the North by De Fuca's Strait, whose waters approach that river within the distance of a few miles; and as the resolution (without defining the limits of the voyage) proposes an exploration of the Northwest Coast, as well as the establishment of a post, they concluded that it would violate no rule of propriety or of correct parliamentary proceeding, to include this country within the sphere of their examination, particularly as the expediency of a military establishment must be ascertained, from an investigation, not of partial, but of general advantages. Their first inquiries were directed to the climate: for they would not favor any project which would expose their adventurous countrymen to the dangers or fatality of one which was unhealthy or pestilential. The result of their inquiries on this subject is highly satisfactory. Cook, Dixon, Portlock, Vancouver, and Kotzebue, all represent the climate of the Northwestern Coast of America as exceedingly mild, pleasant, and salubrious. Even to the Northward of Cape Prince of Wales, lat. 71, Kotzebue says that, on the 30th of July, "a long tract of low land was covered with luxu-
"riant verdure, and apparently well inhabited." He speaks also of the

very great difference between the Asiatic and American Coasts, a difference altogether in favor of the latter.

Portlock, speaking of the climate at Cook's River, lat. 61, (August 9,) says: "During the late stormy weather the air had been mild and "temperate, and I am inclined to think the climate here is not so se- "vere as has been generally supposed." The hills were clothed with pines and shrubs, and the landscape beautiful and picturesque. Dixon, who accompanied Portlock, complains of the cold and damp of the climate, but says: "In the early part of August it had become very mo- "derate."

Of Prince William's Sound, lat. 60, Portlock says: "The country, "after the snow leaves it, which is about the middle of June, is plea- "sant enough; the weather, long before that period, at times, is very "fine and pleasant, and at other times exceedingly boisterous, with "constant rain, which washes the snow away, and soon leaves the lower "parts clear, and you immediately perceive vegetables coming forth." Dixon says that, on the 29th of August, he found the weather moderate.

At Port Mulgrave, lat. 59, in May, he found the climate "tolerably "mild, the mean of the thermometer being 46."

In June, at Norfolk Sound 57° 3′, the mean of the thermometer was 48; winds light; "shores abounding in wild fruit."

At Port Banks he says the appearance of the country in the same months, was "truly pleasing and delightful, and the weather very "fine;" mean of the thermometer 50.

At Queen Charlotte's Islands, between 54° 24′ and 51° 42′, in August, the weather was generally mild and temperate; mean of the thermometer 54.

Cook, speaking of the climate of Nootka, 49° 30′, as he experienced it, from March 29 to April 26, says, "the weather nearly corresponded "with that which we had experienced when we were off the coast. "We had fine clear weather if the wind was between North and West; "but if more to the Southward, hazy, accompanied with rain. The "climate appears to be infinitely milder than that on the coast of Ame- "rica, under the same parallels of latitude. We perceived no frost in "any of the low grounds, but, on the contrary, vegetation proceeded "briskly, for we saw grass at this time upwards of a foot long."

On the Atlantic coast, in the same parallels of latitude, the inclemency of the climate is proverbial; and, although the daring enterprise of *Parry*, stimulated by the love of science and the hope of renown, has induced him to explore that country, yet it is a region of icebergs, famine, and eternal frost, a place of horrid sterility and utter desolation.

The Pacific Ocean, through a space of seventy-six degrees of latitude, equally extended on both sides of the equator, is seldom disturbed by storms, and, throughout this wide extent, the summer seems perpetual. The voyage of Captain *Bligh*, of the *Bounty*, from the Society Islands to Timor, in the East Indies, a distance of five thousand miles, in an open boat, furnishes strong evidence that the tranquillity of this noble Ocean is uninterrupted.

The committee, after being satisfied of the general character of the climate, directed their attention more particularly to that part of it which is claimed by the United States.

On the 25th of February, Capt. Cook, in his voyage from the Sandwich Islands to the Northwestern Coast, had reached lat. 42° 30′ and long. 219. On the 1st of March (says he) "we had a calm day, which "was succeeded by a wind from the North, with which we stood to the "East, intending to make land. We ought to have been near it ac- "cording to the charts. Such moderate and mild weather appeared "to us very extraordinary whenwe were so far North, and so near an "extensive continent, at this time of year."

Mr. Prevost, the agent of the United States, whose attention was particularly directed to this subject by the Government, in a communication made by him to them, and communicated, by message, from the President to the House of Representatives, (April 17, 1822,) says: "It has been observed by those exploring this coast, that the climate "to the Southward of 53 assumes a mildness unknown in the same "latitude on the Eastern side of the continent. Without digressing to "speculate upon the cause, I will merely state that such is particularly "the fact in 46° 16′, the site of Fort George. The mercury, dur- "ing the Winter, seldom descends below the freezing point; when it "does so, it is rarely stationary for any number of days, and the se- "verity of the season is more determined by the quantity of water than "by its congelation. The rains usually commence with November, "and continue to fall partially until the latter end of March or the be- "ginning of April. A benign Spring succeeds, and when the Summer "heats obtain, they are so tempered with showers as seldom to sus- "pend vegetation. I found it luxuriant on my arrival, (October 1, "1818,) and, during a fortnight's stay, experienced no change of wea- "ther to retard its course."

Lewis and Clarke, who remained here from November, 1805, to the succeeding Spring, complain, it is true, of the frequent rains, but it must be recollected, that they experienced no sickness during that worst period of the year. The humidity of the coast, may be attributed to physical causes, operating upon a small part of this great Territory. The vapours of the ocean, falling upon the high and mountainous lands, which form the coast, are arrested in their progress, and descend in copious rains, but the same causes produce in the interior a climate of uncommon mildness—the coast being like an immense wall, protecting the rich valleys within, from the rude blasts of the ocean. Between this mountainous ridge, along the coast, and the chain of mountains which cross the Oregon, at the lowest falls, lies the rich valley of the Columbia. Beyond, and between this chain and the Rocky Mountains, the country, for several hundred miles in length, and about fifty wide, is described by Lewis and Clarke, as a high level plain, in all its parts extremely fertile. "Nearly the whole of this "wide spread tract (say they) is covered with a profusion of grass and "plants, which were at this time (May 16) as high as the knee.— "Amongst them, are a variety of esculent plants and roots, acquired

"without much difficulty, and yielding, not only a nutritious, but a ve-
"ry agreeable food. The air is pure and dry, the climate quite as
"mild, if not milder than the same parallels of latitude in the Atlantic
"States, and must be equally healthy. In short, this district affords
"many advantages to settlers, and if properly cultivated, would yield
"every object necessary for the subsistence and comfort of civilized
"man." It must be remembered that this description is applied to a high and mountainous plain, elevated several thousand feet above the level of the ocean, where a very great degree of cold might have been expected, even in latitudes near the tropics.

