

as to what should be done. There was an open channel for a short way up past the north point of the nearest island, but farther to the east the ice seemed to be close. It might be possible to force our way through there, but it was just as likely that we should be frozen in; so I thought it most judicious to go back and make another attempt between these islands and that mainland which I had some difficulty in believing that Sverdrup had seen in the morning.

"Thursday, August 20th. Still foggy weather. New islands were observed on the way back. Sverdrup's high land did not come to much. It turned out to be an island, and that a low one. It is wonderful the way things loom up in the fog. This reminded me of the story of the pilot at home in the Dröbak Channel. He suddenly saw land right in front, and gave the order, 'Full speed astern!' Then they approached carefully and found that it was half a baling-can floating in the water."

After passing a great number of new islands we got into open water off Taimur Island, and steamed in still weather through the sound to the northeast. At 5 in the afternoon I saw from the crow's-nest thick ice ahead, which blocked farther progress. It stretched from Taimur Island right across to the islands south of it. On the ice bearded seals (*Phoca barbata*) were to be seen in all directions, and we saw one walrus. We approached the ice to make fast to it, but the *Fram* had got into