

may examine the accounts against the Government, at the Company's establishment at Lachine, to which place they have been forwarded from the several interior posts.

I have the honour, &c.

(signed) *John Richardson,*
Commanding Arctic Searching Expedition.

To the Secretary of the Admiralty,
&c. &c.

Fort Confidence, Great Bear Lake,
May 1, 1849.

(Memorandum.)

As in the prosecution of the search for traces of the Discovery Ships under command of Sir John Franklin, the continental coast line between the Mackenzie and Coppermine Rivers has been carefully examined, the only part of my instructions not yet complied with, is the examination of the adjoining shores of Wollaston and Victoria Lands, which the state of the ice in Dolphin and Union Straits rendered inapproachable last autumn. That these two lands are separated from each other by a strait lying between the 111th and 113th meridians, is rendered almost certain by a consideration of the direction of the flood tide, which, on the west side of these parallels, sets to the westward through Dolphin and Union Straits, and to the eastward of them, sets to the eastward towards Cape Alexander; coming, we must conclude, from the northward between the lands in question: for the survey by Messrs. Dease and Simpson has shown that the coast of Victoria Land is continuous up to the 111th parallel; and the latter gentleman records his opinion, that much of the heavy drift ice that encumbers Coronation Gulf descends from the north between these lands.

The exploring of the shores of this strait is of much importance in the search for the Discovery Ships, for the following reasons:—Sir John Franklin was directed to steer to the S. W. after he had passed Barrow's Straits, a course which would lead him to the strait in question, and he would be deterred from attempting a direct westerly course by the circumstance of Sir Edward Parry having found that route impracticable for two successive seasons. Should there be several islands between Wollaston and Banks's Lands, and the channels between them be intricate, it is not unlikely that the ships may have been shut up therein by ice. It was the intention of Sir James Ross, in the event of his reaching Winter Harbour last year, to send a party across the ice this spring to pass between Victoria and Wollaston Lands towards Cape Krusenstern and the Coppermine River. To co-operate with that party and to aid it with provisions, or supply its place, should circumstances have prevented its being sent, it is expedient that a party should go from hence, and as you and a party of men have volunteered for this service, I hereby, in virtue of the clause of my instructions which authorizes me to detach you and a party of volunteers under your command, appoint you to this duty. You are therefore to descend the Coppermine River, and as soon as the sea opens in July, are to proceed to explore the strait in question, endeavouring to communicate with any parties of Esquimaux you may meet with on Wollaston or the neighbouring islands. Should you reach the northern coast of Banks's Land, you are there to erect a pile of stones, and deposit a memorandum of your object and proceedings at the distance of 10 feet from its base, marking that side of the pile with a broad arrow in red or white paint. You are also to erect similar piles, and deposit in the same manner memoranda for the guidance of the party detached by Sir James Ross, on conspicuous headlands, when you can do so without materially delaying your progress. Should you discover any piles erected by that party, and learn from the memoranda deposited near them that the strait has been sufficiently explored down to that place, you are to proceed no further in that direction; and you are at liberty to use your own judgment in deviating from this route, if, from information given by the Esquimaux, or obtained from other sources, you are of opinion that the ships, or part of their crews, may be found in another direction.

Having the fullest confidence in your judgment, experience and prudence, I shall not name a period to your advance, further than by requesting you not to hazard the safety of the party entrusted to your care, by delaying your return too long.