

ANTARCTIC

How Much is a Barrel at the South Pole?

The satellite automatically tracked the six brave souls engaged on the still unprecedented crossing, but they themselves were getting their bearings only from the signals of the Soviet station Vostok, to which there were still 300 miles to travel. On 1 January the expedition had covered 2,394 miles in all and had already noticeably distanced itself from the South Pole.

In order to preserve the attained rate of travel and to free themselves from some part of the cargo - and any cargo in Antarctica, especially at 3,100 meters of altitude - seems superfluous, the participants in the crossing asked to set up additional sub-bases, one of them at 82° south latitude. In moving with comparatively little cargo, they will possibly arrive at Mirnyy Station - their destination - on 1 March.

It is difficult to reach these places by any route, to say nothing of the one selected by the expedition. Flights here are exceptionally risky and supplying aircraft with the necessary reserves of fuel is as mandatory as the presence of a pilot in the cabin. This is why, when difficulties arose with "fuel" a radiogram from the Goskomgidromet (State Committee on Hydrometeorology) of the USSR reporting the allocation of the fuel needed by the expedition was met with a loud hurrah.

The "New York Times" exclaimed: "Either fuel or death!" Whereupon the newsmen calculated how much it would cost to deliver a barrel of oil to the South Pole. The answer was: 20,000 dollars!