To return to the country between the lowest falls on the Columbia and the ocean. As the committee have thought it extremely probable, that the first establishment of the United States, (if made at all) would be made in this region, they have deemed it expedient to collect some information (which they have gathered principally from the travels of Lewis and Clarke) of the country which extends from the point where the tide water is terminated, at the foot of the first rapids, to the ocean, a distance of one hundred and seventy-eight miles. Directly below the falls, is an island of a mile in width, and extending down the river three miles; "the situation high and open, the land rich, and at this
"time (November 2) covered with grass, and a great number of straw-
"berry vines. To this island, succeeded three small islands, covered
"with wood." At a place where the mountains receded from the river, distant twenty-nine miles from the termination of the rapids, they rested. Here the river was two and a half miles wide, "the low
"grounds were extensive, and well supplied with wood." There they saw great numbers of water-fowl, such as swans, geese, ducks, of various species, gulls, plover, and the white and gray brant. At the distance of six miles, they reached Quicksand river; here there was another island, three and a half miles in length, and a mile and a half in width; immediately below which, there was another island, which they called Diamond island. "Below Quicksand river, the
"country is low, rich, and thickly wooded on each side the Columbia."
The islands have less timber, but are furnished with a number of ponds,
"near which, are vast quantities of water fowls." The river was wide, and many sea otters were sporting in its waters. Diamond island is six miles long and three broad, directly below which, are two other islands, thickly covered with wood. At this place they were treated with a root, similar to the Irish potato, called Wappatoo:
"roasted until it becomes soft, it has an agreeable taste, and is a ve-
"ry good substitute for bread." Seven miles further, they came to another large island. "On the right shore, is a fine open prairie, for
"about a mile, back of which, the country rises, and is supplied with
"timber, such as white oak, pine, of different kinds," &c. This island is nine miles in length, near it, are two smaller islands. Nine miles further, "the grounds along the river continue low and rich;
"on the right, the low grounds are terminated at the distance of five
"miles, by a range of high hills, covered with tall timber." The game, as usual, very abundant. Eight miles below, they reached ano-

ther island, which was "open, with an abundant growth of grass, "with a number of ponds," filled with wild fowl. On this island, they saw many deer. Near this island, were two or three smaller ones. Seven miles below, they found the river a mile and a half in width, and the water deep. "Here the ridge of low mountains, run- "ning Northwest and Southeast, cross the river, and form the West- "ern boundary of the plain, through which we have just passed. This "great plain, or valley, begins above the mouth of Quicksand river, "and is about sixty miles wide, in a straight line, while on the right "and left, it extends to a great distance. It is a fertile and delight- "ful country, shaded by thick groves of tall timber, watered by small "ponds, and running on both sides of the river. The soil is rich, and "capable of any species of culture, but in the present condition of the "Indians, its chief production is the wappatoo root, which grows spon- "taneously, and exclusively, in this region. Sheltered as it is, on "both sides, the temperature is much milder than that of the sur- "rounding country; for, even at this season of the year, (November "5) we observed very little appearance of frost."

It is well known, that these adventurous travellers continued their voyage to the mouth of the river, discovering in their progress many other islands. The country, as they advanced towards the ocean, became more mountainous, but wherever the mountains receded from the river, the level country was fertile and beautiful.

Captain Clarke explored about thirty miles of coast, South of the mouth of the river; he gives the following description of a view from the top of a mountain, on the summit of which was an open spot, facing the ocean. "projecting nearly two miles and a-half into the sea. Here "(says he) one of the most delightful views in nature presents itself. "Immediately in front is the ocean, which breaks with fury on the "coast, from the rocks of Cape Disappointment, as far as the eye can "discern to the Northwest, and against the highlands and irregular "piles of rocks, which diversify the shore to the Southeast. To this "boisterous scene, the Columbia, with its tributary waters, widening "into bays as it approaches the ocean, and studded on both sides with "the Chinnook and Clatsop villages, forms a charming contrast: "while immediately beneath our feet, are stretched the rich prairies, "enlivened by three beautiful streams, which conduct the eye to small "lakes at the foot of the hills."

Vancouver describes the appearance of the coast, lat. 46° 14′ with animation and elegance. "The country now before us, (says he) pre- "sented a most luxuriant landscape, and was probably not a little "heightened in beauty by the weather that prevailed. (April 27.) The "more interior parts were somewhat elevated, and agreeably diversi- "fied with hills, from which it gradually descended to the shore, and "terminated in a sandy beach. The whole had the appearance of a "continued forest, extending as far North as the eye could reach, which "made me very solicitous to find a port, in the vicinity of a country "presenting so delightful a prospect of fertility;" which, after attempt- ing in vain, regretting his disappointment, he "resumed his route "along the shores of this pleasant country."

Broughton, the Lieutenant of Vancouver, who effected a partial survey of the mouth of the river, (October 23, 1792,) speaking of the country, about a river which he distinguished by the name of Sir George Young, says, "The night was windy, and it rained without "ceasing until daylight the next morning, which was very pleasant, "and greatly enriched the prospect of the beautiful surrounding coun- "try. From the banks of the river, a low meadow, interspersed with "scattered trees and shrubs, extended to the more elevated land. This "was of easy ascent, and was agreeably variegated with clumps and "copses of pine, maple, alder, birch, poplar, and several other trees, "besides a considerable number of shrubs, greatly diversifying the "landscape by the several tints of their autumnal foliage. The marshy "edges of the river afforded shelter to wild geese, which flew about in "very large flocks, and ducks were in abundance." Mr. Broughton ascended the river for the distance, according to his estimate, of eighty-four miles from its entrance, and found a beautiful and magnificent country, particularly upon the smaller rivers, which discharge themselves into the great bay, usually denominated the mouth of the Columbia.

Lieutenant Broughton concludes his account, with a general view of the soil and productions of the country, both animal and vegetable. "With respect, (he says) to its natural productions, and other inte- "resting matter, the weather experienced on board the vessel, having "uniformly been similar to that afterwards encountered at sea, pre- "cluded any competent knowledge being acquired. The trees princi- "pally composing the forest, were pines of different kinds, growing "to a large size, but were unequal to those of Nootka. Near the "water side were found maple, alder, and ash; at some distance up "the river, beside these, the oak, poplar, and oriental strawberry tree "were produced, with many other forest trees, unknown to the gen- "tlemen who made a short excursion into the country, and who were "only able to judge of the indigenous quadrupeds or animals, by the "skins the natives wore or brought to barter; these were similar to "those found on other parts of the coast. The birds that were pro- "cured, were large brown cranes, white swans, white and brown "geese, ducks, partridges, and snipes, a variety of others were seen, "that could not be taken. All that were brought on board, excepting "the brown cranes, proved excellent at table. The river seemed to "abound with fish, from the supply the natives provided, consisting "of two sorts of salmon, both very good; sturgeon of large size and "very fine flavor, with silver bream, herrings, flat fish, and soiedi- "nias; of these four last sorts some were caught in the seine. The "skirts of the woods afforded a most excellent green vegetable, re- "sembling in appearance and taste, the turnip top when young. A "bulbous root about the size, and not unlike the crocus, that ate much "like mealy potato, wild mint, ground ivy, and wild lavender, all "these the natives make great use of, together with berries of various "kinds, particularly the cranberry, of a most excellent flavour, and "the first we had seen on this coast." "The soil of the low ground, was

"mostly a stiff rich clay, capable, to all appearance, of being made "very productive; that on the high land amongst the pine trees, a "black mould, seemingly composed of decayed vegetables."

The Chairman of the Committee has been favored with a communication from Major Alexander S. Brooks, a gallant and intelligent officer, now in the artillery service of the United States, who in early life made several voyages to this coast. Speaking of the climate at the mouth of the Columbia, he says, it is "good. The growth, fir and its "varieties; no hardwood, except you so call alder. We found among "the drift wood, beech, bass, &c. (very rarely) maple." Again, "with "regard to soil, I should think it better than generally represented. "The natives procure a root, which they call Wappatoo, about the size "of a wallnut, and when baked, a very tolerable substitute for potato." "The shores of the river abound with game, as moose, deer, bear, &c. "and its waters with fish—salmon, sturgeon, &c."

Mr. Prevost, in his letter to the Secretary of State, says, "The soil "is good; all the cereal gramina and tuberous plants, may be cultiva- "ted with advantage; and the waters abound in salmon, sturgeon, and "other varieties of fish."

"The ocean teems with otter, the seal, and the whale; while the "main land affords, in innumerable quantities, the common otter, the "bear, the buffalo, and the whole variety of deer."

