

parties, who are ordered with strict injunctions not to advance to such a distance as to endanger their return by that time at latest. Poor Sir John Franklin! They think it "highly improbable" that some trace of him should not be found by the exploring parties in the upper part of Wellington Channel, but no liberty is given to follow them up, and they are to abandon their ships, only two of which are to search, and two remain behind, sooner than endanger their return.

I told the Committee (which is not put down in the evidence) that if they did not combine the search for Sir John Franklin with scientific purposes, his fate would never be ascertained; if they are afraid to make the North West Passage which Sir John Franklin was sent to make, it is not to be expected, humanity requires he should not be left to perish because he is far advanced; we do not know how far, having the means of subsistence, as I am persuaded, in the country itself; and all the more likely to be preserved in health because they would have to seek it, and thus have their minds and bodies actively employed.

It is also possible that some of their own stock may have been eked out, considering their determination and forethought from the earliest period of their voyage; and that their numbers, under most favourable circumstances, may be somewhat reduced. The Esquimaux, as Dr. Scoresby says, "in similar regions as cold, as desolate, and as apparently resourceless (altogether resourceless indeed, except in Arctic animals), live out not six or seven winters merely, but a fair portion of the ordinary life of man;" and, he adds, "Why may they not be yet surviving amid the desolation of Arctic solitudes, and the wreck of the hopes of the timid and doubting?"

I shall make no farther remarks on the proposed expedition of the Committee, which enter into detail better to be considered by the officer in command. I have read Sir John Franklin's instructions, Sir James Ross's, Captain Collinson's, and Captain Austin's, and see nothing of the kind dictated, but they are left to employ the means they have to the best of their ability according to circumstances, but restricted as to time, except Sir John Franklin, who is not restricted as to time, and hence the unfairness, not to say the folly, of imposing restrictions on those who follow him. No man who has a proper sense of his duty, but will look to the safety and health of his crew in the first instance, and always bear it uppermost in his mind, but I will venture to assure the Committee that no man who does his duty in any circumstances, but must run some risk if he would do it conscientiously. This is said in reference to the Committee's fears of "risk of loss or danger," taking no note that each fresh expedition has larger resources as well as more experience in ice travelling, and falling back on depôts, than the preceding.

18, 19. The paragraph 4, to which their Lordships are referred in Captain Austin's instructions, contains all the liberty that a commander could desire, if paragraph 7 is omitted.

I pass on to where the Committee say they have thought it right to request the opinion of the gentlemen named in the margin, "on this interesting but most difficult question," which I am sorry to find they think so difficult, and that they should ask those officers who have consigned Sir John Franklin to destruction in his way home, for their opinion as to the future search, and how it should be conducted. I had the honour to submit my plan of search to the Committee when called upon, and it is a great satisfaction to see the similarity to the plans of Sir John Richardson and Dr. Scoresby, which are entitled to great weight. It was hardly to be expected, when the Committee thought proper to ask my advice as the commander of one of the late expeditions, that it was their intention to discard me altogether from future operations.

I may further remark, that if their Lordships will turn to Captain Austin's letter on this subject, they will find that he is at great loss to account for the sudden disappearance of Sir John Franklin without leaving any vestige of his fate; nevertheless, he is convinced he did not penetrate to the south-west, and declares he has "no confidence in my representation that Sir John Franklin had gone away in clear water beyond our reach (say 500 miles);" he neither believes in the open water of Wellington Straits, nor in the water sky beyond; and after this would I have, thought, my Lords, that an officer of such high rank in Her Majesty's navy would demean himself to throw on the man he discredited the responsibility of his own conduct? I was infatuated to write that letter. I told