

expeditions of former years, I go on to say: "The results of these numerous attempts, as I have pointed out, seem somewhat discouraging. They appear to show plainly enough that it is impossible to sail to the Pole by any route whatever; for everywhere the ice has proved an impenetrable barrier, and has stayed the progress of invaders on the threshold of the unknown regions.

"To drag boats over the uneven drift-ice, which moreover is constantly moving under the influence of the current and wind, is an equally great difficulty. The ice lays such obstacles in the way that any one who has ever attempted to traverse it will not hesitate to declare it well-nigh impossible to advance in this manner with the equipment and provisions requisite for such an undertaking."

Had we been able to advance over land, I said, that would have been the most certain route; in that case the Pole could have been reached "in one summer by Norwegian snow-shoe runners." But there is every reason to doubt the existence of any such land. Greenland, I considered, did not extend farther than the most northerly known point of its west coast. "It is not probable that Franz Josef Land reaches to the Pole; from all we can learn it forms a group of islands separated from each other by deep sounds, and it appears improbable that any large continuous track of land is to be found there.