

At Southern Latitudes

Leaving behind its stern the rocky shores and fragments of icebergs at the oasis of Larseman, the diesel-electric ship Vitus Bering left the new antarctic station Progress yesterday. The Far Eastern seamen had worked in the Sodruzhestvo Sea delivering cargos to the wintering members of the 33rd Soviet antarctic expedition. For the first time, Vitus Bering probed the ice at southern latitudes confirming the possibility of supplying the shore stations by this type of ship, which carry Mi-8 helicopters and power-driven barges on their deck.

The cargo operations, under the command of the young captain, S. Sakhnov, were carried out in little known navigational zones. The most difficult stop proved to be the Progress station, the last of the voyage. As yet the navigational charts do not indicate the approaches to it and the sailors were put through a serious professional test. The wintering personnel were supplied with prefabricated barracks, building materials, technical equipment, and fuel. The unloading was carried out by a helicopter. The pilots had to make up to fifty trips with cargo a day.

The all-terrain vehicles weighing seven tonnes were transported by a power-driven barge.

The crew had utilized all the advantages offered by their unique supply ship especially built for work in the extreme conditions of the North and South Poles. Besides participating in setting up the new antarctic station, Vitus Bering conducted full-scale geophysical and hydrological studies.