

Photo: A. E. Porsild

View from cliffs northeast of the Danish Arctic Station showing Godhavn in the background.

NORTHERN NEWS

The Danish Arctic Station at Godhavn

The Danish Arctic Station at Godhavn, west Greenland, is the oldest permanent biological laboratory in the Arctic. It was founded in 1906 by the botanist Morten P. Porsild, with funds provided by private sources, mainly a grant of 35,000 Danish Kroner given by the publisher A. Holck. The station was at first associated with the University of Copenhagen, but in 1917 its administration was transferred to the Grønlandsdepartementet (then Grønlands Styrelse), and an annual grant, at first of 10,000 Danish Kroner, was made to cover all expenses. This arrangement continued until 1 April 1953 when the station was again taken over by the University of Copenhagen. The Faculty of Natural Sciences was made responsible, and has appointed a board of three professors to administer the station. They are, at present, Knud Jessen, R. Spärck, and M. Westergaard.

The station is built on the shore of Disko Bugt, a mile east of the town of Godhavn, at the foot of low gneiss hills, behind which terraced basalt cliffs rise

to a height of over 2,000 feet. In 1928 the original building was enlarged to make room for the growing library, and in 1949 a second building was added, which is occupied by the scientific leader.

There have only been three scientific leaders of the station. In 1947, after forty-one years at the station, Morten P. Porsild retired and now lives in Copenhagen. He was succeeded by Poul Gelting, who was at that time biological adviser to the Grønlandsdepartementet. Poul Gelting continued as scientific leader until 1 April 1954. During his stay in Greenland he made a large collection of lichens which he is now working up at the University of Uppsala. The present scientific leader is Ulrik Røen, the zoologist. He is making a survey of the freshwater lakes in the Disko Bugt area. Orla Jensen is the superintendent of the buildings, and the library is supervised from Copenhagen by Knud Jakobsen.

The station is open to foreign scientists who want to study biological problems. They can travel by ship from

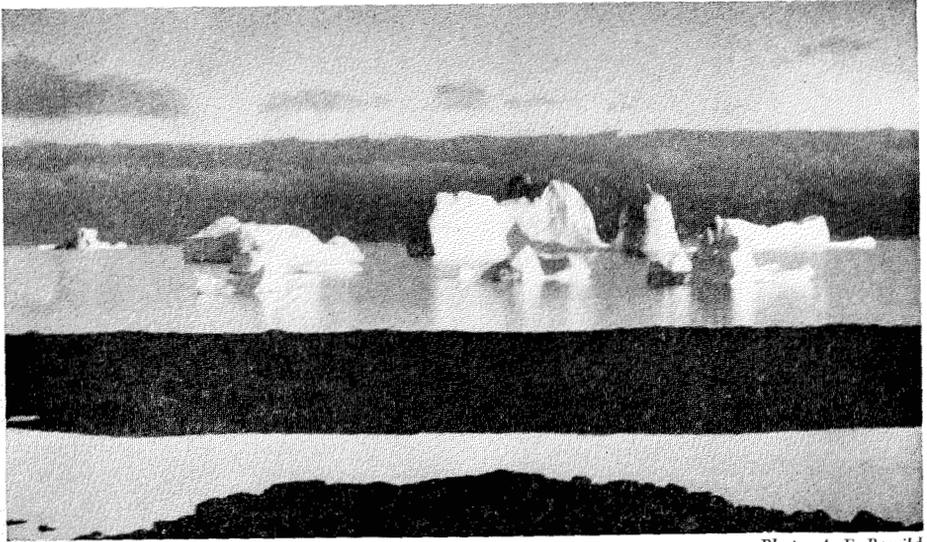


Photo: A. E. Porsild

Icebergs in Disko Bugt seen from the laboratory of the Danish Arctic Station.

Copenhagen to Godhavn. The first ship for Godhavn usually leaves Copenhagen in April, and the last returns in November. There is accommodation for up to twelve visiting scientists at the station. Visitors will be given free access to the facilities of the station, which has electricity (220 volts a.c.), standard scientific equipment, including microscopes, and a 36-foot sea-going boat, the *Holck*. Board and lodging are provided for about 10 Danish Kroner a day.

