

ENCLOSURE No. 1.

REPORT OF THE ARCTIC COMMITTEE,*

*Adopted by the President and Council of the Royal Geographical Society,
April 29th, 1872.*

1. SINCE 1865 several Swedish and German expeditions have attempted to explore the unknown Polar Region, by penetrating the ice between Greenland, Spitzbergen, and Novaya Zemlya.

2. The leaders of these expeditions, Captain Koldewey, and MM. Nordenskiöld and Von Otter, are convinced of the impracticability of the routes they attempted. Their work has been reviewed by Captain Sherard Osborn, in the accompanying Paper [Enclosure No. 2], which was read at a meeting of the Royal Geographical Society, on the 22nd of April, 1872.

3. This conclusion, strengthening the deductions from all previous experience, will enable those who advocate Arctic exploration to point out a definite course to be now pursued.

4. The unknown region covers an area of more than a million of square miles. It is obvious that a single expedition cannot undertake to explore the whole of this space. It is, therefore, necessary to select that portion of it for exploration which offers the three advantages that are considered essential. These are: 1st, the certainty of exploring a previously unknown area of considerable extent; 2nd, the prospect of the most valuable discoveries in various branches of science; 3rd, the best security for a safe return.

5. These advantages can only be secured in that portion where a coast line of great extent is known to exist, because the most valuable discoveries must be made on or near the land.

6. The unknown coast of Greenland intervenes between a point in about 82° N. lat., on the west side, and a point in 77° N. lat. on the east side; and at both points the land trends north. The following considerations lead to the inference that the land of Greenland extends far to the northward. The current flowing down the east side of Greenland has been observed by Dr. Forchhammer to be composed, not of Polar water, but of Atlantic water. A strong current flows through the channels between the Parry Islands down Baffin's Bay. If Greenland extended no further to the northward, this current would also sweep round it, and flow down its eastern shore. Observation has shown that this is not the case. The width of Greenland, at its most northern known points, is more than 600 miles. There is no other land, offering similar conditions, on the verge of the unknown area.

7. The object of an Arctic expedition of discovery should, therefore, be to explore the unknown shores to the north of Greenland.

8. In order to reach the point whence discovery would commence, an Arctic expedition must, therefore, proceed up the west coast of Greenland, in Baffin's Bay and Smith Sound. This route is preferable to one by the east coast of Greenland, because of the facilities for retreat to the Danish settlements.

9. Such an expedition should consist of two moderate-sized screw-steamers, one to be stationed at some distance within the entrance of Smith Sound, the other to advance, as far as possible, to the northward (preserving communica-

* Composed of the following gentlemen:—Sir George Back, Admiral C. Illison, Admiral Ommanney, Admiral Richards, Sir Leopold McClintock, Captain Sherard Osborn, Dr. Rae, Mr. Findlay, Mr. Clements Markham (Sec.).