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ARCTIC EXPEDITIONS.

OPINIONS of the most experienced OFFICERS connected with the ARCTIC EXPEDITIONS, on the Necessity of sending a Ship to the Entrance of Lancaster Sound, with Supplies for Sir James Ross's Expedition; and their joint Opinion as to certain Measures proposed to be adopted.

(*Sir Thomas Acland.*)

*Ordered, by The House of Commons, to be Printed,
20 April 1849.*

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Under 2 oz.

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ARCTIC EXPEDITIONS.

FURTHER RETURN to an ORDER of the Honourable The House of Commons, dated 15 March 1849;—for,

COPIES or EXTRACTS "of any PROCEEDINGS or CORRESPONDENCE of the Admiralty, in reference to the ARCTIC EXPEDITIONS.—(In continuation of Parliamentary Papers, Nos. 264 and 336, of Session 1848, up to the present time.)"

Admiralty, }
19 April 1849. }

T. CROFTON CROKER,
For the Chief Clerk.

Ordered, by The House of Commons, to be Printed, 20 April 1849.

RETURN of the OPINIONS of the most experienced Officers connected with the ARCTIC EXPEDITIONS, on the Necessity of sending a Ship to the Entrance of Lancaster Sound, with Supplies for Sir James Ross's Expedition; and their joint OPINION as to certain Measures proposed to be adopted.

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— No. 1. —

REMARKS of Captain Sir W. Edward Parry, on the Mode of Communicating with Sir James Ross, and rendering further Assistance for the Relief of Sir John Franklin's Expedition.

Opinion of Captain Sir W. Edward Parry.

Haslar Hospital, 8 January 1849.

HAVING given my best attention to the subject of your communication of the 4th inst., a subject which we cannot but feel to be one of increasing anxiety and importance, I now submit to you the following observations:

The whole question of additional effort for the discovery and safety of Sir John Franklin and his gallant companions appears to resolve itself, at present, into the nature of the communication to be opened with Sir James Ross, or rather with his colleague, Captain Bird, in the summer of the present year.

I may first, however, glance at the probable nature and extent of the operations of that expedition, during the season of 1848.

As the "Enterprize" and "Investigator" did not reach the entrance of Lancaster Sound till the 28th of August, we cannot reckon upon the "Enterprize" having had more than 20 days for continuing the navigation till the approach of winter (indicated especially by the formation of "young ice") would render further efforts difficult and dangerous, if not altogether impracticable, for I find that this obstruction became very serious in 1819, about the 17th September.

Judging, however, from what the ships under my command were enabled to effect in that year, I should hope the "Enterprize" would be able during the

Opinion of Captain
Sir W. Edward
Parry

season of 1848 to get as far westward as Melville Island, as I find that independently of our discovery and examination of Prince Regent's Inlet, and notwithstanding the disadvantages of a navigation then entirely unknown, the "Hecla" and "Griper" were only 19 days actually engaged in making their way from the entrance of Lancaster Sound to the longitude of Winter Harbour; that is, from the 1st to the 5th August, and from the 21st August to the 5th September.

It appears to me not improbable, therefore, that Sir James Ross in the "Enterprize," may have succeeded in penetrating as far to the westward as Winter Harbour in 1848, or still further westward, perhaps along a portion of "Banks' Land," if, in trying a more southern latitude, the ice should have been found to present somewhat less serious obstacles. But I should not expect the any excursions by way of search, as contemplated by the Admiralty instruction could be made that season by boats from the "Enterprize," or that much could be effected by travelling parties.

With respect to Captain Bird in the "Investigator," I see no reason to doubt his having been able to place that ship in some sufficiently safe harbour, in the neighbourhood of Cape Rennell, as directed by the Admiralty instructions, early as about the 5th of September, since the impediments from ice between that point and the entrance of Lancaster Sound will probably not prove of very formidable character.

This would leave 10 days at the utmost in the season of 1848 for the prosecution of the proposed search by the boats of the "Investigator." I say at the utmost, because the navigation by ships, which is necessarily conducted at some distance from land, may be continued somewhat later in the season than would be practicable for the closer examination of coasts and inlets by boats, on account of the earlier formation of "young ice" close in shore, whereby the progress of a boat is always seriously impeded, her planks cut, and the difficulty of close and effectual examination immensely increased. Considering, also, the severity with which winter sets in after the middle of September in this latitude, with 10 hours of darkness, I do not expect that anything effectual could be accomplished by land journeys after that period.