Scientists who want to work at the station should apply not later than February 1 of each year. They should state their research program, the length of stay, and the kind of facilities required for their work (instruments and books). Applications and all correspondence concerning the station should be addressed to: Universitetets Arktiske Station, Frue Plads, Copenhagen K, Denmark (Cable address: Arktostat Copenhagen). The address of the station in Greenland is: Universitetets Arktiske Station, Godhavn, Greenland (Cable address: Arktostat Godhavn). All correspondence concerning the library, including posting of books, periodicals, and reprints, should be sent to the Librarian, Universitetets Arktiske Sta-

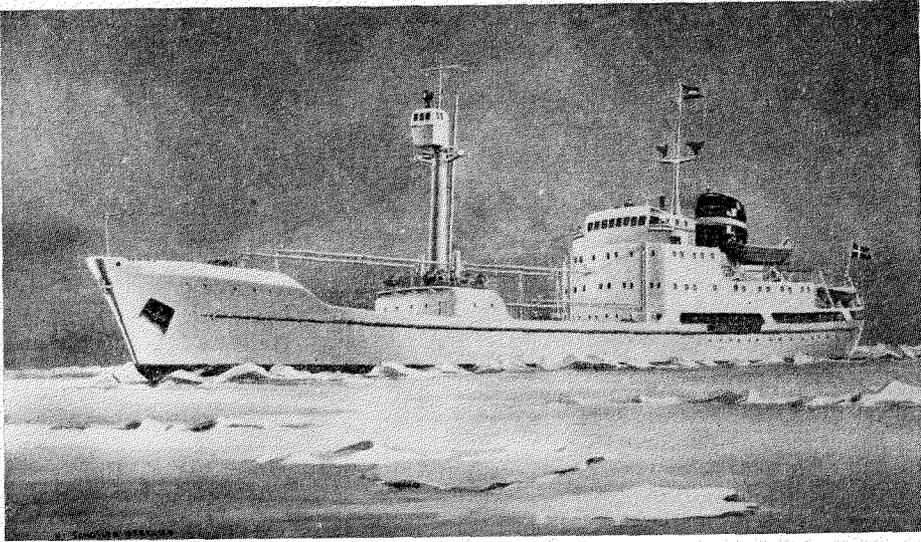
tion, L. E. Bruunsevej 10, Charlottenlund, Denmark.

Foreign scientists must observe all the regulations for visitors to Greenland, such as a medical examination, and must obtain permission from the Grønlandsdepartementet if they wish to make collections in Greenland. These regulations are given in "Bekendtgørelser om rejser til og i Grønland" (Orders on travels to and in Greenland, issued by the Danish Prime Minister's Department, 22 March 1954). Passport and visa regulations are the same for Greenland as for Denmark.

M. WESTERGAARD

New Danish arctic ship

J. Lauritzen Lines, Copenhagen, which for many years have specialized in transport in northern waters, have begun the construction of another arctic ship at their Aalborg Yard. The new ship is to be bigger and considerably more powerful than their vessel *M.V. Kista Dan*, 1,100 tons deadweight as a cargo vessel, speed 12 knots, which was built in 1952 for passenger and cargo transport in the Arctic and Antarctic, and is considered one of the strongest and most efficient



Drawing of the M.V. *Kista Dan*.

ice-breaking commercial vessels in service today. She has been used in east Greenland waters and, in 1954, was chartered by the Australian government to establish the Australian National Antarctic Research expedition on the coast of MacRobertson Land. The new ship, M.V. *Magga Dan*, will incorporate the experience gained with the *Kista Dan*. The *Magga Dan* will have a deadweight of about 1,650 tons as a passenger vessel, with a diesel engine giving a speed of 12 knots and a range of 16,000 miles, and will be ice-strengthened with heavy underwater shell-plating one inch thick. She is to have a special "ice-knife" aft, to protect the rudder when going astern, and three "ice-fins" will be fitted on each side of the underwater hull aft to protect the propeller from ice damage. The propeller will have a variable pitch, giving the *Magga Dan* more ice-breaking power for a limited period than a ship equipped with ordinary fixed-blade propeller; it will be controlled from the steering house or mast. There will be an enclosed navigation house (crow's nest) at the top of the foremast which may be reached from inside through the hollow mast.