The Committee have collected some facts, respecting the soil and appearance of this coast north of the Oregon or Columbia river. Vancouver, after passing the mouth of this river, as before related, spoke Captain Gray of Boston, then on the Coast, and who, while commanding the Washington in 1789, had re-discovered the lost strait of De Fuca, which he explored for fifty miles. After receiving from Gray information of its position, he continued his course North, and entered it in lat. 48° 37′, (according to Gray's reckoning, which Vancouver supposes too far North,) and places in 48° 23½′; having passed Tatooche's Island, connected with the promontory of Cape Classet, (the Cape Flattery of Cook,) by a ledge of rocks.

This island he describes as "half a league in circuit, bearing a verdant and fertile appearance, without trees." He continued his course up this celebrated strait on its South side. "The shores, (he "says) on each side the strait, are of moderate height; and the delight- "ful serenity of the weather, permitted our seeing this inlet to great ad- "vantage. The shores on the South side, are composed of low sandy "cliffs, falling perpendicularly on beaches of sand or stones. From "the top of these cliffy eminences, the land appeared to take a further "gentle moderate ascent, and was entirely covered with trees, chiefly "of the pine tribe, until the forest reached a range of high craggy "mountains, which seemed to rise from the woodland country, in a "very abrupt manner, with a few scattered trees on their sterile sides, "and their summits covered with snow." Latitude at noon, 48° 19′. He anchored at night, near a sandy point of land, which he called *New Dungeness*. "Our May day (says he) was ushered in by a morning "of most delightful pleasant weather." "We found the surface of the

"sea almost covered with aquatic birds, of various kinds. The first "opening to the S. E. appeared to be formed by two high bluffs; the "elevated land within them, seemingly at a considerable distance. It "proved, however, to be a close and compact shore, the apparent va- "cant space being occupied by a very low sandy beach, off which ex- "tended a flat, of very shallow soundings. From hence, we made the "best of our way for land, appearing like an island off the other supposed "opening; from whose summit, which appeared easy of access, there "was little doubt of our ascertaining whether the coast afforded any "port within reach of the day's excursion." Here this plain and unso- phisticated sailor, breaks forth in a strain of descriptive eloquence, which nothing but the transcendant beauty of the prospect could have inspired. "On landing (says he) on the West end of the supposed "island, and ascending its eminence, which was nearly a perpendicu- "lar cliff, our attention was immediately called to a landscape, al- "most as enchantingly beautiful as the most elegantly finished pleasure "grounds in Europe. From the height we were now upon, our con- "jectures, of this land being an island, situated before the entrance of "an opening in the main land, were confirmed. The summit of this "island presented nearly an horizontal surface, interspersed with "some inequalities of ground, which produced a beautiful variety, on an "extensive lawn covered with luxuriant grass, and diversified with an "abundance of flowers. To the Northwestward, was a copice of pine "trees, and shrubs of various sorts, that seemed as if it had been plant- "ed for the sole purpose of protecting from the N. W. winds, this de- "lightful meadow, over which, were promiscuously scattered a few "clumps of trees, that would have puzzled the most ingenious design- "er of pleasure grounds, to have arranged more agreeably. Whilst "we stopped to contemplate these several beauties of nature, in a pros- "pect no less pleasing than unexpected, we gathered some gooseberries "and roses, in a state of considerable forwardness. Casting our eyes "along the shore, we had the satisfaction of seeing it much broken, and "forming, to all appearance, many navigable inlets. The inlet now "before us, did not seem so extensive as we had reason to believe it "to be from the ships; yet, there was a little doubt of its proving suf- "ficiently secure and convenient for all our purposes. We, therefore, "proceeded to its examination, and found its entrance to be about a "league wide, having regular good soundings, from 10 fathoms close "to the shores, to 30, 35, and 38 fathoms in the middle, without any ap- "parent danger from rocks or shoals. Fresh water, however, seemed "hitherto a scarce commodity; and yet, from the general face of the "country, a deficiency, is this respect, was not to be apprehended. "The shores of the harbor were of a moderate height: its western side "bounded, at no very great distance, by a ridge of high craggy moun- "tains, covered with snow, were, as I conceive, connected with the "mountain we took for Mount Olympus. In quest of the only great "object necessary for constituting this one of the finest harbors in "the world, we prosecuted our researches, until, almost despairing of "success, I suddenly fell in with an excellent stream of very fine wa-

"ter. The design of our excursion was thus happily accomplished; "and after taking some little refreshment, we returned towards the "ships, and arrived on board about midnight, perfectly satisfied with "the success of our expedition, and amply rewarded for our labor."

"On the next day, (May 2d) a light breeze springing up, we weighed "and steered for the port we had discovered the preceding day. The de- "lightful serenity of the weather greatly aided the beautiful scenery that "was now presented; the surface of the sea was perfectly smooth, and the "country before us exhibited every thing that bounteous nature could "be expected to draw into one point of view. As we had no reason to "imagine that this country had ever been indebted for any of its de- "corations to the hand of man, I could not possibly believe, that any "uncultivated country had ever been discovered exhibiting so rich a "picture. The land which interrupted the horison, between the N. "W. and the Northern quarters, seemed, as already mentioned, to be "much broken; from whence its Eastern extent round to the S. E. "was bounded by a ridge of snowy mountains, appearing to lie nearly "in a North and South direction, on which, Mount Baker rose con- "spicuously; remarkable for its height, and the snowy mountains that "stretch from its base to the North and South. Between us and this "snowy range, the land, which on the sea-shore terminated like that "we had lately passed, in low perpendicular cliffs, or on beaches of "sand or stone, rose here in a very gentle ascent, and was well cov- "ered with a variety of stately forest trees. These, however, did "not conceal the whole face of the country in one uninterrupted wilder- "ness, but pleasingly clothed its eminences, and chequered the valleys; "presenting, in many directions, extensive spaces that wore the ap- "pearance of having been cleared by art, like the beautiful island we "had visited the day before. As we passed along the shore, near one "of these charming spots, the tracks of deer, or of some such animal, "were very numerous, and flattered us with the hope of not wanting "refreshments of that nature, whilst we remained in this quarter.

"A picture so pleasing could not fail to call to our remembrance "certain delightful and beloved situations in old England. Thus we "proceeded, without meeting any obstructions to our progress; which, "though not rapid, brought us, before noon, abreast of the stream, that "discharges its water from the Western shore, nearly five miles within "the entrance of the harbor, which I distinguished by the name of "*Port Discovery*, after the ship. There we moored in 34 fathoms, "muddy bottom, about a quarter of a mile from the shore. The en- "trance of this harbor is formed by low projecting points, extending on "each side, from the high woodland cliffs, which in general bound the "coast; bearing by compass N. 48 W. to North 54 W. in a line with "two corresponding points from the island already described, lying "off this harbor. Had this insular production of nature been de- "signed by the most able Engineer, it could not have been placed more "happily for the protection of the port, not only from the N. W. winds, "to the violence of which, it would be otherwise greatly exposed, but

"against all attempts of an enemy, when properly fortified; and hence "I called it Protection Island."

Three or four leagues from Port Discovery, the latitude of a point of land was ascertained to be 48° 7′ 30″; beyond, a large inlet presented itself. "As we advanced, the country seemed gradually to improve "in beauty. The cleared spots were more numerous, and of larger "extent; and the remote lofty mountains, covered with snow, reflected "greater lustre on the fertile productions of the less elevated coun-"try."