Upon the whole, therefore, it does not appear to me likely that any great progress could have been made in the proposed search by Captain Bird before the close of the season of 1848, but I should hope that, considering the proximity of Wellington Channel to his intended anchorage, something may have been done in that direction.

To continue my speculations as to the operations of Captain Bird (for I consider those of Sir James Ross in the "Enterprize" to be quite beyond the reach of conjecture), I should expect that his search by land or across ice, in the present season (1849), could not commence much before the 1st June, principally on account of the want of water for drinking, and the difficulty of carrying fuel melt snow for that purpose.

Captain Bird's operations by boats are not likely to commence until after the middle of July, judging from my own experience in those regions, unless there be any favourable peculiarity in that particular locality whereby the navigation in-shore may be opened somewhat earlier than is usual in this latitude.

The remarkable absence of ice in the summer season in most parts of Barrow Straits, may possibly constitute such a peculiarity.

As to the period at which Captain Bird may be expected (in pursuance of instructions) to send his steam launch or other boat to the eastward, to communicate, as intended, with some vessel from England, it may be some guide to consider the periods at which the three expeditions of 1819, 1824, and 1848 respectively, were enabled to reach the entrance of Lancaster Sound; the object in all these instances being to gain that point as early as possible. These were as follows:

In 1819 -	-	-	-	-	1st August.
„ 1824 -	-	-	-	-	11th September.
„ 1848 -	-	-	-	-	28th August.

affording, by the by, conclusive proof of the uncertain nature of this navigation even before entering what may be termed the threshold of this enterprize.

Thus it would appear that the very earliest period at which Captain Bird might expect his boat to meet any vessel in Lancaster Sound, is the first week in August, the probability being against her doing so till one, two, or three weeks later than this.

And now as to the main question of all, so far as we at home have to act in this matter, I mean as regards the nature and extent of the "instructions and communications" proposed to be sent out from England for Captain Bird this year.

Opinion of Captain
Sir W. Edward
Parry.

By the tenor of Sir James Ross's instructions it appears that the Board of Admiralty contemplated making use of the whalers for this purpose. If the communication in question were to be confined to the mere delivery and receipt of letters, this mode of effecting it might perhaps answer the purpose; though not with any degree of certainty, as I believe the whalers failed in reaching Lancaster Sound at all last year, and may do so again, for they will not persevere in their attempts to get across the ice in Baffin's Bay in that latitude, beyond a certain time, but run to the southward to prosecute their fishery elsewhere. But as I presume that their Lordships contemplated also sending out some supplies of provisions, fuel, and other stores, and perhaps a few officers and men, to supply the place of any that may have been disabled or permanently detached from the ships, I am of opinion that this object could not be accomplished with any degree of efficiency and certainty, except by sending out a vessel fortified and otherwise equipped for this special purpose, and commanded by a naval officer of intelligence and zeal. I believe that even as a matter of economy this plan would be preferable to the employment of a whaler, since the owner of such a vessel would demand a very large payment for freight, and for the probable injury to his fishery, if the vessel really performed the service honestly and efficiently. I much doubt, however, whether any consideration would induce a whaling ship to prosecute this service, if a good opportunity offered of striking a whale. I trust, therefore, that the Admiralty will not depend on the whalers for performing this important service.

The delivery of stores from a transport to the "Investigator" would best be performed by the latter coming eastward into Barrow's Strait to receive them. But should this prove impracticable or inexpedient, it would be necessary to land the stores in some convenient locality as a depôt for future use, and to be conveyed to the ship or ships as opportunities offer. This service would require all the energy and zeal to be expected only from Queen's officers and men, and would render indispensable some addition to their numbers, since a party must be left to guard the stores.

I do not understand the allusion you make to Sir James Ross's intention of sending home the "Investigator" this year, since his instructions contain no orders to that effect. But whatever were his original intentions, surely the shortness of his first season's operations would induce him to retain both his ships for a second winter, in order to extend to the utmost the search after Sir John Franklin's expedition.