The new vessel will have insulated holds which can be heated and kept

frost-proof under arctic conditions, or cooled down to -20°C under tropical conditions. There will be cabin accommodation for 35 passengers. The *Magga Dan* will be ready for delivery about September 1956 and, with the exception of naval icebreakers, will probably be one of the strongest arctic ships in existence.

Kamchadal culture and its relationships to the Asiatic and New World populations

Although the inhabitants of the Poluostrov Kamchatka (Kamchatka Peninsula) have figured prominently in speculation concerning the relationship of Asiatic and New World populations, particularly with reference to the possibility of cultural diffusion or even movement of peoples from Asia to the Aleutian Islands, there has been no single source of data sufficiently comprehensive to be useful for examining these problems. This lacuna has now been filled by the recent study of C. S. Chard ("The Kamchadal: a synthetic sketch", *Kroeber Anthropological Society Papers*, Nos. 8 and 9, 1953, pp. 20-44). The author presents the relatively inaccessible source material of Steller and

Krasheninnikov, he corrects the simplistic view, commonly held since the Jesup expedition, of the Kamchadal as an "Americanoid" culture, and he presents a basic inventory of Kamchadal culture ranging from the ecological base to beliefs concerning the supernatural. The importance of the annual salmon runs in laying the basis for sedentary life and creating considerable leisure is well demonstrated. The extensive use of vegetable foods and of birds, and the minor role of land animal hunting is presented, with more importance given to sealing than has formerly been acknowledged. No evidence is found that whale were ever hunted. The absence of skin boats, kayak or umiak, with dependence upon wooden boats goes far toward explaining the failure to make use of the great sea mammal resources of the nearby Komandorskiye Ostrova (Commander Islands). The absence of polished slate implements, the apparent absence of native pottery, and the absence of drums are among the puzzling features which have important ramifications for theories of contact with the New World. Prior to 1740 it appears that the Kamchadals had no knowledge of or contact with the world outside Kamchatka except for limited trade contacts with neighbours to the north and south. Though origins and affinities of this culture remain obscure, it seems possible to exclude the Kamchadals as important contributors to Aleut, Eskimo, or Indian cultures of the New World.

WILLIAM S. LAUGHLIN

Symposium on Arctic and Alpine Tundras

A Symposium on Arctic and Alpine Tundras is to be held in connection with the National Convention of the Ameri-

can Institute of Biological Sciences in East Lansing, Michigan, Thursday September 8. The main speakers and the titles of their papers are listed below. The symposium will be held in Room 326, Natural Science Building, Michigan State College, and will start at 9.00 a.m. Further details can be obtained from John E. Cantlon, Department of Botany, Michigan State College, East Lansing, Michigan.

a.m. Pierre Dansereau, presiding.

A. E. PORSILD, National Museum, Ottawa, Ont. Age and history of the flora of the North American Arctic Archipelago.

WILLIAM C. STEERE, Stanford University, Stanford, Calif. Bryophytes in arctic vegetation.

CHESTER A. ARNOLD, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Mich. Some aspects of arctic paleobotany.

DANIEL A. LIVINGSTONE, Dalhousie University, Halifax, N.S. Pollen diagrams from arctic Alaska.

p.m. John Cantlon, presiding.

JOHN C. F. TEDROW, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, N.J. Soils and soil formation in permanently frozen arctic tundra.

JOHN H. CONOVER, Blue Hills Observatory, Cambridge, Mass. Macro- and micro-climatology of the Arctic Slope of Alaska.

JOHN W. MARR, University of Colorado, Boulder, Colo. Alpine tundra environment of the Front Range, north central Colorado.

HERBERT C. HANSON and ETHAN D. CHURCHILL, Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C. The concept of climax in arctic and alpine vegetation.

FRANK A. PITELKA, University of California, Berkeley, Calif. High arctic tundra as an ecosystem.