Vancouver concludes his account of the country in the neighborhood of Port Discovery, with several observations touching its soil and productions. "This country (says he,) may generally be considered of a "moderate height, although bounded on the West side by mountains "covered with snow, to which the land from the water's edge rises "in a pleasing diversity, by hills of gradual ascent. The snow on "these hills probably dissolves as the Summer advances, for pine trees "were produced on their very summits. On the sea-shore, the land "generally terminated in low sandy cliffs; though in some spaces of "considerable extent, it ran nearly level from high water mark. The "soil, for the most part, is a light sandy loam, in several places of very "considerable depth, and abundantly mixed with decayed vegetables. "The vigor and luxuriance of its productions proved it to be a rich fer-"tile mould, which possibly might be considerably improved by the addi-"tion of calcareous matter contained in the marrow stone, that present-"ed itself in several places. This country, regarded in an agricultu-"ral point of view, I should conceive, is capable of high improvement, "notwithstanding the soil in general may be considered to be light "and sandy. Its spontaneous productions in the vicinity of the woods, "are nearly the same, and grow in equal luxuriance with those under "a similar parallel in Europe; favoring the hope, that, if nutritious "exotics were introduced, and carefully attended to, they would suc-"ceed in the highest degree. The mildness of the climate, and the "forwardness of every species of plants, afforded strong grounds in "support of this opinion.

"The interruptions we experienced in the general serenity of the "weather, were probably no more than were absolutely requisite in "the spring of the year, to bring forward the annual productions. "These were attended with no violence of wind, and the rain which "fell, although disagreeable to travellers, was not so heavy as to beat "down and destroy the firm efforts of vegetation."

"What the low country before us, toward the range of snowy moun-"tains, may produce, remains for future investigation; but, judging "from what we had seen, it seemed more than probable, that those "natural canals of the sea, wind in various directions; and that they "are capable of affording great advantages to commercial pursuits, by "opening communications with parts of the interior country commo-"diously and delightfully situated. The great depth of water may be "offered as an insuperable objection; yet, on a more minute examina-"tion, it is likely that many eligible and convenient stopping places

"might be found, for the security of such vessels as would necessarily "be employed in those occupations."

Hitherto, Vancouver's course up the strait, had been S. W. On the 19th of May, he entered Admiralty Inlet, one branch of which has received the name of Possession Sound; his progress was retarded by the fracture of the foretopsail yard; this accident led to the examination of the other spars, several of which were ascertained to be defective. "It was a very fortunate circumstance, (says he,) that these "defects were discovered, in a country abounding with materials to "which we could resort; having only to make our choice, from amongst "thousands of the finest spars the world produces."

Speaking of the country about this inlet, he says, "to describe the "beauties of this region will, on some future occasion, be a very "grateful task to the pen of a skilful panegyrist. The serenity of "the climate, the innumerable pleasing landscapes, and the abundant "fertility that unassisted nature puts forth, require only to be enrich-"ed by the industry of man with villages, mansions, cottages, and "other buildings, to render it the most lovely country that can be "imagined; whilst the labor of the inhabitants would be amply re-"warded in the bounties which nature seems ready to bestow on cul-"tivation."

It is impossible for the Committee, within the limits which they have prescribed to themselves, to follow this excellent navigator in his adventurous course along these waters. It is sufficient to say, that he ascertained, that, in the climate, soil, productions, and face of the country which he afterwards examined to the South, there was a great similarity to that which he had already examined and described; that the Southern extremity of these waters called Puget's Sound, was in lat. 47° 3', and approached the waters of the Columbia, within the distance of 30 or 40 geographical miles, and more nearly to the waters of Whidbey's bay on the ocean, between the mouth of the Columbia and the entrance of De Fuca's strait, enclosing more than two thirds of the country, on the ocean between the river and the straits, forming a great peninsula, the advantages of which, if occupied by a civilized nation, (if the writer is to be believed,) transcend those of any other country in the world.

Vancouver proceeded Northward, and entered the Gulf of Georgia, where he found a desolate and barren country, and a rocky and iron-bound coast for some distance, beyond which the country improved, and resembled in some degree that which he had first examined; but farther North it again resumed its barren aspect. He ascertained the insularity of the land in which Nootka is situated, (and which now bears his name,) by sailing round it through the Gulf of Georgia, Johnson's Strait, and Queen Charlotte's Sound. In situation, this Island resembles Long Island, in the state of New York, being separated from the continent like that, by straits and sounds. Before his arrival at Nootka he explored Fitzhugh's Sound, further North.

Major Brooks says of De Fuca's strait, "it presents a noble en-"trance, of more than half a degree in width, which it carries about

"sixty miles, when it suddenly narrows at a place called by Van-
"couver, New Dungeness, where is a pretty little harbor, and (if I
"recollect right,) a very good site for fortification. But we must
"return to its entrance. On the right or Southernmost side, is an isl-
"and near the main land, which is the summer residence of a large
"tribe, known to me only by the name of its Chief, (Utica;) just with-
"in is good anchorage in a small cove, but the Spaniards seem to have
"chosen the Northernmost shore, where just opposite is another cove,
"which they have named Port St. Juan, and when I was there a rem-
"nant of a crucifix was to be seen, but on this side we saw no natives.
"The navigation is perfectly safe, water only too deep, shores smooth
"and bold, no rocks, and the combined navies of the world might
"traverse here in safety, and sea room; but having passed new
"Dungeness, you sail as in a smooth beautiful river, continually pass-
"ing creeks, and now and then a fresh water brook. The passage
"inclining with a large curve toward N. W. after passing Georgia
"Sound, where the navigation assumes a different character." Major Brooks, after giving some general account of the navigation round Vancouver's Island, continues, "but to return to my Egypt. Our
"inducement for cruising this strait (De Fuca's) was to find hard
"wood for repairs; the course of many a floating leaf was followed,
"until in Pitt's cove we found oakwood. The cove a large com-
"modious harbor for a fleet. The shores most beautiful, soil, (where
"the bears had turned it up in search of roots,) ready to melt in its
"own richness. Game in absolute profusion. Salmon to be had for
"knocking on the head with sticks, in the shallows of the brook where
"they ran up to spawn. Here are several large deserted villages,
"and very few natives. The climate, (September and part of Octo-
"ber,) is the mildest of that which prevails in New England."

The Committee, after investigating the character of the soil, and the nature of the productions of this country, directed their attention to its general geographical character, and particularly to its rivers and waters. Pursuing its natural features, this region may be properly distributed into four divisions.

First, the peninsula last described, comparatively of small extent, bounded on the North by De Fuca's strait; on the East and partly on the South by the Admiralty inlet, branching into Possession and Puget's Sounds and other waters, and enclosing Whidbey's Island; and partly on the South by lands watered by the Columbia, and partly by Whidbey's bay; on the West by the ocean on which it lies, for about two thirds of the distance between the Columbia and De Fuca's strait. The waters which bound this peninsula on the North and East, are of great depth, generally free of rocks, with a muddy and tenacious bottom, affording many safe anchoring places and harbors.

The next region is watered by the Columbia and its tributaries, and comprises the rich valley which bears the name of the river—bounded on the West by the mountainous lands which divide it from the ocean; on the South by the Mexican line; on the East by a chain of highlands, running parallel with the Rocky Mountains, through which the river

breaks; on the North by the possessions of Great Britain. Through the whole of this region, being one hundred and seventy-eight miles from the ocean to the foot of the rapids, the tide flows, and the greater river is navigable for small vessels. To the mouth of the Multnomah one hundred and twenty-five miles from the ocean, it is navigable for all vessels which can enter it from the ocean. It is supposed that the larger navigation may be extended to the mouth of Quicksand river, thirty-three miles further. The Multnomah, the great Southern tributary of the Columbia, which is supposed to intersect the Mexican line, is ascertained to be navigable for the distance of fourteen miles, for ships of any size, being nearly thirty feet in depth.

