

To Antarctica In Autumn

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... day slightly over two thousand miles separates the Akademik Fedorov from the first goal in the final leg of the expedition to the coast in Antarctica, where the Kola Peninsula is situated. The sun is still shining brightly and the thermometer is still registering quite normal summer air and water temperatures; yet the operational reports arriving on board from stations and from expeditionary vessels are filled with the harsh breath of the approaching south polar winter. The southern ocean is restless. In the latitudes of the "raging fifties" a force nine storm has engulfed the scientific research vessel Professor Zubov, which was on course for home. For ten days the gale-force winds would not permit the diesel-electric Mikhail Gornov to approach the ice barrier at Novolazarevskaya in order to unload. Messages came from Molodzhnaya and Mirnyi reporting fierce snowstorms. The wind once again damaged the antenna at Leningradskaya; at Ruskaya the velocity of the wind has already exceeded 40 metres per second. The inland continental station of Vesny, where the air temperature has already consistently remained below the minus 60 mark, sent a radio report about blizzards with ice needles.

In spite of all this, work programs and observations are being carried out. The last research detachments of the season are returning from their long-range expeditions. Over the course of the coming three or four weeks the Akademik Fedorov will visit the coastal stations of Southern Antarctica and near the oasis of Emperor. It will take on board the scientists and experts who have completed their work.