It is important, however, to observe, that in all probability Sir James Ross, if he had any success in pushing to the westward in 1848, will be too far advanced in that direction to have any communication with Captain Bird, or the ship from England, until late in the present season, for it would surely be a poor employment of the short summer merely to get the "Enterprize" back to Cape Rennell, instead of prosecuting his search.

I should therefore expect, that the arrangements for Captain Bird's future operations would devolve on himself according to the instructions he may receive from their Lordships in August. Indeed I should not be surprised if Sir James Ross do not communicate with the "Investigator" at all this summer.

If, on the other hand, Sir James Ross was not able to penetrate any considerable distance to the westward in 1848, he will be the more desirous of retaining the services of the "Investigator" for at least another winter, since, in that case, his work is virtually to be commenced this year. In fact, under any circumstances, I see no use in one of the ships coming home before the other, so as to leave one of the crews helpless in case of shipwreck.

I quite agree with you in opinion, that whenever Sir James Ross's expedition does return to England,—and this ought not to be hastened,—depôts of provisions should be placed in all spots likely to be visited by straggling parties from Sir John Franklin's ships.

Should anything more occur to me on this subject, I will not fail to communicate further with you. In the meantime I shall hope to hear that a vessel is to be prepared for the purpose to which I have herein referred.

(signed) W. E. Parry.

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— No. 2. —

Opinion of Captain Sir George Back. **SUGGESTIONS** from Captain Sir *George Back*, on the Subject of sending out Supplies for Sir *James Ross*, &c.

SIR *George Back* is of opinion that a transport, properly strengthened under the bows, and under the counter, should be taken up, without loss of time, to proceed to Lancaster Sound.

He considers this preferable to employing one of the whale ships.

The transport to be laden with as much provisions as she can with perfect safety carry.

He thinks that it would be desirable to put on board a certain quantity of coal, as part cargo, or perhaps the whole of the fuel might be carried out by one of the whale ships, whose services might be engaged, and the vessel (say the "Pacific," whaler of Aberdeen, whose master, Mr. Charles Reid, has a brother, Ice-master of the "Erebus") should be ordered to keep company with the transport.

Sir *George Back* considers that Lieutenant Griffiths, who took out the "Barretto Junior" to Disco, and has therefore had experience, and who was favourably recommended by Sir John Franklin, would be the best officer to select to command her.

The transport, on entering Lancaster Sound should proceed up Barrow's Strait till she falls in with the "Investigator" or her boats, and has communicated with some part of Sir *James Ross*'s expedition.

On her return into Baffin's Bay (unless receiving direct orders to the contrary from the commanding officer of the "Investigator") the transports should be ordered to proceed along the coast to the north, towards the head of the bay, carefully examining the different headlands or prominent points, with a view to discover any signals which may indicate the proximity of the parties.

The execution of these orders must necessarily depend upon the open navigation among the ice, but the officer in charge of her is in no way to risk the safe return of the vessel to England before the close of the season, *i. e.* the 15th September, by which period his ship ought to be in open water and clear of the ice.

Sir *George Back* is of opinion, that having provided Sir *James Ross* with the means of continuing the search another season, that the manner of so doing should be left entirely to his well-known intelligence and discretion, nothing doubting that he will thoroughly explore the Wellington Channel and other northern passages from Barrow's Straits, to which his attention might perhaps again be directed, and that he should be authorized to retain the services of the "Investigator."

Duplicates and triplicates, &c. of any orders for Sir *James Ross* should be sent out by the several whale ships.

As regards Richardson's expedition, should he fail in his object, Sir *George Back* thinks that the further prosecution of the research should be entirely trusted to the Hudson's Bay Company, leaving it to them to adopt their own means for carrying it into execution.

— No. 3. —

Opinion of Captain Beechey. **REMARKS** of Captain *Beechey* on the Mode of Communicating with Sir *James Ross*, and rendering further Assistance for the Relief of Sir *John Franklin*'s Expedition.

Westbourne Crescent, 12 January 1849.

In reply to your note, requesting my opinion as to whether any further measures than those contemplated in the instructions to Sir *James Ross* should now be undertaken by the Government for the furtherance of the object of his expedition, I have to observe that it seems to me highly important that the Admiralty should take active measures to prevent the execution of an order which I find Captain Bird received conditionally from Sir *James Ross* on the 12th July last, *viz.*: "In the event of his not meeting with Sir *James*, he is to land all his provision except just what may be sufficient to carry him home, and to ensure the return

return of the 'Investigator' to England previous to the commencement of the ensuing winter (1849)."

