

NORVEGIA RUNDT SYDPOLLANDET

(THE "NORVEGIA" AROUND THE SOUTH POLAR LAND).

by

GUNNAR ISACHSEN

Norvegia-Ekspeditionen 1930/31, Oslo 1934, 252 pp. - Price Kr. 12.

(Extract from a report by GEORGI, *Annalen d. Hydr. u. Marit. Meteor.*, Berlin, 15th December 1935, page 496).

The *Norvegia* (291 tons gross), a whaling vessel of the well-known shipowner Konsul Lars CHRISTENSEN of Sandefjord near Oslo, was built at Askar in 1919 by Chr. JENSEN, the designer of the famous exploring vessels *Maud* (AMUNDSEN-SVERDRUP, 1918-25) and *Veslekari* (L. A. BOYD, 1931, East Greenland Expedition: *Ann. Hydrogr.* 1935, p. 458); she operated regularly every year from 1927 in the southern polar seas, both as a hunting and a research ship. She was lost in the ice of the White Sea in 1933 during a sealing expedition, and — by a curious coincidence — the crew was rescued by the *Quest*, SHACKLETON's former Exploring ship (1922), used also by ISACHSEN on his expedition to East Greenland (1924).

The *Norvegia* was entrusted in 1931 to the proved explorer Major Gunnar ISACHSEN (retired) for a scientific circumnavigation of the South polar continent, the report of whose voyage and explorations is now available, illustrated by 100 photographs and drawings and a large map of the Antarctic. It will be remembered that ISACHSEN distinguished himself in the South polar regions as Otto SVERDRUP's companion in 1898 during the highly successful voyage of exploration in sledges undertaken by the latter in the Northern part of the Canadian archipelago. Later on, in an expedition to Spitsbergen in 1906-07 sponsored by Prince ALBERT I of Monaco, he crossed the completely glacier-bound Northwestern part of that island, and also carried out scientific investigations in 1909 and 1910 in the same regions on an expedition of which he was the leader. The experience thus gained enabled him, during his voyage in the Southern Sea in the capacity of Inspector of the whaling industry and explorer, to erect new bridges between the past and the present and between the different domains of science, and this is what makes his book particularly valuable. It suffices to quote a short report on the refitting of the ship at the Cape. The *Norvegia* had been docked twice and had had a new deckhouse built to serve as living quarters and modest laboratory. She was also rigged with a new main mast from the governmental forest "Tokai Plantations", which was planted over a hundred years ago. In the days of sailing ships there was a constant demand for masts and other round timber, especially as the Cape lay mid-way from the East Indies, China, Australia and New Zealand. The *Norvegia's* mast was of Cape pine (1) and was the tallest tree felled since the World War, when the clipper *Cutty Sark* was recommissioned. The *Norvegia* was here on the stocks at the same time as the *Discovery II* under command of Dr. Stanley KEMP and the B.A.N.Z. Antarctic Research Expedition under Dr. Douglas MAWSON in SCOTT's old *Discovery*, which was named by the British Press, for some strange reason, the "Mystery Ship of the Southern Sea", although her scientific plans had been widely published — a consolation for us Germans to whom such things have also frequently happened.

It would naturally have been impossible for the small craft to carry sufficient coal for the entire circumnavigation of the South polar land. Refuelling had therefore been arranged for from the big colliers *Thor I*, *Falk* and *Kosmos* distributed around the Antarctic. These operations were carried out as planned, but a great part of the success belongs to the fairly important radio-electric equipment which included a 300 watt long-wave transmitter (450 to 640 m.), a short-wave transmitter and a radio direction-finder. From October 1st, 1930, to February 1st, 1931, 54 stations were occupied, of which

(1) From information kindly communicated by the author, the botanical name of the tree mentioned in the "Original Cape Peninsula Furu" is *Pinus ponderosa* (Peninsularis).

31 reached 2000 metres; 26 vertical sections were made; net-fishing was carried out at 50 m. intervals between depths of 600 metres and the surface, in order to capture pelagic plankton. A complete meteorological programme for the times 0700, 1300 and 1900 h. was also carried out, and observations were made every four hours from the bridge. The results have been specially analysed by ISACHSEN's collaborator Cand. real. Jens EGGVIN (1).

.....

It is interesting to note that the three systems of currents shown by MEYER in the Weddell Sea off Enderby Land are of very real economic importance: just north of each of the current eddies there is a zone where coarse plankton ("Krüll") finds optimum life conditions and where, therefore, the principal whaling regions are located. Thus a problem of vast biological importance is made tributary in a high degree to geophysical measurements, and it may be expected that, in this manner, it will also be possible to explain the occurrence of whales, just as, among other things, there has been explained the temporary occurrence of cold and warm currents off the Peruvian coast.

.....

Those in charge of an expedition will be particularly interested in the data concerning the occurrence of ice, drift, etc. as well as in the very complete details on the unsuccessful researches for various islands of doubtful existence (Truls, Nimrod, Dougherty Islands and Pagoda Rock), which, including the Douglas Islands, may unquestionably be considered as due to optical illusion engendered by icebergs carrying dirt. Very complete information may also be found in the text and in the form of maps, on the coastal regions to the East of Enderby Land as far as Coats Land (Lars Christensen Land, Queen Maud Land, Princess Ragnhild Land and Kron Prinzess. Mártha Land) lately discovered by Danish whalers and partly explored by means of an aeroplane, thanks to which one of the largest gaps in our knowledge of the Antarctic coastal contours has been filled.



(1) Scientific Results of the Norvegia Antarctic Expeditions 1927-31, instituted and financed by Konsul Lars CHRISTENSEN. *Det Norske Videnskaps-Akademi i Oslo.*