

3. But in case you should have found any trace of the expedition, it will be your duty to follow up that trace. In doing this, you must exercise extreme caution, so as not to lose your means of communication with Beechey Island; nor are you to incur any hopeless risk by proceeding beyond reasonable limits, for the safety of your own crews must be your first care. We place every confidence in your zeal and intelligence, and feel assured that you will act with sound judgment in whatever situation you may be placed; we therefore leave it to you either to abandon the expedition altogether, if you are of opinion that no further steps can be practicably taken, or to send such of the ships to England as you may not require; transmitting by them, to our secretary, not only a full account of all your proceedings, but charts of all your discoveries, and keeping us informed of your views and intentions, so that if it should be necessary every requisite aid may be given you in the summer of 1854.

4. Before your final departure from the Polar Seas, should you think proper to adopt that course, there appears one very important subject which will require your serious consideration; and that is, the present position of the ships under the command of Captain Collinson, and Commander M'Clure, which entered the ice to the N. E. of Point Barrow, (Behring Straits,) the latter in August 1850, and the former in July 1851. These officers, with their respective crews, may have been compelled by circumstances to abandon their ships. If such should be the case, they may probably attempt to reach Melville Island, and having had this in view when you left England, we directed in your instructions that a depôt of provisions, and other stores, should be formed at that island. From this position they will no doubt endeavour to make their way to Beechey Island, or Port Leopold. It will therefore be your duty, before returning to England, to be fully satisfied that a proper depôt of coals, provisions, &c., had been formed at Melville Island, by Captain Kellett, and that clear information had also been left there, that similar supplies would be found at Beechey Island.

5. This depôt on Beechey Island is to consist of a full store of coal, provisions, clothes, and other stores, and you will take care to have it most carefully secured against the depredations of bears, or other animals; you are also to leave one of your ships there, with or without a crew, as you may deem most advisable, so that Captain Collinson or Commander M'Clure's parties may find every possible assistance, which they may require, and have the means at their command of returning to England; but should you find it to be practicable to place the ship, or a depôt of stores, in a more advanced position, between Melville and Beechey Islands, it might be expedient to do so. This is a point on which you can form a better judgment than we can. Our most anxious wish is to establish the best possible arrangement with the view of giving succour and support to the crews of those ships, should they be compelled to seek refuge in the direction we have pointed out.

6. Having expressed these general views, which will require your careful consideration, we leave it to you to take such steps as you may consider most expedient for meeting the circumstances of the case.

7. On the arrival of the Transport at Beechey Island, you are immediately to hasten her discharge, and dispatch her to England, with the least possible delay, and you are not to detain the Phoenix longer than may be necessary, or to risk her being frozen in, but to send her also to England with intelligence of your proceedings, exchanging any of her men, and sending invalids, &c.

Given under our hands this 11th day of May 1853.

(Signed) J. R. G. GRAHAM.  
HYDE PARKER.  
M. F. F. BERKELEY.  
R. S. DUNDAS.  
ALEX. MILNE.

To Sir Edw. Belcher, C.B.,  
Captain of Her Majesty's Ship Assistance,  
Arctic Seas.

By Command of their Lordships,  
(Signed) R. OSBORNE.