

2 INSTRUCTIONS ISSUED TO COMMANDERS OF H. M. SHIPS

Should Her Majesty's sloop "Plover" have been lost or found unfit for service, rendering it necessary that she should be abandoned, you will receive Commander Maguire, his officers and crew, on board as passengers, in case they may not have joined the ship sent from the Pacific station.

In the event of England being at any time involved in hostilities with any other power during your employment on the above service, you are clearly to understand that you are not to commit any hostile act whatever, the ship under your command being fitted out for the sole purpose of aiding those engaged in scientific discoveries, and it being the established practice of all civilised nations to consider vessels so employed as exempt from the operations of war.

I am, &c.

Commander Trollope,
Her Majesty's Ship "Rattlesnake."

W. A. B. Hamilton.

Sir,

Admiralty, 11 January 1854.

My Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, by their instructions to you, dated the 15th February 1853, and transmitted to Behring Strait by Her Majesty's ship "Amphitrite," directed the return of Her Majesty's sloop "Plover," under your command, from the winter quarters at Point Barrow to Grantley Harbour, so soon as the season of 1854 would permit. I am now commanded by their Lordships to acquaint you that Captain M'Clure, in Her Majesty's ship "Investigator," arrived at a harbour on the N.E. shore of Bank's Land, on the 24th of September 1851, and subsequently communicated with Melville Island, thereby insuring the safety of the crew of that ship.

By your letter of the 21st of August last, it appears that Her Majesty's ship "Enterprise" had been seen by the natives of the northern shore of America, near the Colville River, in August 1851. If Captain Collinson should have found the same extent of open water along that shore as was experienced by Captain M'Clure, and if he pursued the same track, their Lordships have reason to expect that he may have been enabled to reach a position to the eastward of Cape Bathurst, and from thence, by means of travelling parties, to have obtained, from the records left by the officers of the "Investigator," information of the proceedings of that ship as a guide to his future plans.

In whatever position the "Enterprise" may at this time be placed, it is obvious that in the ensuing spring (1854) Captain Collinson, from the reduced state of his supplies, will be compelled to abandon his ship. It may be presumed that, if to the eastward of the Mackenzie River, and having found the records of Captain M'Clure, that he will push on with his crew to the north-eastward, with the view of reaching Melville Island, or he may divide his ship's company, and send one portion by the Mackenzie River, with the intention of reaching the Hudson's Bay posts.

If, however, by any unfortunate accident the "Enterprise" has been lost, it is by no means improbable that Captain Collinson may have returned to the "Plover." If such should have been the case, there will exist no further necessity for the detention of the "Plover" and "Rattlesnake" at Behring Strait, and my Lords desire you will accordingly proceed to San Francisco and Valparaiso to wait their further orders.

But should no further information have reached you respecting the "Enterprise" since she was reported off the Colville, it will be necessary for you to consider the expediency of remaining for another season at Point Barrow, with the view of affording assistance to Captain Collinson and his crew, should he still be compelled to fall back on the "Plover." On this point we are unable, from want of information relative to your proceedings since August last, and the further tidings you may have gained respecting the "Enterprise," to give you any definite instructions; their Lordships entirely rely on your judgment as to the necessity of your remaining another year. They desire me to acquaint you that