Opinion of Captain Beechey.

By Captain Bird's compliance with this order, the "Enterprise" will be left alone in the Arctic regions, without its being known where perhaps, or in what condition she may be in at the time, and Sir John Franklin's party may possibly be deprived of the inestimable advantage of finding an asylum at the mouth of Regent's Inlet, should anything have compelled Sir John to take that route in his boats on his way to Barrow Strait; for it is evidently contemplated by Sir James Ross that he may not be able to reach that spot in time himself. Thus the most likely part of the strait on the south for falling in with the absent parties would be deserted; and be it remembered, at a time when, from the nature of an Arctic summer, it would be most likely that the party would arrive, and when they would be in an exhausted condition from the labour and difficulties attending their reaching that far, supposing them to have abandoned their ships at a distance to the westward, at the early part of the season.

It has ever been the practice to keep two vessels together in those regions, for reasons which are sound and obvious; and to depart from it now, when there are unfortunately more than ever weighty reasons why it should be adhered to, seems to me inexpedient. I am fully aware that the only way in which this can be prevented is by sending out provisions, and incurring an additional expense. But this, after all, will not be so weighty as it at first appears.

We have already promised a communication this season with Sir James Ross, and have even arranged the plan; and we know that this cannot be ensured by a general request to the whalers to look into Lancaster Sound, nor even by a very small reward, seeing how little the reward of last year operated upon them; but that it will be necessary to select one vessel in particular, and contract with her owners that she shall make this service part of her voyage; and I apprehend that it will be necessary to place an officer in her to see that the contract is properly performed, or that there are substantial reasons why it could not be. To lessen the expense, the vessel may be permitted to fish before the ice opens, or at any time when she cannot proceed.

This is the best that can be done to carry out the instructions; but it must be admitted that we make a very imperfect communication of it, if we do not at the same time acquaint Sir James Ross with the result of information which we may be able to derive through Russia during the spring, as to whether the expedition under Sir John Franklin has been heard of at Kamstchatka, or which we might possibly receive by that time through New York, or *via* Mexico, &c.

It is important that Sir James Ross should be in possession of such information, as it will set at rest any expectations he might have sanguinely entertained as to Sir John Franklin having got through, and determine him at once as to any ultimate plan he might be contemplating.

If then the vessel be detained for this very desirable communication, her fishing season must be given up, or nearly so, and the whole expense of the vessel must be defrayed by the Government; so that the expense of this simple communication with the expedition would not be much less than that of hiring a vessel for the express purpose, and then she might carry out the very desirable supply of provision to enable the "Investigator" to remain as long as the "Enterprise" continues in those regions.

And this is the more desirable, for at the late period at which we know the expedition arrived off Barrow Strait, much of the arrangement contemplated for the summer operations could not have been carried into effect; and now, looking to the unforeseen delays, the possibility of accident, &c., it can hardly be expected that that full and efficient examination of every port, in search of our forlorn countrymen, can be made even by the two vessels there: such a search, I mean, as would alone satisfy this country, and, in the lamentable event of hearing no more of the parties, would enable us to lay our heads on our pillows with the inward satisfaction of knowing that we had done all that humanity could suggest, and all that a great nation, jealous of the lives of its subjects, could possibly have accomplished.

Wellington Inlet, Bathurst Inlet, and Regent's Inlet, have all to be examined, in addition to the other routes contemplated by Sir James Ross for his own vessel, and matters have now evidently arrived at such a crisis that merely sailing up and down an inlet will not satisfy us; a rigid, a minute search of the shore must be made in boats from the ship; the hills must be ascended; the points

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Opinion of Captain
Beechey.

and headlands examined, for traces of the objects of their search, &c.; all of which would, under any circumstances, occupy much time.