The third region is the elevated plain between the highlands, which bound the Columbia valley on the East, and is extended to the dividing line which separates the waters of the Columbia from those of the Missouri in the Rocky Mountains. This plain is watered in every direction by the branches of the Columbia, and is celebrated in the Travels of Lewis and Clarke, as a region peculiarly genial to horses. "The horse (they say) is confined principally to the nations inhabiting the Great Plains of Columbia, extending from lat. 40 to 50 N., "and occupying the tract of territory lying between the Rocky Mountains, and a range of mountains which pass the Columbia river "about the Great Falls. Free tribes possess them in immense numbers. They appear to be of an excellent race, lofty, elegantly formed, "active, and durable. Many of them appear like fine English coursers and resemble in fleetness and bottom the best blooded horses of "Virginia. The natives suffer them to run at large in the plains, the "grass of which affords them their only Winter subsistence; their masters taking no trouble to lay in a Winter store for them; notwithstanding, they will, unless much exercised, fatten on the dry grass afforded by the plains during the winter. Whether the horse was originally a native of this country or not, the soil and the climate appear to be "perfectly well adapted to the nature of this animal. Horses are said "to be found wild in many parts of this extensive country. An elegant horse may be purchased of the natives for a few beads or other "paltry trinkets, which, in the United States, would not cost more "than one or two dollars. The abundance and cheapness of horses, "will be extremely advantageous to those who may hereafter attempt "the fur trade to the East Indies, by the way of Columbia river, and "the Pacific ocean."

Wild sheep are also found in this region, and on the coast: Lewis and Clarke say "The sheep is found in many places, but mostly in the "timbered parts of the Rocky Mountains. They live in greater numbers on the chain of mountains, forming the commencement of the "woody country on the coast. We have seen only the skins of these "animals, which the natives dress with the wool, and the blankets "which they manufacture from the wool. The animal, from this evidence, appears to be of the size of our common sheep, of a white color. "The wool is fine on many parts of the body, but, in length, not equal "to that of our domestic sheep."

The fourth division is the mountainous line of coast along the ocean, where no inlet, harbor, bay, cove, or river, has been discovered, from the line of Mexican territories to the mouth of the Columbia. On some maps, however, the long river Monges is made to discharge itself into the ocean within the American limits, but the better maps place the mouth of this river South of the divisional line.

The partial survey made by Lieutenant Broughton, under the orders of Vancouver, of the mouth of the Columbia, has created an impression that the obstructions, which are there presented, render the access to the bay so difficult, that its occupation would not be productive of many commercial advantages; yet, in concluding his account, he speaks thus: "The entrance, as already stated, lies between breakers extending from Cape Disappointment on the North side, and those on the South side, from Point Adams, over a sort of bar, or, more properly speaking, over an extensive flat, on which was found no less depth of water than four and a half fathoms.

"From the information and experience derived by this visit, it appears to be highly advisable, that no vessel should attempt entering this port, but when the water is perfectly smooth; a passage may then be effected with safety, but ought even then to be undertaken with caution."

The agent of the United States, Mr. Prevost, in his communication to our Government, (Nov. 1818,) says, "The bay is spacious; contains several anchoring places, in a sufficient depth of water; and is, by no means, so difficult of ingress, as has been represented. Those enjoying the exclusive commerce, have, probably, cherished an impression unfavorable to its continuance, growing out of the incomplete survey of Lieutenant Broughton, made under the orders of Vancouver, in 1792. It is true that there is a bar extending across the mouth of the river, at either extremity of which, are, at times, appalling breakers; but it is equally true, that it offers, at the lowest tides, a depth of twenty-one feet of water, throughout a passage exempt from them, of nearly a league in width. The Blossom, carrying more guns than the Ontario, encountered a change of wind while in the channel; was compelled to let go the anchor; and when again weighed, to tack and beat, in order to reach the harbor, yet found a greater depth, and met with no difficulty either then, or on leaving the bay."

He then refers to a survey made by Captain Hickey, of the British Navy, "Who, (he says,) was kind enough to lend himself to the examination, and to furnish him with the result, which might be relied on for its accuracy. It is the more interesting as it shows that, with the aid of buoys, the access of vessels of almost any tonnage may be rendered secure."

Major Brooks says, "I will remark a little on your observations respecting the difficulties at the mouth of the Columbia. You seem to think that the natural difficulties at the mouth of the Columbia might be greater to an enemy, than to those accustomed to them.

"Were there any intricacies you would be right, but it is a plain bar, "and its passage is marked as plainly on the chart of an enemy, as "on that which pointed out my first entrance into the river; and "while Mount Olympus, (the mark for steering in,) rears his majestic, "snow-clad brow, you must find other impediments to small ships. "But fortify Cape Disappointment, and nothing can cross, or having "crossed, be comfortable under a well regulated fire from a point al- "most unassailable."

The committee cannot conceive that any great difficulty can present itself to skilful navigators, well acquainted with these waters, in approaching the bay through a passage three miles in width, with a depth of water, at the lowest tides, of twenty-one feet, and increased twice in twenty-four hours to thirty feet.

Imagine the worst; strangers might suffer some inconvenience, yet the interest of the United States could not be injuriously affected, if the superior knowledge of their own citizens should give them a monopoly of the navigation of those waters, while their apparent difficulties should deter others from attempting to navigate them.

If difficulties exist, they are more than counterbalanced by the advantages which they give to the occupants, in the capability of defence, inasmuch, as they can command the waters of the only avenue by which the country can be assailed. And on this subject, Mr. Prevost unites in opinion with Major Brooks, that the passage can be completely defended. He says, after recounting the advantages of the bay, "in addition to this, it is susceptible of entire defence, because a ship, "after passing the bar, in order to avoid the breaking of the sea on "one of the banks, is obliged to bear up directly for the knoll forming "the cape; at all times to approach within a short distance of its base; "and, most frequently, there to anchor. Thus, a small battery, erect- "ed on this point, in conjunction with the surges on the opposite side, "would so endanger the approach, as to deter an enemy, however "hardy, from the attempt."

The Northern part of this region, on De Fuca's Strait, and its waters, is susceptible of defence at certain points. Major Brooks says, that the harbor at New Dungeness may be defended. Vancouver says, that a fortification on an island facing the harbor of Port Discovery, would completely protect that port "against all the attempts of an en- "emy:" for which reason, he called it Protection Island.

The committee having satisfied themselves that this country might be protected against all exterior enemies, at a small expense, proceeded to the consideration of the dangers to which a civilized race might be exposed, from the savages who hunt upon its lands, and fish in its waters.

The country on De Fuca's Strait, at the time Vancouver explored it, in 1792, was nearly depopulated, in consequence of the ravages of the small pox, which horrible disorder had been communicated to them by the Spaniards, and which (according to Vancouver) had left its loathsome marks upon those who escaped its fatality. Major Brooks,

who visited this country later, (believed to be between 1801 and 1808, found many deserted villages, and few inhabitants. It is therefore altogether probable, that but little danger is to be apprehended from their hostility, and in the Peninsula, that a very small force would be sufficient to overawe the whole.

The tribes further North are ferocious, warlike, and treacherous, exhibiting one of the horrible anomalies in human nature, the desire to feast upon human flesh. The squeamish moralist may affect to grieve, if, by any chance, by contact with the whites, or otherwise, any danger of their extermination should arise; yet, he who properly apprehends the excellence of his own nature, would no more reluct at the destruction of such wretches, than he would at that of the beasts who prowl in the forest for prey.

