

the *Gazette* notice. When in the early part of the Session of 1849, the House of Commons unanimously voted £20,000 for the encouragement of private enterprise and of private enterprise alone, in the search of the lost objects of national solicitude, they placed no restrictions as to the period during which the reward was to be held out. It could never have been contemplated that while the community was divided in opinion as to the evidence of facts, and while a great majority of those best informed on the subject and others the most deeply interested in it, were dissatisfied with that evidence, and demanded better, an arbitrary edict such as that involved in the premature adjudication of the reward, should, in favour of any one candidate of doubtful pretensions, shut out all future ones. I would fain submit to your Lordships that so long as private funds are embarked in the same cause, and that active measures are in progress or in contemplation, to clear up the mystery as to the fate of the crews of the *Erebus* and *Terror*, it would be unjust to place an arbitrary limit to the operation of an act designed expressly for that object, and so proclaimed at the time, "By Her Majesty's Government."

And here I feel compelled to state that, though it is my humble hope and fervent prayer that the Government of my country will themselves complete the work they have begun, and not leave it to a weak and helpless woman to attempt the doing that imperfectly which they themselves can do so easily and well, yet, if need be, such is my painful resolve, God helping me.

In the name then of those brave men who will devote themselves to this labour of love and duty, I feel called upon to claim that they should not be shut out, by a premature adjudication, from the reward which may become their due. It may yet fall to their lot to ascertain all, or much of what we want to know, and to bring back some journal, or some precious fragment, otherwise lost to us for ever.

Should these last of the explorers accomplish any of these things, will you ignore their services and claims, because, in the spring of 1856, you had deemed that the fate of the expedition was ascertained, and had given away the reward? I have a right to use this argument, though in carrying it into its consequences I feel it may be doing injustice to your Lordships, as well as to the devoted volunteers who will undertake what they have to do in a higher spirit than any hope of pecuniary recompense can put into them.

But I may illustrate the argument by a more immediate example—that of the zealous and enterprising Captain Penny. It may not be known to your Lordships that Captain Penny, before his departure from England last year, in command of two whaling ships, informed me that the reports brought home by Dr. Rae reminded him of some vague rumours of a fight between whites and Esquimaux, which had reached him in Northumberland Sound the preceding season, from a great distance, travelling through successive tribes of natives. And Captain Penny added, that in spite of all the difficulties he foresaw in the execution of his project, it was his intention to engage some of the most intelligent and trustworthy natives, domesticated at his whaling station, to trace back these rumours to their source, whether that source were the catastrophe at the Great Fish River, or any other which may have overtaken a separate portion of the crews of the *Erebus* and *Terror*, in some other locality. Now, though I have no great hope (considering the distance to be traversed and other obstacles), that much success will attend Captain Penny's laudable efforts, and am sure that no thought of qualifying himself for the Government reward entered into his speculations, yet, would it be fair to adjudicate that reward at this moment, in the face of such a fact?

I have spoken reluctantly of a private expedition, at my own cost, which, in despair of your Lordships completing the work you have begun, and not till then, I may be forced to undertake. And it may not be superfluous, though I trust it is so, that I should state I can have no personal interest in desiring that the adjudication of the reward should be delayed till the result of that expedition or of any other be known. Even in the event of the reward being adjudged in whole or in part to those engaged in my private expedition, this could in no degree relieve me from any portion of my own pecuniary obligations to them, or from any expenditure whatever. My funds since the settlement of my late husband's affairs, are equal to the ample equipment of the *Isabel* schooner, which is now lying in dock, waiting, at a considerable current expense to me, her possible destination; and unless these my