As I am informed by Sir John Franklin's nearest connexions that he placed much expectation in Wellington Inlet, I think it ought to be minutely examined and traced to its head, as far as the ice will permit with safety of return; and that Regent's Inlet should at the same time be closely watched on both sides; and this can hardly be done by one vessel, for we cannot reckon upon Sir James Ross's return from Banks' Land, seeing he was so late in his operations last year, and as he evidently does not contemplate it himself. These, and other reasons which could be mentioned, seem to me to render it necessary, as an ultimate measure, that a whaler should be hired expressly for the occasion, and placed in charge of a steady officer, and manned with volunteers; that she should be ready to start by May or by June, should the information from Kamtschatska not arrive before; that she should carry out provisions for the "Investigator," to enable her to remain as long as the "Enterprise" continues in the Arctic Seas; that she shall make the best of her way to Cape Rennell, and effect a communication with the "Investigator," and co-operate with her in searching the straits, &c. as above mentioned; and at the close of the summer leave the "Investigator" moored in the position assigned her by Sir James Ross (always supposing him not to have been communicated with, and nothing to have occurred to render an alteration of this arrangement necessary), and then, landing all that can be spared, make her way home to this country.

I am sure you will excuse this long letter; but, independent of the interest we must all feel for our absent countrymen, Sir John Franklin, besides being a much-valued friend, was my greatly esteemed commander on the first Polar Expedition, on which memorable occasion his coolness and fortitude were so eminently displayed, to the saving of the lives, in all probability, of all who had the pleasure of making that voyage with him.

(signed) *F. W. Beechey.*

— No. 4. —

Opinion of Colonel
Sabine, R. A.

REMARKS of *Colonel Sabine, R. A.*, on rendering further Assistance for the Relief of *Sir John Franklin's Expedition.*

Woolwich, 9 January 1849.

YOUR letter presses for a reply, and I therefore make one by return of post, though I should have preferred to have had a day or two for reflection.

If Franklin has taken the south-westerly route, after passing through the Straits which bear your respected father's name, and has persevered in that course, we shall either hear of him on the side of Behring's Straits, or either Ross or Richardson will surely come upon his traces; and further, if any accident had happened to the ships, retreat to the continent, every part of which is so well known to Sir John himself, might reasonably be expected.

Circumstances may be very different, however, if, failing in the south-west, he returned at the end of a twelvemonth, and with diminished resources, to make trial of Wellington Channel. If that channel be, as it appeared to me, a continuation of the deep and open sea which we found in Barrow's Straits, and if it conduct into an open sea like that which occupies the upper part of Baffin's Bay (for which nothing else is requisite but that the sea should be deep and unencumbered with land), it may be far more difficult to determine the direction which Franklin may have taken, or to conjecture, otherwise than on the spot, the most eligible course by which he may be followed. It is to this quarter therefore that one's thoughts are naturally directed, and unfortunately, in respect to that quarter, I am ignorant what Ross intended to do himself, or to direct the "Investigator" to accomplish. There has been time, however, for much that is important to have been done; for it is probable that navigation is open in the immediate neighbourhood of Barrow's Straits far later in the autumn, as well as earlier in the spring, than when further advanced in the ice-encumbered sea south of the Parry Islands.

It is probable that Captain Bird knows, or will know before any advices from this country could reach him; what is the aspect of things at the northern extremity of Wellington Channel, and may have executed at least a partial search for traces

traces of Franklin on the shores of that channel, and may have ascertained thereby, either that it is desirable to pursue the search farther in that direction, or that there is no encouragement to do so. In the first case fresh instructions and a supply of provisions might enable him to follow up the research that has appeared to him most advisable on the spot: in the second case, and supposing that there should appear to be no probability that Franklin has taken that direction, they might authorize and enable him to examine the sounds at the head of Baffin's Bay before his return to England. It was Franklin's declared intention, if he failed in one channel, to attempt another, and not to desist, if possible, till he had tried all; the search consequently of the Sounds referred to, even if unsuccessful, in the absence of more promising traces elsewhere, would be satisfactory.

Opinion of Colonel Sabine, R. A.

I am interrupted and unable to write more, but I cannot but think that it is very desirable that those who take a deep interest in the fate of Franklin and his companions, and who have local knowledge, should meet together and consult as to whether any and what steps should be recommended to Her Majesty's Government; and I can only say that for my part I am ready to attend at any moment, if my presence could be of any use.