Fortunately, however, the natives of Columbia river are harmless, stupid, imbecile, good tempered, and unsuspecting. In 1806, their numbers, from the Great Falls, including those about the Falls, and from there to the ocean, were estimated, by Lewis and Clarke, at 13,000. Indian population rarely increases, generally decreases. If, of this number, 7,000 are allowed for females—and this estimate is certainly not too large: for polygamy is practiced amongst them, and in Indian warfare, females are seldom put to death—and if, of the remaining 6,000, one half be counted as warriors, which, deducting the infirm, the children, and the old men, is surely a large estimate; then 3,000 comprise the whole number of Indian warriors, and these are distributed amongst twenty distinct tribes. It would belie all experience, if any considerable number of Americans could be destroyed, in any contest which might happen, if they deported themselves with common prudence. The objects of Indian rivalry are similar, and the tendency to hostility is greater amongst themselves, than with civilized neighbors, to whom, if a contest should arise, it is more than probable that one half of them would be found allied.

Lewis and Clarke estimate the whole Indian population West of the Rocky Mountains, at 80,000.

The committee have no hesitation in saying, that a small fortification, with a few cannon, at the mouth of the Columbia, well garrisoned, would defend the entrance against any enemy, who should attempt to assail it from sea. That small posts, at the confluence of the Multnomah, the Great Falls, Lewis's river, and on Clarke's river, somewhere on the elevated plain, bordering on the Rocky Mountains, would overawe all the Indians on the waters of the Columbia, and secure a monopoly of trade; and that another post, at some suitable point on the waters connected with De Fuca's Strait, would, at least, secure the whole trade of the delightful peninsula, which it waters.

As to subsistence, the great variety and abundance of game, both beasts, and birds, and the prodigious quantities of the finest and most nutritious species of fish, that throng the waters of this noble river, can leave no doubt on that subject, even if supplies from home were wholly withheld.

We learn from Lewis and Clarke, that "the multitudes of salmon, "in the Oregon, are inconceivable, and they ascend to its remotest "sources, to the very ridge of the dividing mountains. The water is "so clear, that they may be seen at the depth of fifteen or twenty feet. "At certain seasons, they float in such quantities, down the stream, "and are drifted ashore, that the Indians have only to collect, split, "and dry them. So abundant are they, that, in the scarcity of wood, "dried fish are often used as fuel."

Having satisfied themselves, that this country might be defended against exterior and internal enemies, at a small expense, and subsisted from its intrinsic resources, the Committee then turned their attention to the great interests already existing in that quarter, which the establishment of a post or posts on the waters of the Columbia might serve to protect; and the fur trade naturally presented itself as the first object. Cook speaks of the abundance and cheapness of the furs at Nootka. Portlock and Dixon found immense profit in their traffic, on the more Northerly part of this coast.

Lewis and Clarke represent this region as abounding in the fur-bearing animals, as the silver fox, beaver in large numbers, common otters, sea-otters, minks, seals in great numbers, and a beautiful animal with fine fur, resembling the squirrel, called the sewellel; and, also, in animals whose skins are of less value, as the white bear, the black bear, three species of deer, the elk, wolf, tyger cat, red fox, black fox, antelope, raccoon, several species of the squirrel, the braro, an animal like a badger, the panther, hare, rabbit, and pole-cat.

Major Brooks says, "the sea otter fur is here rare, but very fine. "Minor furs in abundance, as beaver, land-otter, mink, muskrat, &c. "&c. and bought for a song. The principal object of fur traders "here, when the Northern Indians are providing their winter stock "of provisions, and cannot trade, is, to purchase war garments, "and a certain shell valued at the North, and only found at the South, "for traffic in their return Northward."

It is obvious, that, at no very distant period, all the valuable fur-producing animals East of the Rocky Mountains, will either be driven West, or exterminated. The hunters of the United Northwest and Hudson's Bay Companies, pursue their game with an avidity arising from the combined influence of the two strongest passions of the human heart, "the love of pleasure, and the love of gain." The employment which supplies their means of living, is the delight of their lives. Even now, the beaver is almost extinct. It is well worth consideration, whether prompt measures ought not to be adopted to prevent foreigners from enjoying an almost exclusive monopoly of this invaluable trade, within our own limits, and a total monopoly it must become, whenever these animals shall find their only shelter in the vast forests on the Pacific ocean, unless the protecting arm of the Government shall be extended to that region.

In connexion with the fur trade, the trade in the sandal wood of the Sandwich Islands, which is used in the religious ceremonies of the Chinese, and always bears a high price at Canton, must be taken into

consideration; this, with ginseng, which grows in profusion on this coast, opium, copper, and specie, are the only articles with which trade can be transacted in that city.

The Committee are indebted to the North American Review for a very able article on the subject of our claim to the Northwest Coast, and the value of the fur trade. "In 1801, sixteen ships were engaged "in the traffic, fifteen of which were owned in the United States, and "one in Great Britain. Eighteen thousand sea otter skins, besides "other furs, were collected for the China market, in that year, by the "American vessels alone."

"In 1822, there were fourteen vessels from the United States en- "gaged in this trade, combined with that to the Sandwich Islands for "sandal wood. These vessels were from 200 to 400 tons each. "Crews from 25 to 30 each, and the duration of the voyage usually "three years."

The usual course of this trade is a voyage to the Northwest Coast, where a part of the cargo is exchanged for furs; then to the Sandwich Islands, where the lading is completed with sandal wood; then to Canton, where this cargo is exchanged for teas, &c.

The value at Canton, of furs, sandal wood, and other articles carried thither in 1821, by American vessels, from this coast, is estimated by the writer at $500,000 in that market; and this was an under estimate. The capital employed comparatively nothing.

Since that time it is presumed that the trade has not been less.*

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* Much information may be derived from statements formerly presented to this House by a gentleman once at the head of a Committee appointed "to consider the expediency of the occupation of the mouth of the Columbia River, by the United States," and whose industry and perseverance in obtaining information, on every topic illustrative of the value of this country and its trade, are deserving of all praise.

In the season of 1817–18, there were sold in the Canton market, all presumed to be from this Coast—

	Sea Otter skins,	125,310	
	Land Otter,	47,000	
	Beaver,	75,385	
	Fox skins,	525	
	Seal,	70,935	
	Mink,	334	
	Rabbit,	150	
	Muskrat,	420	
		all sold at	$563,510
	In addition, sandal wood,		174,075
	ginseng,		144,000
			$881,585
1818–19.—	Sea Otter,	124,000	
	Land Otter,	49,425	
	Beaver,	70,065	
	Seal skins,	100,300	
	Rabbit,	750	
	Fox skins,	7,550	
	Sea Otter tails,	10,136	
		sold at	$362,296
	Sandal wood,		91,368
	Ginseng,		77,770
			$531,434

The Committee entertain no doubt that, on the lowest estimate founded on any accurate statement, the amount of annual sales at Canton, of articles from the Northwest Coast and Sandwich Islands, are equal to half a million of dollars, after deducting the original outfit of each vessel; for it is well known that the cargoes which are taken from America to this coast, are generally the refuse of the hardware shops, and of very little value.

