

to be done under various contingencies, even if it were possible to give any. I am certain you will know best yourself what ought to be done in any emergency, and I therefore consider that I may with confidence leave the *Fram*.

“ The chief aim of the expedition is to push through the unknown Polar Sea from the region around the New Siberian Islands, north of Franz Josef Land, and onward to the Atlantic Ocean, near Spitzbergen or Greenland. The most essential part of this task, I consider, we have already accomplished; the remainder will be achieved as the expedition gets farther west. In order to make the expedition still more fruitful of results, I am making an attempt to push farther up north with the dogs. Your task will then be to convey home, in the safest manner possible, the human lives now confided to your care, and not to expose them to any unnecessary danger, either out of regard for the ship or cargo, or for the scientific outcome of the expedition. No one can tell how long it may take before the *Fram* drifts out into open water. You have provisions for several years to come; if for any unknown reason it should take too long, or if the crew should begin to suffer in health, or if from other reasons you should think it best to abandon the vessel, it should unquestionably be done. As to the time of the year when this should be done, and the route to be chosen, you yourself will be best able to judge. If it should be necessary, I consider Franz Josef Land and Spitz-