

regard to the free navigation of the Columbia river, your committee would desire to be understood as expressing no decided opinion; but from all they can discover, it does not appear to them, that any serious injury would ensue to the United States, in stipulating for the free navigation of that river. Having the entire control of the mouth of the river as they would have by means of forts and fortifications, and being the owner of the territory on both sides from its mouth up for the distance of five hundred miles, it is difficult to conceive in what manner the navigation of the river if conceded to Great Britain in common with ourselves, could impair any of the great interests of the country, or seriously embarrass any of the operations either of the people of the territory, or of the Government of the United States. Besides, Great Britain having by the terms of the proposed compromise, the exclusive right to the Territory bordering on each side of the river for the distance of nearly two hundred miles north of the forty-ninth parallel of north latitude, it would seem to be unjust to exclude her from all access to that portion of her territory watered by the river. Without the liberty of free ingress at the mouth, and a continuing right of navigation to the point where her territory commences, that portion of it at least bordering on the river, as it would seem to your committee, will be of but little value to her, and scarcely worth the acquisition. It is more than likely that this proposition was not repeated to the British Government by the present Executive, because it was known, that on two former occasions, it had been deliberately rejected by her accredited representatives, and perhaps from a sincere desire to avoid all appearances of compromising in the slightest degree, the dignity of the nation, by again submitting propositions, which the United States had on former occasions been told would not be received. All these propositions, liberal as they appear to be, have however, on various occasions been rejected by Great Britain. The expectation, that at some future time she might receive more favorable concessions, may perhaps have prompted her to this course, but your committee believe that in all probability no terms more favorable to Great Britain will be offered by the United States. Under these circumstances it is apparent that the chances of settling the controversy by negotiations are becoming more and more uncertain. Indeed unless Great Britain expresses some willingness either to recede from her position, or to accept of some one of the propositions hitherto made to her by this Government, it is quite certain that all hopes may be abandoned of having the matter adjusted *under present circumstances*, by Executive negotiations.

Your committee have reflected much upon the position in which the United States are placed by the operation of the Convention of 1827, between them and Great Britain, usually termed the Treaty of Joint Occupancy of the Oregon Territory. And in the view which your committee have taken of that Convention, and the rights of the respective parties to it, great doubts are entertained, whether a longer continuance of it, would not be injurious