The proceeds of the sales are generally invested in teas, the duties on which, we learn from the best authority, are, on an average, equal to the original cost of the article in the Chinese market; giving to the revenue the annual sum of *five hundred thousand dollars*, and an advance to the owners in the American market. This trade is to be considered in another point of view; much of the tea is reshipped to Holland, to the Mediterranean, to the West Indies, South America, and elsewhere, giving activity to other important branches of trade, employment to sailors, freight to ship owners, returning to our market other articles, productive both of profit and of revenue. The history of this trade, when understood, will furnish a partial solution of a problem in political economy. Notwithstanding the apparent advance of the nation in wealth and prosperity, a national bankruptcy was apprehended, because the books of the Customhouses exhibited an alarming excess of imports over exports. It was apprehended, and apparently with some degree of reason, that the excess of importations would eventually produce a ruinous balance against the United States. Yet, upon examination, it will be easily discovered that the return of $1,000,000 in the productions of China, as an offset against a trifling export, instead of indicating an extravagant and ruinous excess of importations, demonstrates the immense profits of trade and navigation on this coast. It will easily be seen, that the continuance of this trade for thirty years, (and it has been pursued for a longer period,) has added $15,000,000 to the actual capital of the country, besides paying to the revenue $15,000,000 more. Yet, for its protection, not a dollar of the public money has been expended. No public ship has been stationed in the North Pacific and, since the appropriation of a trifling sum to cover the expenses of Lewis and Clarke's exploring expedition, twenty years ago, not a single rifleman has been supported at the public expense, while, for the protection of the European and West India trade, squadrons have been annually sent forth; and what is still more extraordinary, to protect

1819-20.—Furs,	$245,101		
Sandal wood,	82,872		
Ginseng,	38,000		
Sea Otter tails,	5,789		
		$371,762	
1820-21.—Furs,	$340,991		
Ginseng,	171,275		
Sandal wood,	73,508		
		$585,774	
1821-22.—Furs,	$490,081		
Ginseng,	209,610		
Sandal wood,	268,220		
		$967,911	

our own citizens against the apprehended ruinous effects of those branches of trade, a series of legislative remedies have been proposed, and have passed into laws!

Our stars and stripes, it is true, are annually displayed in the South Pacific; yet the Committee cannot discover the object of our expeditions there, unless it be, to exhibit the symbols of our sovereignty to the miserable Creoles who inhabit the Western coast of South America, to which, on one occasion, they shewed but little respect, inasmuch as they suffered the frigate Essex to be captured under the guns of their batteries; and as little on another, when they permitted the marauder who commanded their navy, and who, after having been expelled from England with disgrace, as a swindler, was suffered by them to play the part of a pirate here, by plundering our vessels at pleasure, and with impunity.

Of late years, the subject of the whale fishery has been so often before the public, that none can be insensible to its value.

For a long period this pursuit was confined in the Pacific, to the waters South of the equator, but there the success of the whalemen, the hunters of the deep, has been so destructive, that they are compelled to traverse seas far to the North; and the coast of Japan is now the limit of their adventurous voyages.

Nothing but the apprehended difficulties of the entrance of the Columbia river, and extent of unexplored coast, has prevented these daring navigators from frequenting a shore, represented by all who have visited it, to be thronged with whales.

The fur trade and the whale fishery, are the great nurseries of seamen. A fur voyage generally continues three years; a whaling voyage in the North Pacific, never less than two. In these long voyages the habits of landsmen are accommodated to the ocean, and a certainty and precision in nautical knowledge and seamanship, and hardihood and intrepidity and a habit of self reliance are acquired, which enables them to encounter, successfully, all the perils of the element on which they live, and elevates them to the summit of professional excellence. They visit every clime—they encompass the world. Not like the humble stipendiaries, too often seen in the European and West Indian trade, reckless of the interest of their employers, and anxious only to secure their monthly wages, the sailors who visit these remote seas, are the partners of merchants, they share the profits as well as the losses of the voyage, and they are sure of receiving, eventually, an elevation in command proportionate to their merit and exertions.

The great, but undeveloped capacities of this region on the North West Coast for trade, must be obvious to every one who inspects its map.

A vast river, with its tributaries and branches, waters its whole extent through seven degrees of latitude, and even penetrates beyond, into the territories of other nations.

It abounds in excellent timber, and in spars, equal to those of New Zealand, unsurpassed by any in the world.

Its waters are navigable for vessels through half its extent, and for boats (saving a few short portages,) through half the remainder.

The water power for moving manufacturing machinery is unequalled, and commences where the navigation terminates.

It is bounded on the South by a country which abounds in cattle and wheat, the two great sources of subsistence for a new colony, and which can be reached by sea in less than ten days, in the vicinity too of other countries, whose interior is filled with the precious metals, and with the richest articles of commerce, and whose shores abound in the pearl-producing oyster.

It is within twenty or thirty days sail of the coasts of Peru and Chili, which stretch in a long narrow line along the ocean, indented with fine bays and harbors, which countries would necessarily become commercial, were they not destitute of all the materials for ship building: of course they must depend on the country which can supply those materials at the cheapest rate.

It is within seventy or eighty days sail of China, and the East Indian seas, and within thirty of the Sandwich Islands, the West Indies of the Pacific, abounding in sandal wood, in the sugar cane, in tropical fruits, and perfectly adapted to the culture of coffee and cotton.

On one side it approaches a country where coal in prodigious quantities has already been discovered, and, on the other, the borders of a sea, which, for a space of seventy-six degrees, is seldom ruffled by a storm, and which, in all probability, can be traversed in every direction by steam boats.

These advantages, great as they now are, will be trifling, in comparison to what they will be, whenever a water communication between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, through the Isthmus, dividing North and South America, shall have been effected. Of the practicability of this communication there is no doubt. If Humboldt is to be believed, the expense at one place would not exceed that of the Delaware and Chesapeake canal. Should it be done, a revolution in commerce will be effected, greater than any since the discovery of America; by which both the power and the objects of its action will be more than doubled. The Indian commerce of Europe will pass through America, and more commercial wealth will be borne upon the ample bosom of the Pacific, than ever was wafted over the waves of the Atlantic, in the proudest days of the commercial greatness of Spain, Portugal, France, Holland, and England.

If it were given to a civilized, commercial, and manufacturing people "where to choose their place of rest," the world affords no position equal to this, and it requires no prophetic spirit to foresee the wealth and grandeur of that fortunate race, whose happy destiny shall have placed their ancestors in this beautiful region.

Impressed with a sense of the great advantages which may result to the United States, from the establishment of a post or posts in this territory, by which, in our opinion, the savages may be conciliated, the fur trade secured, the whale fishery partially protected, our title strengthened, and the way prepared for future enterprizes, if subse-

quent events should prove favorable, we have concurred most fully in opinion with the President that "the river of the West first fully "discovered, and navigated by a countryman of our own, claims the "protection of our armed national flag at its mouth, or at some other "point on that coast."

The Committee think that five hundred men will be amply sufficient, not only to establish and maintain one post, but several others, and that for the complete defence of the entrance of the Columbia, nothing will be necessary, but a few cannon placed in a stockaded fort, which can be erected at small expense.

In conformity with this opinion, the bill which we report provides that the President may establish a post or posts, within the limits of the United States on the Pacific ocean, or on the waters connected with that ocean, where, and in such manner as he shall see fit; submitting the location to his discretion, which discretion, will doubtless be determined after careful examination, and a comparison of the advantages and disadvantages of different positions.

EXPLORATION OF THE NORTHWEST COAST.

The subject of a voyage of exploration on the Northwest Coast has also received the particular attention of the Committee.

Navigators have done but little to ascertain the character of this coast, from lat. 42 N. to the mouth of the Columbia.

From the Spanish voyages nothing can be learned.

Cook first discovered the coast of New Albion, (March 7, 1778,) in lat. 44° 33′, being then eight leagues off shore, and in seventy-three fathoms of water. The weather became unpleasant, and the winds adverse, and his view was obstructed. On the ninth of March, he saw it again, farther South, between 44° 6′ and 43° 30′. Stormy weather succeeding, he was compelled to abandon it, and saw no land again until he was near the entrance of De Fuca's Strait, which he passed without discovery.