(signed) *Edward Sabine.*

— No. 5. —

REMARKS of Captain Sir *Edward Belcher* on the Probabilities of communicating with Sir *James Ross*, by the Whale Ships or otherwise, &c.

Opinion of Captain Sir *Edward Belcher.*

24, Thurloe-square, 8 January 1849.

IN reply to your questions relating to the paragraph in the instructions to Sir J. C. Ross, directing him to send his steam launch, or possibly the "Investigator," to meet the whale ships this spring;—

It is necessary to look narrowly to the possibilities attending any such attempt, and the periods at which they can be made, before we can arrive at any conclusion upon which further instructions can be framed.

For this purpose it will be necessary to refer to the previous voyages of Sir E. Parry in those regions, whence I collect the following important data. In the first voyage, 1819, I find that the temperatures of July, August, September, and October are as follows, viz. :

July	-	-	-	-	-	26 min.	to	46 min.
August	-	-	-	-	-	28	"	42 "
Up to 24 September	-	-	-	-	-	9	"	37 "
" 15 October	-	-	-	-	-	8.5	"	17.5 "

Upon the entry into Lancaster Sound on the 6th of August, until 31st same month, with a comparatively clear sea, the ships were merely able to reach Melville Island.

Indeed on the 6th they were barred; and not until the 20th did they find this barrier removed; they had, therefore, only 11 days to navigate the distance in question. Therefore, it is to be assumed on the spring of 1819, that no boat or vessel could have communicated with the "Investigator's" proposed situation, from Melville Island, before the 21st August. On the ensuing summer the ice is not noticed "moving" until the 30th June; on the 26th July the vessels move out of winter quarters, and start on the 1st of August.

With powerful ships, adapted to resist the ice, they reach the mouth of Lancaster Sound on the 31st, and on the 6th September, all their exertions having been put forth, they reach Agnes' Monument; meeting on the preceding day the "Lee," of Hull, and other whalers in that region.

It is, therefore, clear to my comprehension (unless trusting to the in-shore depths, in which the larger bergs cannot be driven), that the steam launch, with the thermometer possibly at — 10, will not be risked, and that the "Enterprise" herself will have to seek the "Investigator," and send her with the despatches.

To effect this will compel the "Enterprise," according to the data supplied by Parry's voyage, to strain every nerve merely to reach and despatch the "Investigator," whose berth she must occupy for that winter. Circumstances more favourable than those experienced by Sir E. Parry may possibly help him, but these we have no right to anticipate. We will now pass to the instructions in force, and all we can now do is to make our calculations upon when the effort should

Opinion of Captain
Sir Edward Belcher.

should be made to meet the anticipated launch, or "Investigator." It is to be regretted that no preconcerted dates should have been given for looking out; but we have pretty fair presumptive evidence to lead us to the improbability of any boat or vessel, from the interior of Lancaster Sound, reaching Agnes' Monument under the most promising season before the 15th of August. From this date until the 15th September, therefore, we may assume that there may be a chance of a whaler communicating, even in the ordinary cruising ground, with that part of the coast. In Parry's case they had no motive to approach, beyond their own interest, and yet he communicated with the "Lee" off that coast, in soundings. As it is the practice amongst the whalers to cruise in company, and also within signal distance of each other, I think that some arrangement might be entered into with them, previous to their approaching season, to carry out portions of coals as well as provisions in each vessel, so that they might on certain dates arrange to form a chain of connexion with the land, and upon signal made of "sighting any of the Discovery parties," close and contribute their quota. The coals, at the low price at which they could be shipped at Hull, could be retained as ballast, and when "full ships" needed its absence, be thrown overboard; if they succeeded in transshipping it to the Discovery Vessels, they should then be paid the value of coal in that region. If necessitated to throw it overboard, they should be remunerated at a per-centage over cost price.

Under some arrangements of this nature, duly entered into with the owners and masters at Hull, I have little doubt that all that has been contemplated may be carried into effect.

Failing in this, the time taken by one of our small steamers, adapted with the screw, and acting in concert with the whalers, would perform the service most expeditiously. In this latter case she need not quit England before the 1st August, and might return by the third week in September.

