

— No. 6. —

## JOINT OPINION of OFFICERS, &amp;c. interested in the Welfare of the ARCTIC EXPEDITIONS.

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Officers, &c.

17 January 1849.

At a meeting of the undermentioned officers, &c. interested in the welfare of the Arctic Expeditions, namely, Rear Admiral Sir Francis Beaufort; the Rev. Dr. Scoresby; Colonel Sabine, R.A.; Captain Sir Wm. Edward Parry, R.N.; Captain Frederick Wm. Beechey, R.N.; Captain Sir George Back, R.N.; Captain Sir Edward Belcher, R.N.; it was given as their unanimous opinion,—

1. That considering the fact that Sir James Ross's Expedition did not reach the entrance to Lancaster Sound till the 28th August 1848, little or nothing could have been effected by the ships under his command in that season, beyond a partial examination of the two shores of Lancaster Sound, and Barrow's Strait.
2. That therefore that expedition will, virtually, have to commence the search for Sir John Franklin's ships this year.
3. That with reference to the position of Sir James Ross's ships during the present winter, there are three possible cases,—
  - a. The "Investigator" in a harbour near Cape Rennell, and the "Enterprize" having pushed on to, or near to, Melville Island.
  - b. The "Investigator" as above, and the "Enterprize" having proceeded a part of the way to Melville Island.
  - c. Both ships having been obliged to winter near together, in consequence of the few days remaining for that season's navigation in 1848, subsequently to the 28th August.
4. That in either of these three cases the two ships are sure to be separated this season, as even in the last case (c), Sir James Ross will push to the westward as soon as possible in the ensuing summer.
5. That under any of these circumstances it is highly unsafe, and therefore inexpedient, for the "Investigator" to come home in the autumn of this year, so as to leave Sir James Ross alone in the "Enterprize," in the performance of a hazardous service.
6. That, therefore, fresh instructions should be sent out this summer to Capt. Bird to the above effect, lest he should feel himself bound by Sir James Ross's instructions to him of the 12th July 1848, and by the state of his resources, to return to England in the "Investigator" in the ensuing autumn.
7. That Capt. Bird should be directed to remain out another winter, in order to carry out more extensively the objects of the Expedition.
8. That for this purpose supplies of provisions, ship's stores, and fuel should be sent out to the "Investigator" this year, as much as a suitable vessel will conveniently carry.
9. That the performance of this service with the requisite certainty and effectiveness is entirely impracticable by engaging a whaling vessel to execute it, this duty being wholly incompatible with, and opposed to the usual, and to them all-important, occupation of killing whales. That these ships pushing across the ice in Baffin's Bay at all during the season cannot be reckoned upon with any degree of certainty, and that the early period of their leaving England (February and March), would be a serious disadvantage, as greatly lessening the chances of our having received previous information of Sir John Franklin, either from Sir John Richardson, or by way of Panama, or through Russia, from Kamtschatka.  
(In this view of the inexpediency of employing a whaling ship, Dr. Scoresby's opinion is very strong, from his long experience of those vessels, and the business in which they are engaged.)
10. That the best vessel for carrying out the provisions, &c. would be a bomb, such as those already engaged on the Arctic Expeditions, their scantling being large, and their frames strong, and that the "Thunder," of about 375 tons, if fortified in the usual manner for the navigation among the ice, manned by effective officers and men, and commanded by an officer of intelligence and zeal, would be a very fit vessel for this service.
11. That the 15th of May (not a day later) is the proper time for the store ship to leave England, and that she should be directed to proceed across the ice in Baffin's Bay, into Lancaster Sound, and up Barrow's Strait, looking out for

North Star selected  
(about 500 tons).