The appearance of the coast there, he describes thus: "We were "now in forty eight fathoms water, and four leagues from the land, "extending from north to southeast; and a small round hill, which we "supposed to be an island, bore north three quarters east, at the dis-"tance of about six or seven leagues. It seemed to be of a tolerable "height, and could but just be seen from the deck. There appeared "to be a small opening between this supposed island, and the northern "extreme of the land; we therefore entertained somes hopes of finding "an harbor; but these hopes gradually vanished as we grew nearer; "and at length we were almost convinced, that the opening was closed "by low land. The Commodore, for this reason, named the point of "land to the northward, Cape Flattery. Its latitude is 48° 15′ north; "in this very latitude, geographers have placed the pretended strait

"of Juan de Fuca. But nothing of that kind presented itself to our "view, nor is it probable that any such thing ever existed."

Vancouver sailed along this coast in extremely pleasant weather, but could discover neither harbor, river, or inlet, between 42 N. and De Fuca's Strait, although he was in sight of the mouth of the Columbia, and his ship floated upon its waters, at the very place where they mingled with the ocean. His sagacity induced him to believe, that a mighty river must be there, and he only yielded his conviction to the evidence of his senses, which discovered to him, (as he thought,) nothing but an unbroken reef of rocks, against which the waves of the ocean were beating in terrific conflict.

The ill success of two such illustrious navigators, as Cook and Vancouver, furnishes striking instances of the vanity of human science and skill.

Within the three degrees of latitude, which Cook, by bad weather was prevented from visiting the greatest river in Western America discharged itself into the ocean, and he lost the chance of a discovery, which would have been the proudest of his triumphs. Deceived by the appearance of the land, he lost the further triumph, of rediscovering the long lost Strait of De Fuca, after he had actually seen the opening, by which it communicated with the sea.

The mouth of the Columbia eluded the view of Vancouver, in consequence of the deceptive appearance of a continuous shore. This noble river, which had rolled its mighty mass of waters for countless centuries, through primeval forests, in solemn and silent grandeur to the ocean, had escaped the researches of the navigators of Spain, Russia, and Great Britain; and this grand discovery was left, (it would seem almost providentally,) to perpetuate for ages, not only the name of an humble American, but even the name of the ship with which he was quietly navigating this coast, for commercial purposes; and he had also the further triumph of rediscovering the long lost, celebrated Strait of De Fuca, which had baffled the lynx-eyed vigilance of Cook.

Of the coast in 45° 32′ N., Vancouver says, "the more inland coun- "try is considerably elevated, the mountains stretch towards the sea, "and, at a distance, appeared to form many inlets and projecting "points; but the sandy beach that continued along the coast render- "ed it a compact shore." It is not certain, however, that there is not between this sandy beach, and the interior mountainous country, much navigable water, communicating with the ocean by narrow inlets, like the coast of North Carolina; at any rate the fact ought to be ascertained.

The most skilful navigators are deceived by appearances on land as well as on the water. Cook asserts that he saw land South of Cape Gregory, covered with snow. Vancouver says that this appearance was produced by sand "extremely white."

If such navigators as Cook and Vancouver should be so far deceived in the appearance of the land, as to suffer the mouth of the Columbia and the entrance of De Fuca's Strait to escape discovery, after a close examination, made with the express view of ascertaining the existence

of both, it would not be surprising if many discoveries were yet made in this quarter.

If no rivers communicate with the ocean, along the line of coast from 42 to 46, yet, it would be surprising, indeed, if there were not several undiscovered bays, harbors, and inlets; if such do not exist, it is a remarkable fact, contrary to all the analogies of nature: a hilly or mountainous coast being always deeply indented by openings, extending far inland, which form secure and convenient harbors.

Another fact ought to be ascertained; in some of the latest maps, the long river *Monges*, which flows far from the interior, is represented as discharging itself into the ocean North of 42; in others, nearly as recent, and of equal authority, the same river is made to communicate with the ocean South of 42.

The mouth and bay of the Columbia river should receive a more particular examination, as well as the river itself, as far as it is navigable. The Multnomah, its great Southern tributary, should be explored: fourteen miles from its confluence with the Columbia, its water (according to Capt. Clarke) was of sufficient depth to float vessels of the largest size.

That part of the coast between the mouth of the Columbia and De Fuca's Strait, and the waters communicating with that strait from the South, although explored by Vancouver and his officers, might be re-examined with advantage. If nothing more was ascertained, than that their surveys were correct, it would be productive of some benefit to science, and of some service to the nation.

To the North an exploration is more necessary, particularly as we have but an imperfect knowledge of the rivers *Tacoutche Tesse*, and *Caledonia*. From the natives of this region but little difficulty is to be apprehended: those on the Columbia and De Fuca's Strait have already been mentioned. Vancouver represents those which he met near Cape Orford, "as pleasing and courteous in their deportment, and scrupulously honest."

EXPENSE.

That a correct estimate of the expense attending the establishment of a military post on the waters of the Northwest Coast may be formed, we refer the House to a message from the President of the United States, contained in the fifth volume of the Executive papers, and communicated to the Eighteenth Congress, during their first session, No. 85.

Gen. Jesup, the Quartermaster General of the Army, estimates the expense of transporting two hundred troops from the Council Bluffs to the mouth of Columbia river, at - - - $15,000

He adds, for unforeseen expenses, - - - 15,000

"And (says he) for the transportation of the heavy baggage, "ordnance, and a supply of provisions, by sea, whaling

"or sealing vessels, or Northwest traders, it is believed, "might be chartered at about five or six thousand dollars; "say they should cost $7,000 each, and the amount of sea "transportation would be - - - - 14,000

"Making the entire expense of the operation by land and water, $44,000

A communication from the Secretary of the Navy has been laid before the House of Representatives, from which it is to be inferred that none of the vessels of our Navy can be transferred from the service in which they are now engaged, without detriment to the public interest. He estimates the annual expense of a sloop of war employed in this service, at nearly - - - - $38,000

He also suggests the expediency of attaching to the expedition, a schooner of light draught of water, to explore the waters inaccessible to a vessel drawing fifteen or sixteen feet, which is obviously a measure not only of convenience, but of necessity.

The estimate of the annual expense of such vessel, is - 16,500

The expense of instruments, apparatus, and the pay of such scientific men as shall be employed, is estimated at 10,000

Requiring an appropriation to cover the whole expense, of $64,500

If one of the sloops of war now in commission could be transferred to this service, the difference of the expense, in the opinion of the Secretary, would not be so great as to require any alteration in the annual estimates, all that would be required in that case, over the usual appropriation, would be - - - - - - - $26,500

And if one of the United States' schooners could be transferred from another service to this, the necessary additional expense, in that case, would be only - - 10,000

The estimate of the Quartermaster General may bear some reduction.

Although the committee are not clearly convinced that the exigencies of the public service are of a character so imperative as to require, on all the stations, the full number of vessels now in commission, yet the official statements of the Secretary of the Navy, the organ of the Government in that Department, ought to be regarded. Neither do they think that it is required, either on principles of sound policy or true economy, that the appropriation for the establishment of a post, and for a voyage of exploration, should be limited to the sum actually required to cover the expected expenditure; accidents may happen, and there may be a necessity for expenditures, now unforeseen. It is to be hoped, that whatever the sum may be that is appropriated, it will be judiciously and frugally expended.

The committee cannot conclude this report, without expressing their belief, that the American navy can furnish spirits as enterprising, as adventurous, as heroic, as the most illustrious of the European navigators, who will not only supply our full proportion to the common stock

"of geographical and astronomical science," but who will gain in that field, as many laurels, as they have heretofore in the field of glory; who, instead of rearing crosses, burying coins, and engraving names, are destined, we trust, to plant the standards of a Republican nation along the endless shores of the vast Pacific, not as the barren emblems of nominal sovereignty, but as signals both of power and protection, of law, knowledge, civilization, and liberty.