It appears very clear to my mind, that Sir John Franklin could not have adopted the opening to the south-west from Melville Island, for two reasons: First, because he would have fallen in with the Esquimaux, who seem to observe about the 70th to 72d degree of latitude; and from the visits of deer and musk-oxen to Melville Island, it is more than probable that they come from the haunts of man. The reindeer we are aware will take the water and cross from island to island, but I do not think the musk-ox is partial to this cold bath.

Secondly, from the tenor of the remarks of Captain Parry, during his visit to Melville Island, it is not probable that he would be able to penetrate the frozen barrier there noticed; and it is clearly, I think, the opinion of all the Arctic voyagers, and certainly of Sir James Ross, that progress can only be effected by sticking to the land, and taking advantage of those clear spaces of three to five fathoms and upwards, where the larger bergs ground and form a barrier, leaving a smooth-water canal between them and the shore. It can be only under such a conception that Sir James Ross would suggest the method of detaching his steam launch.

If Sir John Franklin has met with the difficulty noticed in the voyage of Parry in 1819, he will of necessity have sought for a more northern route, probably in the direction from which Captain Parry experienced "northerly winds." It therefore occurs to my mind, that in this latter case he may have steamed against them, and if he succeeded, I think that the probabilities are in favour of his safety until he reached the Arctic Circle; there he would be reduced to the necessity of following any open channels which offered southerly, and they may have led him to the northward of Asia, whence I have some slight suspicion that he will eventually emerge. In this latter case his provisions, or what perhaps is equally important, fuel, may fail; he must then make use of his consort.

Under this latter consideration, I think it unlikely that either Ross or any of the parties sent in search of him, will be able to obtain any trace; as they will not attempt, as I read the instructions, to prosecute the northern channels.

As Parry should be conversant with all these matters, do you not think that these remarks, or at least the main suggestions, should be submitted for his opinion (without giving mine)?—you would then possibly get a new and better light, which the points started might lead him to discuss.

If I can be of any further use in any way, it will afford me much satisfaction.

(signed) *Edward Belcher*

— No. 6. —

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

Joint Opinion of
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.

North Star selected
(about 500 tons).

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

Joint Opinion of
Officers, &c.

the "Investigator" or her boats, and then to take such measures for unloading the vessel as may be directed by Captain Bird.

12. That if it should happen that the "Investigator" is not met with, nor any of her boats (which however may be confidently expected, from the tenor of the Admiralty instructions to Sir James Ross), then the store ship to proceed in good time to land the provisions, &c. if possible at Whaler Point, Port Leopold, this being a rendezvous specially appointed by Sir James Ross in his instructions to Captain Bird, but should that point (as is not unlikely) prove inaccessible to the ship on account of ice, then a notice to be left there, as well as at several points on the south coast of Lancaster Sound named by Sir James Ross, containing a summary of the Admiralty instructions now sent out, and giving precise information where the provisions, &c. are landed.

13. That imperative instructions should be given to Sir James Ross for a strict search in Wellington Channel and its neighbourhood, since it has been ascertained that Sir John Franklin attached very great importance to that opening, in case of his failing to push on to the southward and westward.

14. The attention of Sir James Ross should likewise be drawn to Regent's Inlet, as Sir John Franklin might possibly return by that route, and that very conspicuous notices be posted in that neighbourhood, and especially about Cape York.

15. That it is desirable that the store ship be employed in assisting in the search during whatever portion of the season may remain after the delivery of her provisions, &c., and in such manner as Captain Bird or (as the case may be) her commander may deem fit, consistently with the securing of her return to England before the ensuing winter.

16. That should Captain Bird deem it expedient, any of the officers and men belonging to the store ship, who are volunteers for the service, may be exchanged for any sick or disabled individuals whom it may be desirable to send back to England.

17. That in addition to the foregoing precautions, it will be desirable to send out by a certain number of the whaling ships, (selecting the most desirable,) copies of the new instructions to Captain Bird, including those given to the officer commanding the store ship, and offering some inducement to the masters of the whaling ships to deposit these communications at certain points, to be hereafter decided upon, especially those which we know to have been selected by Sir James Ross. It may be well to print these instructions, and to enclose them in copper cylinders ready for depositing as above suggested.

18. That it will be necessary to go into many important details in addition to the above, but that the points herein alluded to, appear to be the most obvious and important, and requiring immediate attention.

(signed) *F. Beaufort.*
